

## Jesus is ... – The Good Shepherd & The Door

Jan. 22, 2017- Pastor Randy

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What I am hoping to accomplish through our 21 Days of Devotion is to get us to “fix our eyes on Jesus”. Our mission at Calvary is to Learn, live and share the good news of Jesus. The order is not coincidental or accidental. Learning precedes living and sharing. We can't follow a Jesus we haven't learned about. We can't share a Jesus we don't know. We have been learning who Jesus is through reading the Gospel of John each day and through our Sunday messages which focus on some of Jesus “I am” statements.

Today we turn our attention to two more of these “I am” statements found in John 10. These statements are part of an extended metaphor Jesus used to draw a contrast between Himself - the faithful savior and shepherd of the people - and the faithless and unfaithful religious leaders who were seeking to destroy Him. The two “I am” statements are:

“I am the gate/door & “I am the Good Shepherd”.

*John 10:1-15*

*“I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice.” Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, **I am the gate for the sheep**. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, **I am the gate**. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. **I am the good shepherd**. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.*

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***"I am the good shepherd;** I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.*

John 10 continues a conversation that began in John 9, and it is the story in chapter 9 that really makes Jesus words in John 10 come to life. A review of John 9 reveals Jesus treating a man born blind with compassion and acceptance while the Pharisees treatment of this same man was harsh and unloving.

So why did Jesus begin to engage in this figurative speech about sheep, shepherds, thieves, and hired hands? He did it to make His point as clear and powerful as possible. Jesus' words would have drawn the minds of the Pharisees back to the words which God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to the religious leaders who failed in their responsibility to properly shepherd God's people. In Ezekiel 34 we read,

*"Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. You have not taken care of the weak. **You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty.***

*...For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I myself will search and find my sheep.** I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.*

*..**And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David.** He will feed them and be a shepherd to them."*

When Jesus referred to himself as the good shepherd he was declaring that he was the Messiah ("David") God would send to shepherd His people. He was also calling the Pharisees out for being just like the unfaithful shepherds of Ezekiel's day.

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“The gate” = Jesus.

“Entering through the gate” = Believing and following Jesus.

1. If you want to be a part of God’s flock you must enter through Jesus.
2. Those called to shepherd God’s people must also go through Jesus.

Thieves” = The Pharisees who rejected Jesus. They consumed rather than cared for the sheep.

Hired Hand = The Pharisees who served the sheep for the sake of personal gain, rather than true love.

The Good Shepherd = Jesus, the one who sacrificially loves the sheep. He provides for their needs and protects them from outside threats.

Jesus is committed to His people. For the remainder of this message I want to encourage you by reminding and convincing you that Jesus is committed to provide for you and to protect you.

1. The good shepherd provides for His people. Jesus said, *“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”* “The NASB and ESV translate Jesus words, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

What abundant life is not:

It is not a life free from suffering. It is not a life of material abundance, and It is not a life of never-ending pleasure. If it required any of the above Jesus would have no credibility in claiming to offer us abundant life because you can’t offer something you don’t have. Jesus had no place to lay his head. Jesus suffered brutally on the cross. Jesus lived a celibate life.

Even though Jesus life was not one that was free from suffering, full of pleasure, and full of material possessions it was an abundant life because of three other qualities:

1. A Life of Purpose – Jesus demonstrated repeatedly that he had a clear purpose for his time on earth. He said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

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"I came to seek and save the lost." "I came to call sinners to repentance." "...I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." "I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." "I came to serve and to give my life as a ransom."

2. A Life of Love. Jesus was absolutely secure in the love that the Father had for him. Not only did Jesus experience being loved, he also possessed love for the Father and for the people He came to save. Abundant life consists in both receiving and giving love.

3. A Life of Freedom. By freedom I mean liberty as opposed to license. Many people confuse the two. License is the freedom to indulge my desires even if they are destructive to myself or others. Liberty refers to the freedom to do what is right. For the Christian, that means the freedom to pursue God's will. True freedom, the freedom Jesus possessed and offers us is:

Freedom from the fear of man; freedom from the power of sin; freedom to choose the right thing; freedom from guilt; freedom from the control of sinful impulses like hatred, lust, greed.

Jesus is not only committed to provide for the needs of His people he is also committed to protecting His people. There is no question that the Devil is real and there are real demonic forces, what the bible calls spiritual forces of evil and darkness. However, God's people "are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:5). In John 10:11-15 Jesus described Himself as the good shepherd who differs from the hired hand in the way they care for the sheep. The hired hand is not committed to protecting the sheep, and will abandon them for the sake of self-preservation. When the wolf comes the hired hand runs, and the wolf is able to snatch and kill the sheep. The true shepherd will risk his life in order to rescue the sheep. In vs. 28,29 Jesus declared that no one can snatch his people out of His hand. Here is my question to you? Do you believe this? Do you trust that Jesus is committed to protect you and keep you under His care? Are you afraid of what the Devil might do to you? Are you afraid of what people might do to you? If so, you need to hear these words again:

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“My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father’s hand.” If Jesus was willing to lay down his life to rescue us and make us one of His sheep in the first place, why should we have any doubt that He will make sure protects those he has rescued.

If God be for us who can be against us?

I love the way the NLT translates Paul’s words in Romans 8:38-39

*“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*