

Subject: *The Good Shepherd and His Sheep*

Scripture: *John 10:1-21*

The theme song in our revival services was *Christ is Enough for Me*, and I'm sure you remember the word "everything I need is in You, everything I need." That's what the Gospel of John is telling us. In this wonderful Gospel we find several "I AM" statements of Jesus:

- *I am the bread of life (6:35)*
- *I am the light of the world (8:12)*
- *I am the door of the sheep (10:7)*
- *I am the good shepherd (10:11)*
- *I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)*
- *I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)*
- *I am the true vine (15:1)*

In this message we are going to focus on Jesus as our Good Shepherd. Our church property used to be the church home of a Lutheran Church, and before that our property was actually a pig farm. I learned that bit of history while I was visiting someone in the hospital several years ago. The Lord transformed our campus from a pig pen to a sheepfold. Now you know.

The basic meaning of "shepherd" is "a keeper of sheep." The first keeper of sheep was Adam's son, Abel. Many of Israel's best known men were shepherds by occupation: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David. The Bible mentions shepherds and keeping of sheep over 200 times. Shepherds had many important responsibilities. They led their sheep to pasture and water. They protected them from wild animals. They guarded their flocks at night. They took care of the weak and sick by carrying them in their arms. The term "shepherd" came to be used of kings and even God Himself is described as a Shepherd (Ps. 23:1). Jesus used the image of a shepherd to describe His relationship to His followers and His ministry to them.

When Jesus restored and forgave Peter in John 21, He told Peter the same thing three times: "If you love me, feed my sheep." When Paul spoke with the elders of the church at Ephesus he reminded them of their high calling to care for God's sheep. *Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

QUALITIES OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

- *Jesus is the True Shepherd (vs. 1-6)*

Unlike the false shepherds that took advantage of the people, Jesus loves and cares for the sheep. Thieves work by deception and robbers work by force, but Jesus is the true Shepherd who is concerned about the needs of His sheep.

- *Jesus is the Good Shepherd (vs. 7-15)*

As the Good Shepherd, He provides for His sheep. In verses 7-9 Jesus refers to the way a shepherd would gather his sheep into the sheepfold and then he would lie down and become the gate or the door for the sheep to enter. This is lovely picture of salvation. Jesus is the only door or point of entry. We must go through Him. He saves (vs. 9). He sustains (vs. 9b).

He satisfies (vs. 10). When a young girl was learning the 23rd Psalm, she tried to say it from memory, and said, “The Lord is my Shepherd. I’ve got all I want.” He gives His own life for the sheep. Jesus compares His commitment to the hireling (“hired hand”) who would run from danger (the wolf). The hired hand flees because he is only a hired hand and has no real love or concern for the sheep.

- Jesus is the One Shepherd (vs. 16-18)

The other sheep are Gentiles. There is only one fold and one shepherd. The world wants to believe there are many sheepfolds and many shepherds. A few months ago I heard a minister refer to this verse and said it meant that Christians and Muslims will be in the same fold. Of course Jesus never meant anything like that. All sheep in His fold believe in Him and accept Him as their Lord and Savior. The “one fold” is made up of Christians and the “one Shepherd” is Jesus. One of our local schools, Emory and Henry College, recently announced the opening of a new “inclusive” center dedicated to acknowledge that other faiths are valid ways to God and not just Christ and the Christian faith. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the exclusive way to God. ***John 14:6*** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* ***Acts 4:12*** *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

QUALITIES OF HIS SHEEP

- The sheep hear the Shepherd’s voice (vs. 3, 16)

They recognize His voice and respect it. The method of a shepherd in the Middle East is different from shepherds in the Western world. The shepherd would stand outside the sheepfold and call his sheep by name and they would come to him. He didn’t drive them; He led them. He didn’t have to use a sheepdog to herd his sheep; his voice was enough to get their attention. This is a wonderful picture of how Jesus leads His sheep. The Lord doesn’t speak in an audible voice, but He does speak through His Word and His Spirit to our hearts. He speaks in a personal and powerful voice.

- The sheep follow the Shepherd (vs. 4, 27)

One of the sure proofs that we belong to Christ and we are one of His sheep is that we hear Him and we obey. A sign in a Christian school cafeteria said: “Where He leads me, I will follow. What He feeds me, I will swallow.” We sing that old hymn, *Wherever He Leads I’ll Go*, and it makes us feel good, but do we really mean it? Jesus doesn’t drive His sheep; He leads them, and the sheep follow. ***Luke 6:46*** *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* ***1 John 2:3-4***³ *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*⁴ *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

- The sheep know the Shepherd (vs. 14)

They know Him and they trust Him and stay close to Him. The Shepherd knows that His sheep are needy creatures. Sheep need protection because they are prone to wander and stray. ***Isaiah 53:6*** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* ***1 Peter 2:25*** *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

The sheep are worth everything to the Shepherd. He was willing to lay down His life for us and then He rose again (vs. 17-18).

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He is the Great Shepherd, and He is the Chief Shepherd.

- **John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* As the Good Shepherd He died for the sheep to pay the penalty for their sins and to seal the covenant with His blood.
- **Hebrews 13:20** *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.* As the Great Shepherd He rose again for the sheep to give them new life and guide them.
- **1 Peter 5:4** *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* As the Chief Shepherd He will return to take us to home and give us rewards for faithful service.

A large crowd was assembled and two people recited the 23rd Psalm from memory. The first person spoke with a rich, resonant voice and recited it in the most eloquent way. The second person was not so talented, but spoke every line with deep heartfelt meaning and moved the audience to tears. After the program someone remarked, “The first person knew the psalm, but the last person knew the Shepherd.” Do you know the Shepherd? Can you say, “The Lord is my Shepherd?”