

Sheep in God's Flock-Why Does God Compare His People to Sheep?

Text: John 10:1-6

"Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don't know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus gave them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

- **Sheep Are "Clean" Animals.** This means that they are acceptable to God. Our acceptance comes only through the merits of Jesus Christ; Ephesians. 1:1-6) ³Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. ⁵He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One. The nature

of the creature determines its appetite, and it is the nature of the sheep to desire the pasture and not the "garbage dump." 2 Tim. 2:19, "Let everyone that named the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

- **Sheep Know Their Shepherd.** John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and are known of Mine." The sheep know the shepherd's voice and obey it, but they will not follow if they hear another. There are many "voices" calling today, and some sound religious. The child of God will not follow when he hears the voice of strangers (John 10:5) God's voice to us today is the Word of God, taught by the Spirit of God. It is encouraging to know that Christ knows each of His sheep by name.
- **Sheep Desperately Need A Shepherd.** Without the loving care of a shepherd, the sheep would be helpless. Unless we follow our Shepherd, we will go astray (1 Peter 2:25) ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls
- **Sheep Are Useful Animals** the Good Shepherd has every right to expect His sheep to be useful. In return for all He does for us, we should be useful to Him. We should be giving our all to the Lord (Rom. 12:1-2). Therefore, brothers and sisters, in

view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.^[a] ²Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- **Sheep Flock Together.** It is the nature of sheep to want to be with the flock; and it is the nature of the believer to want to be with one another. The New Testament knows nothing of isolated Christian living. We need to be identified with God's people. We need to be steadfast. We need to be in the Lord's house (Heb. 10:25). ²⁵not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching. The isolated sheep is always in danger.

The Shepherding Ministry of the Lord Jesus

The Bible presents the shepherding ministry of the Lord Jesus from three different perspectives.

1. As the **Good Shepherd**, He died for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17-18);

2. As the **Great Shepherd**, He lives for the sheep to perfect them (Heb. 13:20) ²⁰Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
3. and as the **Chief Shepherd**, He will return to gather His sheep and take them to Heaven (I Peter 5:1-4). I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: ²Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing^[a] out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you;^[b] not out of greed for money but eagerly; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

These three titles tell about His ministry to us in the past, present and future. Psalm. 22 describes the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep; Psalm. 23 describes the Great Shepherd's provision to us "all the days of our lives." Psalm. 24 is a victory Psalm that announce the arrival of the King, the Chief Shepherd, who will defeat His enemies and reward His people.

- A. **The Good Shepherd** (John 10; Psalm. 22) He willingly gave His life for the sheep.

B. **The Great Shepherd** (Heb. 13:20-21; Psalm. 23) One of Jesus' present-day ministries is one who perfects His people. He is ministering as **our great High Priest** (Heb. 4:14-16; ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

He is our Advocate (I John 2:1-2) My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one. ²He himself is the atoning sacrifice^[a] for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.

The phrase ***“make you perfect”*** in Heb. 13:21 is a translation of the Greek word *Katartidzo*, an unfamiliar word today, but one familiar to the Greek speaking people of the early church. To the soldier it meant *“to equip an army for battle, and to the sailors, “to outfit a ship for a voyage.”* The Great Shepherd wants us to be complete in Himself. He wants to equip us for battle. He uses the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) The purpose of this perfecting ministry is so that we can be better service to Him. He wants to work in us so He can work through us to accomplish His will on the earth. Psalm.23:6 impresses on us the fact that the Great Shepherd will take care of us. Jesus has promised to take our burdens and our cares. He is ***“My Shepherd***. We must stay close to Him and He will stay close to us. We must obey Him. he cares for us.

C. **The Chief Shepherd** (I Pet. 5:4; Psalm. 24) One day he will return and gather His sheep and take them to Heaven. (John 14:1-3;.I Thessalonians. 4:13-18)

While We Wait for the Chief Shepherd to Appear

While we are willing for Him to return, we have some responsibilities to fulfill.

- **First, We Must Keep Alert to The Voice of The Shepherd.** We discover His leading as we study the Bible, meditate, pray and obey what he reveals to us. We must follow Him one step at a time, one day at a time.
- **Second, We Must Stay Close to The Shepherd** no matter whether He leads us to the green pastures or to the dark valley. He is with us in both places. We must always have our eyes on the Savior (Heb. 12:1-2) **Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ²keeping our eyes on Jesus,^l the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

- **Third, If We Do stray, We Must Call for The Shepherd's Help** He will forgive if we will ask Him.
- **Finally, We Must Be Useful to The Shepherd.** Each member has a gift. We must use it. All can do something for God. We must find our talent and use it for the Lord.