

***“The Good Shepherd”***

September 14, 2014

Text: John 10:11-15

**At the end of last week’s text, Jesus said=>** *“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”* (10:10).

Now, as we begin today’s text, He will explain why He gives us abundant life; it’s because=> *“I am the good shepherd.”*

The Good Shepherd gives life to the people of His flock.

Today, as we explore this statement, I hope you won’t simply think of it as merely an interesting (even charming) literary figure;

But rather, that you will apply it to your own situation in life, & get everything out of it for yourself, that you can.

1<sup>st</sup>, pray to Jesus, even as we begin, “Lord, You are the Good Shepherd who has given me life—give it to me abundantly by helping me to know You more, love You more, trust You more, serve You more, & to become more like You.”

2<sup>nd</sup>, as we consider Jesus’ words about Himself & His sheep, put yourself in the picture as one of those sheep.

David said that the good shepherd leads His flock to green pastures and still waters, where they can eat to full satisfaction, then rest in the knowledge that they are completely safe, w/ their shepherd there beside them. Not one troubling thought causes them to worry.

That is what I wish for you, as you let your mind revel in the wonderful truth that, if you have a personal relationship w/ Jesus Christ, He is your good Shepherd who never neglects/ignores you, as one of His sheep.

So you really can “[cast] all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (I Pet 5:7).

Let yourself relax, release your anxiety to Him, & enjoy the inner peace of knowing you’re in His care, no matter what may happen to you next.

Let the joy of the Lord become your strength.

**In today’s text Jesus will use contrast/comparison to help us better understand His goodness as the good Shepherd...**

\* He will contrast Himself with a hired shepherd, showing us the difference.

\* He will compare His relationship w/ His flock to His relationship w/ God the Father, w/i the Trinity, showing us the similarity.

**\* A Contrast: The Hired Hand**

[John 10:11]=> *“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”*

**Jesus put strong emphasis on His being the good shepherd:**

**He lit. said=> *“I am the shepherd, the good one.”***

The word for “good” which He used was not *agathos* (“morally good”), but *kalos*—goodly/beautiful, intrinsically-pleasing, excellent by anyone’s standards, & therefore noble/worthy.

**Q: What makes Jesus such a good Shepherd?**

First, He cares for us, His sheep, & that is a big job, because, as

Isa 53 says=> *“All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way”* (53:6).

We’re no less dependent on Christ than sheep are on their shepherds.

W/o Him we would wander into the wasteland of sin, & end up w/o spiritual strength, & w/o spiritual life.

But Jesus, our Shepherd, loves us w/ such strong love that He never takes His heart away from us.

He protects us from this world’s spiritual wolves, supplies all our needs, & strengthens us when we are weak.

He guides us in the right way, brings us back when we wander, & carries us when we are too weak to make it on our own.

**Though all this is true, the point Jesus makes about Himself as the good shepherd, goes far beyond all that.**

He says He lays down His life for the sheep—those in His fold=>

People whom, according to what He said in Jn 6:37, the Father had given Him beforehand.

It would be one thing for a shepherd to die for his sheep, but something else for him to lay down his life for them.

David was prepared to die for his sheep.

He said in I Sam 17=> *“When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, / I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it*

*from his mouth” (17:34-35).*

When a lion/bear suddenly/unexpectedly appeared at the sheepfold, David risked his life attacking it, in order to defend his sheep, and save their lives.

He didn't lay down his life for them.

But he was prepared to have predators take his life from him, if that's what it took in order to protect his flock.

But Jesus, on the other hand, intentionally *“lays His life down for the sheep.”*

He came to earth for the specific purpose of being killed as a sacrifice for sin, that He might benefit the people God had given Him.

Jesus voluntarily sacrificed His soul for those He'd come to save.

The word *“life”* in our text, actually means *“soul.”*

Prob. even more accurately, it means *“Himself.”*

As Isaiah had prophesied of Messiah=> *“He poured out **Himself** to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many” (Isa 53:12).*

Jesus gave everything He had for the lives of His people—  
He gave Himself.

Jesus laid-down/poured-out Himself as a sacrifice *“for”* (on behalf of) His sheep, so that we wouldn't have to eternally suffer death for our own sins.

**An important question that is asked at this point is this=> For exactly whose sin did Jesus die?**

Ans: For the sins of His sheep—those whom the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world—those who are part of His flock.

This is referred to as “particular atonement.”

It means that on the cross Christ actually propitiated God’s anger against the sins of particular people—His elect.

His death didn’t simply create a reservoir of potential forgiveness, into which a person dips his cup by believing in Christ, & receives some of that forgiveness.

Christ actually atoned, by His death on the cross, for all the sins of particular people whom God had chosen in eternity past.

Then He declared “*It is finished!*” (Jn 19:30).

That meant the whole procedure by which a believer’s sin is atoned had then been completed (2000 years ago).

**Now we come to the contrast between Jesus & other religious leaders who are pictured here as “hired hands.”**

By that, Christ means they are not really committed to the sheep.

[Verse 12]=> “*He who is a **hired hand**, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches*

*them and scatters them.”*

**Jesus’ main point is that He Himself is fully committed to His own sheep and their welfare, unlike false religious “hired hands,” who are really committed only to themselves.**

Even today when spiritual wolves—false teachers—show up, those who are merely hired hands in ministry seek 1<sup>st</sup>/foremost just to avoid conflict, or getting eaten up themselves, by wolves.

They may compromise the doctrines they teach for the sake of peace, or simply flee the scene, leaving the souls of the sheep to fend for themselves in the hands of ruthless deceivers.

Their reason for serving as religious leaders in the first place was simply to make a living, by a lifestyle they found agreeable. They are not committed to the sheep, and because the sheep don’t belong to them, they have no intention of risking/sacrificing anything for them.

They are in ministry for what they themselves can get out of it.

Satan always intends for the unscriptural teachings of spiritual wolves to deceive/confuse those who hear them.

“Hired hands” are not the same as “wolves,” but they make no effort to protect the flock from wolves.

Spiritual wolves raid churches & deceive many people.

They can't destroy Jesus' true sheep, because Christ has said of them verse 5=> "*A stranger **they** [the sheep] simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*"

But none of the sheep—true/otherwise—can count on someone who is merely a “hired hand” to protect them spiritually from the wolves.

He says, “These aren't my sheep anyway. Why should I risk my life/career for them?”

With that, he abandons the sheep, to fend for themselves.

Religious mercenaries like this are in ministry for money, or for whatever personal advantages they can get from it.

But not for the love of souls, not for love of the truth, and not for love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd or his sheep.

So their first instinct whenever they see danger, is to save themselves, at the expense of the sheep.

[Verse 13]=> "*He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.*"

**Jesus said these hirelings “see” (lit. watch for) wolves & when they discover one, they start making plans to leave/flee.**

They know what wolves do=> snatch sheep, scatter flocks, and kill shepherds, if necessary to get to the sheep.

Some of the sheep get “snatched,” as they fall prey to the deceptions of false teachers or false religious leaders.

Suddenly/abruptly, the victims of these spiritual thieves/robbers are drawn to side with them, in opposition against every true shepherd.

For the flock as a whole, the response of being attacked by spiritual wolves like that, is to scatter, destroying its unity, as the sheep take sides against one another, or simply leave.

For the hired hand, it's not worth the hassle, when shepherding sheep gets too difficult or too dangerous for him personally. But until then, however, he'll do his job, & collect his check.

**When ministers who are merely hired hands in the ministry allow this to happen to their flocks, they demonstrate how unlike Jesus (the Good Shepherd) they are (they demonstrate the contrast).**

Jesus protects His sheep, & keeps them together, so they won't scatter, lose their way, & suffer spiritual harm.

He says in verse 28 of this chapter=> *"I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and **no one** will snatch them out of My hand."*

**A religious hired hand flees from wolf-attacks because he is not really committed to the welfare of Christ's sheep.** That's the point=> The sheep belong to Jesus, not to him. His commitment is to himself, not to Christ, & not to Christ's sheep.

**By contrast, every one of Jesus' sheep belongs to Christ Himself.**

He prizes them, placing high value on them, because they are His sheep.

Jesus considers the people of His flock to be His wealth & His inheritance, "*the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*" (Eph 1:18).

Christ has nothing He values more than He does His people, which is why He gave up His own life for them.

And He actually views the church as His body=>

*"the fullness of Him who fills all in all"* (Eph 1:23).

In light of what we know about ourselves, isn't that amazing?

In the presence of God, Jesus says w/ joy, "Those are My sheep."

If an angel were to step forward & ask, "Are you sure You really want to claim these ragtag sheep? Look at that one's dirty wool, & that one w/ a lip split w/ gossip."

"None of these sheep would even qualify to be offered as a sacrifice on God's altar, because of all their imperfections/unworthiness."

But Christ isn't ashamed of even the least of these in His flock.

There isn't much moral beauty about them, but He says of each one, "That one is Mine too, because I bought it with My blood, fighting the dragon of hell for its soul."

We may not seem beautiful to anyone else, but we are beautiful to our Shepherd, and dear to His heart. He owns us, & is not just a hired-hand who is paid to put up w/ us.

If we belong to Jesus Christ, & He feels that way about us, we should behave like it, and give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him.

As we joyfully claim that we belong to Him, we are also acknowledging that we don't belong to ourselves. He has bought us w/ the price of His own blood, so we should live our lives to the glory of our beloved Good Shepherd.

**\* A Comparison: The Trinity**

**Jesus has described the *contrast* between Himself as the Good Shepherd—& a pseudo-shepherd who is really just a hired hand.**

Now He'll *compare* His love-relationship w/ His own sheep to the love between Himself/His-heavenly-Father w/i the Trinity.

The close/committed intensity of His love-relationship w/ us, mirrors that which He shares w/ His Father. He describes that intimate love, in both cases, as His “knowing” them.

**[Verse 14]=> “I am the good shepherd, and I *know* My own and My own *know* Me,”**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Jesus describes His close/intimate union w/ His sheep.**

He knows all about us—our needs/weaknesses, our

trials/temptations, our joys/sorrows: Everything.

But beyond His knowledge about us, Jesus also knows us

personally, w/ a knowledge that is full of love/approval.

We see the word “know” used this way throughout the OT.

E.g. Gen 4:1=> “*Now the man [Adam] **had relations** with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain.*”

The KJV correctly translate this “**knew** Eve his wife”

because that is actually the lit. wording.

“To know” refers to loving intimacy 3 more times in Gen 1.

But also in Gen 19:8 / 24:16 / I Sam 1:19 / Amos 3:2.

When Jesus says we know Him, He is referring to close/intimate knowledge, characterized by faith/trust, confidence/love.

It is an experiential knowledge of loving fellowship.

This is a relationship that totally baffles unbelievers.

But it will someday become extremely meaningful to them

when Jesus tells them=> “*I **never knew** you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*” (Mt 7:23).

**Now we see the comparison between Jesus’ love-relationship w/ us, & His relationship w/ God the Father.**

[Verses 14b-15] (Jesus)=> “*I **know** My own and My own **know** Me, / even as the Father **knows** Me and I **know** the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*”

Christ's love for us, & our love for Him will forever be patterned after His love-relationship w/ the Father.

In Jn 10:30, He will describe it like this=> *"I and my Father are one."*

In Jn 14:11, like this=> *"I am in the Father and the Father is in Me."*

Beyond patterning, however, a believers' relationship w/ Jesus involves his actually becoming caught up in the love which exists mutually among the three members of the Trinity.

In Jn 14, Christ will tell us=> *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him"* (14:21).

**This kind of love involves an absolute commitment of one individual, to the blessing/welfare of another, even when he must sacrifice his own wellbeing for that cause.**

So the ultimate demonstration of Jesus' love, both for us and for His Heavenly Father occurred as He laid-down/sacrificed His own life for our salvation, in obedience to His Father's command.

That is the meaning behind Jesus' words=> *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends"* (Jn 15:13).

That is also the meaning behind Jesus' words in our own

text=> *"I **know** My own and My own **know** Me, / even as the Father **knows** Me and I **know** the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."*

This then is at the very core of Jesus' being our Good Shepherd.

His death was the ultimate demonstration of His love.

He rescued the souls of His sheep at the cost of His own soul.

And seeing Him do so, the Father loved Him for it.

**Think for a moment of all the blessings that come to you because your shepherd is the Good Shepherd who loves you, and not just a hired-hand.**

1<sup>st</sup>, He cares for you, because you belong to Him.

In fact, He never stops caring for you.

Fire fighters here in Sedona have to be on duty at the fire station for a shift of 48 hours straight.

They must be present/ready, so that whenever the alarm goes off, they can rush to the emergency.

They sleep at the station, eat there, & live their whole lives there, during each of their shifts for 48 hours.

Then they go home, & are off duty.

But our Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, never goes off duty.

He sees to the constant care of His people, day/night.

He says to us what He said of His garden in Isa 27=>

*“I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will damage it, I guard it night and day” (Isa 27:3).*

If you are on our prayer chain, you know that our dear sister, Nancy Simley, had a heart-attack on Tuesday. Jim was here at the church, in my discipleship group, at the time, & Nancy had a dentist appointment. Normally, on Tuesdays, Nancy is alone at home. If she had been, this past Tuesday, she'd have died. But she was at a dentist's office, where her symptoms were immediately recognized, & where they had a medical apparatus to shock her heart & keep it beating until fire dept personnel arrived. Nancy's Good Shepherd never goes off duty.

He cares deeply about her, so He care faithfully for her—24/7.

2<sup>nd</sup>, your Good Shepherd always provides for you.

*"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"* (Psa 23:1). Among sheep, there is not a single little woolly head that knows anything about how to select a good pasture. In a dry season there may be no plant-life in a field that is ordinarily green/lush w/ grass.

There may be tall green blades of grass down by the river, but sheep know nothing about capillary action of water, or about water leaching into brook-side soil, enabling grass to grow there.

The shepherd must know everything for them.

He must provide for them what they cannot provide  
for themselves.

In the same way, Jesus Christ, our God and our Good  
Shepherd,

supplies all our needs “*according to His riches in  
glory in Christ Jesus*” (Phil 4:19).

He does that now, & He’ll do it throughout eternity.

He meets the needs of both our body/soul, so that all  
things work together for good (Rom 8:28).

Ironically, we are often like sheep who think we can do a  
better job of finding good pasture than our Shepherd.

So as David said, “*He makes me lie down in green  
pasture*” (Psa 23:2), because we, in our  
stubborn foolishness, won’t do it voluntarily.

One thing that sheep can do for themselves, is to lie down;

But they won’t, if anything makes them feel anxious.

And we are the same, so our Shepherd must at times  
make us lie down and impose restful downtime  
upon us, so we will learn to simply trust in His  
care/provision.

When we willingly choose to set aside our anxiety, &  
rest in the providential care of our Shepherd,  
we find peace that passes our understanding, &  
we give Him pleasure by our trusting Him.

If on the other hand, we choose to worry, our worry accomplishes nothing, but to keep us awake at night.

3<sup>rd</sup>, your Shepherd attentively protects you.

In Palestine, where David once attended his flock, there were wolves who prowled the area, looking for sheep whose shepherds were not paying close attention to them.

The flocks of hired hands were a favorite food source.

Being our Good Shepherd, Jesus is always out in front of His flock, watching for Satan/his-minions, prowling about like lions, seeking someone to devour

(I Pet 5:8).

No such lion can attack Christ's flock w/o encountering the rod/staff of our great Defender—Jesus.

Not that we are totally immune from such attacks, just as

Peter found out when Christ warned him, "*Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; / but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail*"

(Lk 22:31-32).

Jesus intercedes for us as well, at the right hand of God

(Rom 8:34), has provided us w/ the full armor of

God, & has topped it all off by telling us=> "*With all prayer & petition pray at all times in the Spirit*"

(Eph 6:18).

I.e., pray when you need My help, & My prayer, for  
you.

In the end, He who has numbered the very hairs on your  
head (Lk 12:7) will be able to say to the Father=>

*“Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one”*  
(Jn 18:9).

### **What about you? Is your shepherd the Good Shepherd?**

As I was talking this week w/ some Christian friends about  
Nancy Simley’s heart attack, we started wondering what on  
earth people do who don’t have the Lord.

Jesus is the best Shepherd you could have, & He wants to be your  
Shepherd.

But you must invite Him to examine your heart as a shepherd  
examines his sheep, showing you your sin, so you can  
confess it to Him, repent of it, & seek His forgiveness of it.

Surrender your heart to Him, & you will find in Him to be the  
Good Shepherd.

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September 14, 2014

Text: John 10:11-15

**In today’s text Jesus will use contrast and comparison to help us better understand His goodness as the good Shepherd...**

Jn 10:10; I Pet 5:7

**\* A Contrast: The Hired Hand**

**[John 10:11]**

1. What makes Jesus such a good Shepherd? He [12 cares] for us, His sheep.  
Isa 53:6

2. Though this is true, the point Jesus makes about Himself as the good shepherd goes far beyond all that: He lays down His [10 life] for the sheep.

Jn 6:37; I Sam 17:34-35

3. Jesus voluntarily sacrificed His [10 soul] for those He had come to save.

Isa 53:12; Jn 19:30

4. Now we come to the contrast between Jesus and other religious leaders who are “hired hands”; by that Christ means they are not really [20 committed] to the sheep.

**[Verse 12]**

Jn 10:5

5. Religious mercenaries like this are in ministry for money or for whatever [18 personal] advantages they can get from it.

**[Verse 13]**

6. Some of the sheep get “snatched” as they fall prey to the deceptions of [12 false] teachers.

Jn 10:28

7. A religious “hired hand” flees from wolf attacks because he is not really committed to the welfare of Christ’s sheep; his commitment is to [16 himself].

Eph 1:18, 23

8. We may not seem beautiful to anyone else, but we are beautiful to our Shepherd and [10 dear] to His heart.

**\* A Comparison: The Trinity**

**[Verse 14]**

9. Jesus knows all about us; beyond His knowledge about us, Jesus also knows us personally with a knowledge that is full of [10 love] and approval.

Gen 4:1; 19:8; 24:16; I Sam 1:19; Amos 3:2; Mt 7:23

**[Verses 14b-15]**

10. Christ's love for us and our love for Him will forever be patterned after His love relationship with the [14 Father].

Jn 10:30; 14:11; 14:21; 15:13

**Think for a moment of all the blessings that come to you because your shepherd is the Good Shepherd, not just a hired-hand...**

- \*11. First, He cares for you because you [14 belong] to Him.

Isa 27:3

- \*12. Second, your Good Shepherd always [18 provides] for you.

Psa 23:1; Phil 4:19; Rom 8:28; Psa 23:2

- \*13. Third, your Shepherd attentively [18 protects] you.

I Pet 5:8; Lk 22:31-32; Rom 8:34; Eph 6:18; Jn 18:9

14. Jesus is the best Shepherd you could have, and He [12 wants] to be your Shepherd.