

John Ch 10:11-21

Once you find your way there, place your finger there and turn to Ps 23
 “The Good Shepherd”

It just seemed so appropriate to me that we would look to Ps 23 today to sort of open up the text that’s before us in John Ch 10. In that this segment begins with Jesus Christ heralding Himself as the Good Shepherd. The Shepherd that the Word of God had prophesied would come to Israel, how God Himself would Shepherd His people, and in this passage Jesus claims to be the fulfillment of that promise. Jesus being God come in the flesh to Shepherd His sheep, and lead them out of the fold of Judaism, and the legal religion of seeking to keep the Law, into His flock whereby He Himself (not the Law) serves as the door whereby we’re able to have fellowship, and a loving relationship with the Father. and So there’s no conflict with these various passages in the OT whereby God Himself promised to be Israel’s Shepherd, vs what Jesus says here regarding Himself as their Shepherd, that’s not *conflict* it’s *correlation*. Because Jesus *is* God, who *has* come to His own, in order to feed them and to lead them into all truth, to lead them from the fold that’s been “holding” them so to speak, into His flock. (Look at Ps 23)

Vs 1-2

Notice the characteristics of the Shepherd here as they develop how he cares for the sheep. David himself being a shepherd had a keen insight on what it meant to care for sheep, to have compassion on them, tend to them and provide for them. and The absolute trust that sheep place in their shepherd, and so with that we notice a couple of things right off the bat here. #1 David says, “The *Lord* is *my* Shepherd” in other words I put my absolute trust in the Lord, He’s the one who *leads* me, who *feeds* me, who cares *for* me and has compassion *upon* me, He tends *to* me and provides *for* me. and Here where he says, “I shall not want,” another way to understand that is, “I know that with the Lord as my shepherd, and my provider, my every need will be met, I’ll have no lack concerning the needs of my life.” Notice vs 2, He calms me, He quiets me, in the midst of the hecticities of life, He soothes my soul, calms my spirit, makes me lie down. Where? In barren wastelands? In desert regions of hot sand and cactus needles? No, in green pastures, where I can be nurtured and sustained, “He leads me beside the still waters.” Another notion of peace and tranquility where there may’ve otherwise been uncertainty and/or fear, He’s the good Shepherd, takes care of His sheep.

Vs3

So many people look to so many things to try and fix them, be it worldly counsel, or some medication out of desperation, yet David says here, “*He* restores my soul.” and I’m not against legitimate medicines for legitimate conditions, but so often people turn to these things as a means of escape, in order to try and cope with this rip, or this gash that’s in their soul.

Jesus is the one who restores us, those things my numb us temporarily, but Jesus renews us, after that flesh frenzy, or that time that we wandered from the flock, He restores us, renews us, refreshes and forgives us. and Begins to lead us once again down the paths of righteousness, not because we deserve it, or because we're so cool, but for His names sake, for His glory, so that everyone might know that we serve a God who is rich in mercy and full of grace. and If He can forgive me, if He can forgive you, be merciful to you and change your life, then He can do it for anybody.

Now notice the transition that takes place here, now David ceases talking about the Lord, as he's meditated on His goodness, and His grace, and that merciful work or restoration that the Lord does in our lives, his heart begins to overflow, now he's not talking *about* the Lord, the transition is made to talking *to* the Lord, and worshiping *before* the Lord.

Vs4

The rod being the instrument of protection against wolves, or things that may represent danger to the sheep, and the staff being the instrument of correction in the lives of the sheep, as they would begin to stray from the flock, the shepherd would take his staff, that long stick that had that big hook like curve on the end of it and drag the sheep back into the flock. and So David is saying I take comfort in Your ability Lord to protect and correct my life. So that I don't doubt what lies ahead of me, even in death, You'll keep me.

Vs5-6

So David's confidence in the Lord, how He'll pour His Spirit out *over* Him, and take good care *of* Him all the days of his life, and how he'll dwell with the Lord, in the house of the Lord forever.

Vs 11 (John Ch 10)

Now as we launch into this passage there's 2 primary qualities about the Lord as our Shepherd here in this vs that the Lord draws our attention to concerning Himself. and I want you to see them, notice #1 He is good, and then out of the overflow of His goodness, #2 He gives. 1st of all Jesus says, "I am the good Shepherd."

We really need to hone in on this word "good" here for a minute because we're not talking here about "good" in the sense of, "I'm pretty much a good guy overall" you know, the pros outweigh the cons. This word "good" points to that which is inherently, and intrinsically good, so that in His very nature, His very essence is good. Now this should begin to ring a bell in your mind. One day a rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, "*Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" Luke 18:18 and Though this word "good," and the word "good" that this man used aren't identical, the idea remains the same and Jesus picked up on it.

He said, *“Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.”* Luke 18:19 Because God’s Word says that there are none that are righteous, and that there are none who do good, but that we’ve all turned aside, or to understand that another way all of mankind has sinned and fallen short of the standard and the glory of God. and So for this man to identify Jesus as good, meant that there was something in Him that set Him apart from the rest of mankind, and Jesus is trying to get this man to see that. So He’s not denying that’s He’s good, He’s confessing that He’s God! and So as to where in that passage He challenged that man to think a little bit deeper about what he was saying, here He just comes out and says it, “I am the good shepherd.”

The reason that I’m camping out on this is because this is one of the fundamental essentials to your walk and your relationship with God that’s imperative that you understand and walk in the reality of. That God is good, the Lord is good, that He is for you and not against you, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”* Jer 29:11 Because there comes a time, or ten, or 200 in our lives where we’re challenged on this very point, some tragedy enters the equation of our lives, and everything we’ve ever learned about the love of God is challenged. Why would God allow this, or let that happen to me, or my family? and If you don’t have a grip on this fundamental truth of the intrinsic nature of God, you’ll slip. You may not understand why certain things happen, I may not have the answers to everything that goes on, but one thing I know, God is good. Isaiah said, *“I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD And the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, According to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.”* Isa 63:7

Do you remember Job’s testimony? Literally in 1 day his whole life fell apart, he lost everything, his livestock, his servant, his children, everything gone, dead in one day, did Job grieve? Sure; did he blame God? No way; he said, *“Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.”* Job 1:21-22 Why? Because he understood a fundamental truth, that God is good.

You ladies I understand just considered Ps 73 last Sunday afternoon. and There we find Asaph struggling in his understanding as to why seemingly tragic things happen to those who fear God, and he confesses, *“My feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.”* Ps 73:2 But there was an essential anchor point in his life that brought him back around, and when he was confronted with things he didn’t know, he went back to what he did know. and One thing he *did* know is, *“Truly God is good...”* Ps 73:1

Jesus is the good shepherd, and I don't know what's happening in your life, but be reminded of that today, Jesus is good, and He's good to you. He's also called the great shepherd, we read in the book of Heb, "*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*" Heb 13:20-21 Elsewhere known as the Chief Shepherd, over all the under shepherds who tend to His flock (who should mirror the Chief Shepherd's characteristics). Paul said, "*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*" 1 Cor 11:1

You remember last week I pointed out to you how the Lord exhorted Peter at the end of His earthly ministry to feed His sheep and to tend to His lambs, and interestingly enough we find Peter towards the end of his ministry exhort those who serve as elders, "*Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*" 1 Peter 5:2-4

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and because He's good, He gives, whether it be in the common graces that He gives to believer and non-believer alike such as the breath of life, the rain and the sun to grow crops and provide sustenance both for the wicked and the righteous. Or those gifts reserved for His children specifically, Jesus said, "*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*" Luke 11:13 and He said if you'll just seek 1st the kingdom of God and His righteousness then all the things that you have need of will be *given* to you (Matt 6:33).

We serve a good God, and we serve a giving God, "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*" James 1:17 But of course the good and perfect gift that's in view right here in vs 11 is the gift of the good shepherd's life that He gives for the sheep. For you and for me, this is the dedication of the good shepherd, being willing to lay down His life, that the sheep might live. This (you guys) is the gospel message. Our carnal nature wants to magnify vs 10, the fact that Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it abundantly. and We have a tendency to point out to people that if they'll just come to Jesus they'll have such peace, such abundant life, such joy and a love like they've never known. and Though all that's true, when someone responds to the gospel on that premise alone, what happens when the trials come along? We've just talked about the fact that tragedy visits us all, the bible says, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,*" Ps 34:19 how many of you can testify to that?

We know that the Lord will deliver us from them all just as that vs goes on to say. But we need to be real clear that the essence of the gospel is *not* what Jesus *can do* for you, but what He's *already done* for you upon the cross. So though it's true when we tell people the things that the Lord *can do*, the focus needs to be on what He's *already done*. "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*" Isa 53:5-6 Jesus is the good Shepherd, and He has given His life for the sheep. Paul told the Eph, "*Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*" Eph 5:2 The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep, and Jesus Christ did just that. and That's the essence of the gospel message, that needs to be the premise to which people respond.

Jesus died that you might live, shed His blood for the remission of your sin and mine, and if you just place your faith in Him you can have everlasting life.

Vs12-13

Again 2 primary qualities to observe about the hireling, the one who does what he does for how it benefits him and the reason he responds and he does. See em there in vs 12, 2 overriding characteristics of the hireling #1 He sees and #2 He flees, and the reason he flees is spelled out quite frankly in vs 13, because he does not care about the sheep. Now the good shepherd loves the sheep, therefore He gives to the sheep ultimately even His life, now ones life is their most prized possession, so once one is willing to give you their life there's nothing that they wouldn't do for you or give to you if it'll in anyway benefit you. and That's the point Paul is concluding in Rom 8:32 when he said, "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*"

If God is willing to give His Son, then anything else is a no brainer, if it'll help you in your walk with Him, He'll give it to you, He's already given you the most valued thing He has, everything else is secondary compared to the gift of Jesus Christ and His life being sacrificed upon the cross for our sin. But the hireling, one who doesn't own the sheep, (now Jesus owns you, by the purchase price of His blood) but hirelings, people who are watching out over God's flock for personal gain, when conflict and/or potentially damaging confrontation comes against the sheep, he's down the road. If the hireling senses a personal threat, he'll abandon the sheep, if the pay's not right, he'll abandon the sheep, or whatever. This wolf being spoken of here doesn't necessarily represent Satan, but really anything that has the propensity to do damage to the sheep, to bring devastation and destruction into the flock, to scatter the sheep or destroy them.

So as to where the hireling will flee, the shepherd will fight, he'll take the hit, he'll take the necessary measures not only to correct the situation, but to protect the sheep in the process. and Sometimes in that process the shepherd bears the responsibility to take the damage, you know if a shepherd begins to take his rod and stand between the sheep and the predator, and begins to beat back the predator and to protect the sheep from harm. Sometimes he takes some damage, the predator begins to tear into the shepherd, start rumors about the shepherd, try and destroy the life of the shepherd, but if necessary the shepherd will stand in the gap and take the blows, he gives his life for the sheep, sacrifices himself for the sheep. Doesn't blame the sheep for being sheep, doesn't regret what his office calls him to do, he absorbs the damage of the predator in order to spare the destruction of his flock. I don't know many good under shepherds that don't have a few scars that they've incurred from defending the sheep from predators.

But the Lord, the Chief Shepherd will defend them, so God's got it all under control, but the under shepherd just like the Chief Shepherd will be prepared to sacrifice for the flock, if need be give his life, sacrifice his reputation or whatever if it'll spare the flock. Because God knows the facts, and He is our vindication, and one day the truth will come out, but meanwhile soldier, stand your ground, defend the flock.

Vs 14-15

This word, "Know" that's repeated in these couple of vs is speaking more of than just a general intellectual awareness, but rather a personal intimate experience, we're talking here about relationship, it could be rendered, "I understand My sheep, and am understood by My own." and Again the emphasis is on a personal level, sheep may all have the same basic nature, but they'll have individual personalities and characteristics, one may be leery of high places, the other afraid of shadows, and the shepherd will tend to his sheep with their personal characteristics, and needs in mind.

Where He says here, "I lay down My life for the sheep" let's be careful not to divorce this statement from the context of the totality of the Word of God. Jesus died for the sins of the world, the bible is clear that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. J. B. would cry out, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" John 1:29 Isn't it interesting that the Shepherd is also portrayed as a lamb in the Word of God, what does that speak of? His humanity, He was fully human just like you and me, but the fact that He is the good Shepherd identifies His deity, that He is full God as well, so in His humanity He's the lamb of God, in His deity He's the good shepherd of the sheep. and He laid down His life for the world, we might say that sufficiency of His sacrifice covers the whole world, but the efficiency of His sacrifice is only applied to those who believe.

Vs 16

Now here's where you and I come in, the sheep He's been in direct reference to up to this point is the nation of Israel. These other sheep that aren't of that fold, are the gentiles, but what I want you to see here is that if your bible says, there'll be one "Fold" and one shepherd there at the end of this vs, it's a wrong translation. Etch that out and write, "flock" there, regardless of where you've come from, either in the flock of God or you're not, regardless of the fold that you may be in, there's only one flock. Paul the apostle said it like this, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Gal 3:28

Only one flock, and only one Shepherd, and that's another reason we don't have church membership, you can't join C.C.J. as a church body, because we believe you're either apart of the body of Christ or you're not. You're either in the flock, or you're not, and signing a piece of paper, or pledging a certain percentage doesn't qualify you in any sense of the word. You're His sheep if you respond to His word, and if you respond to His word, you're apart of His flock.

Vs17-18

The primary thing I want you to see in these vs is the fact that Jesus is making it real clear that He's not a victim of circumstance, but that He's in control of the circumstance via the authority that the Father has given to Him. 5x He refers to Himself in these 2 vs as laying down His life of His own accord, and taking it up of His own accord, and then He underscores that, or re-emphasizes that by saying in vs 18, "*No one takes it from Me.*" Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for your sin, and for mine, and only Jesus Christ (in all of human history) has ever claimed the authority to not only lay down His life of His own accord, but to take it back up again of His own accord. and Jesus didn't just claim the authority, He delivered the reality. and In the resurrection we see the Tri-unity of the Godhead, at times the scriptures refer to the Father raising Christ from the dead, In Romans we read, "*Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,*" Rom 6:4 But we also have credit given to the Holy Spirit when we read, "*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*" Rom 8:11

Of course here and in other places Jesus plainly said that He was the One who would raise Himself. Contradiction? No, Correlation, there's only one God, and in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, and on that 3rd day He was raised for our justification. That we might be justified in Him before the Father, He was delivered up for our transgressions, and raised for our justification.

Vs19-21

Referring to the events of Ch 9. Why the division? 2 reasons, #1 Jesus is the door, a door keeps some out, and secures others in, and #2 only His sheep hear His voice, so those who were His were responding positively, the others refused to see and hear it. The sheep are being separated from the goats, where do you stand, will you respond to His voice, or refuse to see in the face of indisputable evidence? Some people just refuse to admit, and submit to the evidence no matter how obvious it may be. Let Jesus Christ make you to lie down in green pastures today, let Him lead you beside the still waters, if you're hearing His voice don't *harden* your heart, *give* Him your heart.

(Jesus died on the cross for your sin, and forgiveness can be yours today, not going to say that from here on out life will be easy, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver him out of them all, who will deliver you now? Your sins are like scarlet and Jesus wants to wash you white like snow, why don't you let Him do that work, give Him your heart.)