

John 10:1-21- Youth Devotion for March 15, 2020

Last week we looked at the significance of Jesus healing a blind man, and we see that the religious leaders were furious about the healing. They didn't seem to care that something life changing has occurred, they are more put off by the fact that he was not healed in the right way on the right way from their perspectives. We see that the religious leaders were picking a fight with Jesus, and they rejected Him as Messiah. They don't seem to recognize that they too are in need of a Shepherd. Now He explains His credentials—why we can trust Him as our Savior.

We need to know before we go deeper, that the Pharisees were supposed to be the Shepherds of Israel. The problem is the leaders were not who they were supposed to be, in that they didn't shepherd as much as they abused those who needed care, love and direction. They were masters at knowing God's law and at telling people how to fulfill it. They lacked the fundamental characteristic of a Loving Shepherd.

In Ezekiel 34:1-10, we read that...

“The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So, they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock,⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.”

- 1) What was the problem that God identifies with the Shepherds of Israel?

- 2) What is a shepherd supposed to be like?
- 3) Why do the Sheep need a Shepherd?

In John chapter 10 Jesus says that ...

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

- 4) How does Jesus define himself?
- 5) How does he define the true role of a shepherd?
- 6) What is the most powerful element to you about what Jesus states about the role of a truly Good shepherd?

Using the picture of a flock of sheep, Jesus says to the religious leaders that He came in by the door, making Him the shepherd of the sheep. Others climb in some other way, but He came in legally and in an orderly manner.

He came in to fulfill Old Testament prophecy:

- He was born in Bethlehem in the line of David.
- He was born of a virgin.
- He was born under the Law in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) to fulfill the Law.

No one else could have fulfilled prophecy as He did because no one else had His credentials. The proofs of who He is are His teaching, His life and His miracles.

Not only that, but Jesus was welcomed by the gatekeeper, the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ did everything through His power.

Jesus also said, “and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” In John 9, the religious leaders rejected Jesus as Messiah. They didn’t hear His voice. They doubted the validity of his healing and cared very little for those who were receiving a new life in Jesus’ love. But millions have heard Jesus and, leaving all, follow Him.

Jesus also said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep”. This is one of the most wonderful metaphors used in Scripture. He is the Good Shepherd, yet He is also “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus as a lamb emphasizes His humanity. Jesus as the Good Shepherd emphasizes His deity. He alone is worthy and able to save. No other human being could have; He had to be God.

We are called to follow the Shepherd. “My sheep,” Jesus said, “hear My voice and follow Me”. Obedience is what brands a sheep’s ownership. If you want to know whether a person is saved or not, look at His relationship with the Savior. Are they following Him? Do they obey Him?

To His sheep, Jesus gives eternal life. They don’t earn it; He gives it. And it’s for forever. He gives to us eternal life. Not only at the end of our natural life. It’s an eternal life that begins when we know his voice, we trust his love, and follow his will by seeking truth in our good Shepherd. He is our True older Brother, our Savior, said He won’t lose any of us. If we were to get lost, He’s going out to find and bring back those that he knows, whom he loves and celebrates the joy of being reunited with the family he has called and assembled.