

JESUS CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : John 10:1-18, 22-42

LESSON 144 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 10:1-18

¹ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Into the Right Path

Jesus came to earth to be the Good Shepherd to lead His sheep into the right path. The Israelites were God's chosen people, the "sheep of his pasture," but they had sinned so terribly that God had permitted them to be scattered into all the world. Many of the kings and priests, their shepherds in early days, had been wicked men and had led the Israelites astray. Now Jesus had come to gather the wretched wanderers into a safe fold again. It was said of Jesus when He was preaching to a great multitude at one time: "He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

However, there were not many of those "sheep" who wanted to be saved. Jesus came to His own, but His own received Him not. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Those who received Him were only a little flock, but how they loved the Lord! They followed Him wherever He went. Once when the crowds had forsaken Jesus, He asked His faithful few if they would go also. Peter answered, "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Other Sheep

When the Jews refused to listen to Jesus He turned to the Gentiles. He told the people: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." The Jew and Gentile alike must come through Jesus in order to be saved; and all who are saved are of one fold, with Jesus as the Chief Shepherd.

Helpless Sheep

Every sheep must have a shepherd. It has no homing instinct, and if lost can never find its way back to the flock. How fittingly Isaiah compared us with sheep: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

From the time a child is born he reveals sinful characteristics. He becomes angry and cries if he cannot have his own way. As he grows older these evil tendencies grow; and if they are not controlled the child may become very wicked. It is natural for man to turn his back upon God, and to follow the lure of Satan. The fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden brought that sin nature upon everyone.

A sheep never tries to clean itself. Birds and dogs enjoy splashing in the water for a bath, and cats spend much time washing themselves. But a sheep, never! It remains dirty until someone else cleans it.

A man without God seems always to drift toward evil deeds. He cannot take away his own sins. If it were not for the Spirit of God in the world which convicts men of sin, he never would even try to change his ways. He is as helpless to cleanse

¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

¹⁷ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

John 10:22-42

²² And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

²³ And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

²⁴ Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

²⁵ Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

²⁶ But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

³⁰ I and *my* Father are one.

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

³² Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

³³ The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

³⁴ Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are

himself of sin as the sheep is to make itself clean.

The Door of the Sheepfold

Jesus said He was the Good Shepherd, and He also said that He was the Door of the sheep. He added that the true Shepherd must come in at the Door. How could Jesus be the Door, and then come in through it? John tells us that the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. That is Jesus. And Jesus came through the Word in that He fulfilled the prophecies which the Old Testament prophets had written about the Messiah or Redeemer who would come.

Concerning false prophets, God said through Jeremiah: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (Jeremiah 23:21). Those were the thieves and robbers who had come before Jesus came to earth. They had not come through the Word of God. through the Scriptures, through the Door. They had not been sent by God. And anyone who might come afterward, claiming to be the Christ, would also be a thief and robber. There is no other way to be saved than to come through Jesus — the Word — and His Blood which He shed on Calvary.

The Faithful Shepherd

A good shepherd loves his sheep and takes care of them night and day, winter and summer, protecting them with his life. Jesus said that a good shepherd would even give his life for his sheep. We remember when David was a shepherd boy he killed the lion and the bear which tried to take some of the lambs from his father's flock. He did not run away when he saw the lion coming, and leave all his sheep to be torn and eaten by the wild animal. He stayed right there and fought with the lion until it was dead. And so he did with the bear.

When the scribes and Pharisees began to persecute Jesus and His followers for the preaching that He was the Son of God, He did not stop His preaching. Even if He had to die for His Gospel, He was willing to do it so that all who believe might be saved through His shed Blood. It would have been much easier for Jesus if He had stopped His ministry. He would not have been persecuted and crucified; but neither would there be any way for us to have our sins forgiven to prepare us for Heaven.

Strange Shepherds

Jesus said that strange shepherds had gone into the world to try to gather flocks about them, but that the sheep of God did not recognize such shepherds, and would not be led astray. There are strange shepherds in the world today. Some are telling people that they do not need to pray through and have their sins forgiven, to be ready to meet Jesus. Such people are thieves and robbers, and the people who listen to them become thieves, too. They are trying to climb over the wall instead of going in at the gate into the sheepfold. Such hireling shepherds preach anything the people want to hear, in order to receive money from them. The true undershepherds, the faithful ministers, preach the truth of God's Word because they love people and want to see them get ready for Heaven, and not be eternally lost.

Food for the Sheep

When Jesus called Peter to be an undershepherd, He said, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:16). The food for the Christian is in the Bible — spiritual food. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:35, 33).

gods?

³⁵ If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

³⁶ Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

³⁷ If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

³⁸ But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

³⁹ Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

⁴⁰ And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

⁴¹ And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

⁴² And many believed on him there.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who is the Good Shepherd?
- 2 Who are the sheep?
- 3 Who were the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"?
- 4 How is Jesus the Door of the sheep?
- 5 What did Jesus call those who did not come in at the Door?
- 6 Who are the false shepherds today?
- 7 What did Jesus do when He found that one sheep was missing?

The ministers who are not preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, who died that through His shed Blood we might be saved, are starving their flock. If we preach Jesus, we will preach His virgin birth, His sinless life, His death on the cross for our sins, His resurrection, and His second coming. We will teach the whole Word: justification by faith; sanctification, holiness unto God; and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That is the food of Christians. If they do not hear the entire Word of God preached, they will starve to death spiritually.

The Sheep Named

Jesus was the Good Shepherd when He was on earth, and He continues to be the Shepherd for every true Christian. He has bought them with His own Blood, and He loves them and takes good care of them. He has promised to lead them in green pastures and by the streams of clear, sparkling water. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

Jesus knows each of His sheep by name. We are not too little nor too far away to receive His attention. He loves us with an everlasting love, and has promised that no one will be able to pluck us out of the Father's hand. The only way that the sheep may be lost is to wander away of his own accord or will.

The Lost Sheep

A sheep may have stayed around the outer edges of the flock. It was nibbling grass, not looking up, and it nibbled itself away from the other sheep. It did not mean to wander away, but the grass looked greener farther on, and the sheep did not look at the shepherd. Soon there was no grass — only rocks and brambles. When the sheep looked up, it was all alone and it began to bleat. But there was no one near to hear.

That night when the shepherd led his flock into the fold, he counted them, and there was one missing. Did he say: "Oh, that does not matter. What is one sheep when I have so many? I will forget him"? No! He said, "One of my sheep is missing, and I must go and hunt for him right away." And in the night, while it was dark and cold, he hunted among the rocks and brambles until he heard the bleating of that one lost sheep. He picked it up and carried it back to the fold. How happy that sheep was to be safe among the rest of the sheep again! After that he was, very likely, careful to stay right in the middle of the flock.

Jesus said that is just how much He loves His sheep, the true Christians. Perhaps someone will drift toward the outer edge of the flock, and will not keep his eyes on the Shepherd by praying and studying the Word of God. One day he realizes he is out of the fold of God; he has drifted back into sin. But Jesus still loves him, and He goes out to search for the sheep for whom He gave His life, but who has wandered away. The very angels in Heaven rejoice when that lost one returns to the fold.

Let us follow the Good Shepherd with the assurance that the path He has chosen leads to Heaven.