

In their calloused treatment of the blind man and his parents, the Jewish religious authorities have exposed themselves as poor shepherds of God's people. In stark contrast, Jesus will reveal His identity as the Good Shepherd Who gives His life on behalf of His sheep.

1. The Parable of the Door, the Shepherd, and the Sheep (1-6)

- a. Thieves and Robbers – “He that entereth not by the door in the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (1).
  - i. A sheepfold in Jesus's day was an open-air courtyard, walled off by buildings and stone walls.
  - ii. This sheepfold is privately owned.
  - iii. Access to this sheepfold is by one door.
  - iv. Those who enter the sheepfold any other way are indicating that they have evil intent; they intend to steal that which belongs to the owner of the sheepfold.
- b. The Shepherd – “Be he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep...”
  - i. The Shepherd enters through the door (2).
    1. He has authority to enter the sheepfold.
    2. The porter opens the door to him because he is the rightful owner.
  - ii. The sheep recognize the Shepherd's voice (3a).
  - iii. The Shepherd calls his sheep by name (3b).
    1. Naming shows authority (Genesis 2:19-20).
    2. Naming shows intimacy (Genesis 3:20).
  - iv. The Shepherd leads his sheep (3c-4).
    1. The Shepherd leads the sheep because they belong to him (4).
    2. The way the Shepherd leads them out (ekbalō) is in direct contrast to the way the religious authorities expelled (ekbalō) the blind man from the synagogue.
    3. While the religious elites abandon the sheep, the Shepherd guides the sheep.
    4. The Shepherd leads and the sheep follow.
    5. The Shepherd leads the sheep because the sheep know him.
    6. The sheep avoid the stranger because they don't know him or his voice.
- c. The Misunderstanding – “This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them” (6)
  - i. Verses 1-5 are intentionally symbolic.
  - ii. The hearers did not understand, because they didn't understand the symbolism.

2. The Interpretation of the Parable (7-18)

- a. Jesus is the Door (7)
  - i. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 7 “I Am” statements in the Gospel of John.
  - ii. The purpose of the parable was to illustrate Who Jesus is and what His mission is in the world.
  - iii. As the Door of the Sheep, Jesus cares for the sheep and protects them.
- b. All who came before were thieves and robbers (8).
  - i. Jesus is the Mediator between God and man.
  - ii. All others who came before, including Moses and the prophets, were not mediators; to any who would make them mediators would discover they've been robbed of the life and access to God that only Jesus can give.
- c. All who enter through Jesus will be saved (9).
  - i. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (cf. 14:6).
  - ii. Jesus is the only way to God and the only access to God's provision (cf. Psalm 23).
- d. The thief causes death; the Door offers abundant life (10).
  - i. Those who try to climb up another way to obtain what isn't theirs, deal in death; their own, and the death of those they prey upon. Thieves steal, kill, and destroy.
  - ii. The Door provides access to life and abundant life to His sheep.
    1. The Door not only protects life, the Door creates life.
    2. Jesus gives life it's meaning.
- e. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep (11).
  - i. Jesus is both the Door and the Good Shepherd.
    1. Jesus is the access point to God and His fold.
    2. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus is the perfect Shepherd promised by Ezekiel (34:15-16; 22-23).
  - ii. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus will lay down His life on behalf of his sheep.

1. Jesus is not just willing to die to protect his sheep.
  2. Jesus is promising to lay down His life on the behalf of His sheep.
- f. The hireling represents religious imposters who do not care for the sheep (12-13).
    - i. Religious imposters have no authority or ownership of the sheep they try to lead.
    - ii. Religious imposters are primarily self-interested rather than service oriented; they serve their fellow man for the saving of their own souls; the sheep are means to achieve that end.
  - g. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus has a relationship with His sheep that is as real as His relationship with the Father (14-15).
    - i. Unlike the religious authorities who are completely detached from the sheep, the Good Shepherd has a personal connection with His sheep.
    - ii. The Shepherd loves His sheep, and the sheep respond in gratitude, faith, and obedience.
    - iii. This relationship between the Shepherd and His sheep is as inseparable as the relationship between God the Son and God the Father.
    - iv. In fact, Jesus was sent by the Father to make possible this relationship between the Shepherd and His sheep (cf. 3:16).
  - h. The Shepherd lays His life down for all wayward sheep to unite them all in one fold under One Shepherd (16).
    - i. The "other sheep...which are not of this fold" are Gentiles who are not in the Jewish fold.
    - ii. The Shepherd has come to seek and to save the lost, whether they be Jew or Gentile.
      1. Galatians 3:26-29 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
    - iii. The Shepherd's mission is worldwide (cf. 1:29; 3:16; 4:42).
      1. 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
      2. 4:42 "...Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."
  - i. The Father and Son are unified in their love and their mission (17-18).
    - i. The Father loves the Son because He lays down His life for the sheep (17).
      1. In part, the reason God loves the Son is rooted in His redemptive work which brings to fruition what God had planned before the foundation of the world, One Shepherd laying down His life for one dependent flock (Ezekiel 34).
      2. Jesus lays down His life to receive life; His death is the source of life, not only for Jews, but also for Gentiles.
    - ii. The Shepherd's life is not taken from Him; instead He has complete authority to lay it down and take it back again.
      1. This Shepherd will carry a cross, rather than a staff.
      2. This Shepherd will feed His sheep by means of His own body and blood, sacrificed on their behalf.
      3. The salvation promised in Ezekiel 34:22 could only be accomplished through the cross.
3. The Responses to the Parable (19-21)
    - a. Jesus's words resulted in a divided crowd; before Jesus unites, He divides (19; cf. Matthew 10:34).
    - b. Many of them rejected His claims (20).
      - i. They pronounced Him to be demon possessed.
      - ii. In questioning Him, they reveal that they are not part of His sheepfold and have no relationship with Him or His Father.
    - c. Others defend Him, but they do not confess Him as their Shepherd.

Conclusion:

1. Is the Lord your Shepherd (cf. Psalm 23)?
2. Have you entered a confident relationship with God through Jesus Christ, the Door?
3. If the Lord is your Shepherd, do you heed what He says in His word? Do you recognize His voice and follow Him obediently?
4. Are you inviting others who are not yet part of the Good Shepherd's fold?