

John 19:1-30

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[0 : 00] I'd like to look back with you at the second reading in John chapter 10. And as any surprise, I'm sure, to anyone that takes serious, I am the good shepherd, given what we've said and what we've read together and what we've sung.

So, John chapter 10, verse 11. Let's read again, 11 to 14, part of Jesus' address here, where Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

But the higher man, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and I'm known by my own.

Jesus calls himself here the good shepherd.

[1 : 18] He uses the great I am phrase that I mentioned earlier in the Old Testament, where Jehovah reveals himself to Moses. That's the great I am.

He says, who shall I say, send me to you, the people of Israel? Don't say it. Say, I am sent you. He's eternal.

There's no mistake here. No accident that Jesus uses the word I am. And these people, he was addressing new fine when he was talking about. They knew he was claiming.

We see, in fact, in chapter 10, just after we stopped reading, at verse 30, just after that, Jesus, after the Jews picked up stones to stone him, he said, I have shown you many good works from the Father.

From which of them are you going to stone me? They said, it's not for good works, but for blasphemy, because you being a man, make yourself God. Jesus does make himself God. Jesus is God.

[2 : 17] That's why he's entitled to do that. He does claim. I think I said this morning, that no one mistake here would say, Jesus doesn't claim to be God. He does. He is God. He's equal with the Father.

Equal with the Holy Spirit. In that mysterious, triune God, the Trinity, that we cannot fully understand, or even fractionally understand, as human beings.

But that's who he is. And we see here, he says he's the good shepherd. That's the likeness he uses here. He does speak of himself in other ways. There's a great I am phrases throughout John.

There's others even in this chapter. He says, I am the door. He says he's the resurrection of life. The way he treats the life. He uses all these things about himself.

He says, I am the bread of life. But here it's, I am the good shepherd. And he gives us a picture. He gives us a picture that people then can understand.

[3 : 19] And people in a community like this, dare I say it, well, a city church can understand probably better than maybe a city church with their city ways, and removed from countryside truths.

We're here. Maybe not so many people nowadays keep sheep, but everybody knows what sheep are alive, don't they? I mean, we're told in the scriptures that Christians are like sheep.

There's a flock of blood. Now, it's not a very noble or wonderful animal to be likened to, is it? It's not the kind of heroic animal. You ask people in school, kids in school, what animal they would like to be. Not many are going to say sheep, are they, unless they're really into crofting.

They're going to say a lion, or a tiger, or whatever it is. Some sort of ferocious, tough creature, maybe. Not a helpless, hopeless, short-sighted, rather stupid creature, let's face it.

I apologize to any crofters here who don't think of their sheep that way. That's one of the great things of being a shepherd, I think. I walked for a very short period of time, owned a few sheep.

[4 : 23] It was a great mistake. I didn't know these sheep. I couldn't, I had ten sheep and lambs. It was too many for the lamb that I had. Anyway, one was a part Swaledale, okay?

So I could tell that one because it had some specks on it. And one was a bit loopy, and I called it the jumper because it jumped fences all the time. It was really, they were cargo ships, they weren't that sheep.

That was the problem. But I didn't know them. Now I've got friends that have 500 sheep. And there's Mr. McSween, we called him Mr. McSween anyway, the math teacher for many years in the Nicholas.

I was at Ian McSween, who's got, as some people said, a million sheep. And he's got, they're all over the cliché, maybe everywhere else, I think. Now he knows, I'm sure he knows every sheep. And I know people that know all the sheep.

I know a croft for him back, he'd say he knows everyone. He knows what they're like, he knows their temperament, he knows what they'll do. He has names for them and so on. I don't understand that, but that's the way he is.

[5 : 24] That's the way Jesus is with his sheep. He knows of everyone. And he says here, he gives us a picture of the Middle Eastern shepherd who leads the sheep. He says, we know each other.

That's what he says. He knows each other. And he starts off, this is just by the way of preamble, by saying, with a hired hand, he doesn't know the sheep. He doesn't own the sheep. He doesn't care about the sheep. He wants his wages.

And his wages are not worth getting mauled by a wolf. But the shepherd, it's his living. It's his family's living. And he loves his sheep as well. He's going to protect them.

He's going to take them on like David did. David said to Saul, I can go up against that Philistine, Goliath. I can go up against him. Because when the lion came, I killed him. When the bear came, I killed him.

Me, a mere stripling of a boy, I killed these enemies of the flock. And that's what Jesus does to his enemies, spiritually. And he protects his flock.

[6 : 23] So talking about the good shepherd, we have this confrontation here between Jesus and those who are the ruling class amongst the Jews.

We have Pharisees and we have Sadducees. Very different people, but united in their dislike and distaste for Jesus and his message. We have those who are Pharisees and seek to live a good life and all of that thing and make many rules and lay many rules upon the common people and do very well out of it.

And we have the Sadducees who are not spiritual at all in any way, who deny the resurrection, deny many of the doctrines that would have been normal for Jews to believe.

And these people are not wanting to hear what Jesus has to say. Well, certainly the rabbinical Jews, those who are studying the Old Testament, the Torah, those who are steeped in those laws, they do not want to hear what Jesus has to say.

Because that is not their understanding of what religion is all about. But it is what religion is truly about. And Jesus tells us that here.

[7 : 37] So we have examples of Jesus healing people. We have examples of Jesus doing things in the presence of these people. And these people are getting angry about it and confronting him.

And asking him to defend himself and to say something about himself. And here he is. He's saying, look, I'm a good shepherd. That's who I am.

I'm a good shepherd. I look after my sheep. And he's warned us. First of all, if he's talking to us, if we're believers, if we're sheep, he's talking to us. He's warning us.

He's warning them. And he's warning us about dangers to the flock of God. Okay, that's what he's first told me. He's warning about dangers. And there's different kinds of dangers.

There's dangers posed by different kinds of people. There's the thief and the robber and the stranger. The one that here the sheep flees from. There's the one who's outside the flock and tries to steal in.

[8 : 35] This is what the Pharisees are doing. They're trying to get to people. Jesus calls them hypocrites. He says you're hypocrites. You make all sorts of rules for other people, yet you don't keep them yourselves.

Let's not be hypocritical. Let's not be pharisaical. Let's not make rules for people and not keep them ourselves. Let's not make rules for people.

There are thieves and robbers who try to come into the church of God and teach it for their own benefit.

For their own aggrandizement. For their own profit. There's those who will lead churches because they want to be big. They want to be big shots. And they want to get a lot of money from the people. See some of these televangelists and so on. We see the health and wealth people. They have all sorts of doctrines that are not the doctrines of scripture. But they are thieves and robbers.

[9 : 33] They're no friends of the gospel. And we know they're not because we see no godliness in their lives. By their fruits. You'll know them. Then there's the danger of, we hear, the hired man.

The person that tends just for his own good. He's just doing things for his own good. So that he will get some benefit from it. He'll feed the flock. That's fine. That's easy enough.

I can put feed out for the flock. That's fine. But as the danger comes. I don't want to know that danger. I don't have to run that risk. That's the hireling.

Now this is the opposite of what Jesus is. Jesus is the one who defends his flock. Jesus is the one who has defended and will continue to defend his flock. He will warn of danger.

If he does warn of danger, he warns us in his word. It's there all the time for us. We see so many lessons here. And if we take these lessons to heart, we learn these lessons, we'll be better equipped to stand against the evil one.

[10 : 31] To stand against anyone who comes with false doctrine, with false teaching. How can we combat false teaching? By knowing the truth. That's the only way. How do we discern the spirits?

Because the spirits that are of God speak the truth. They're going to come and speak some new revelation. Dr. Joseph Smith in the book of Moroni, which began in the Book of Mormon.

It's not someone who comes with any new doctrine and says, this is the truth. The church has had it wrong for 2,000 years. I've got it right. I've got a corner on it. I know. And if you send me money, I'll share it with you.

Or something like that. No. The truth is here. It's in between these covers. That's the truth of God. That's the only truth we have written for us.

Anything else, unless it's this Bible, unless it's based on this, is not truth. If it's against this, it's certainly not truth.

[11 : 30] If it questions this, it's not truth. So there are some people that come in and they gain your trust, and then they're not there when you're in trouble.

That's what Jesus is talking about with the hired man. We see this in Ezekiel chapter 34. I'll just turn it up. No need to turn it up yourself.

Ezekiel 34, and he says there, prophecy against the shepherds of Israel. This is the prophet Ezekiel. A thousand years or so, maybe before Jesus, the words of the Lord came to me, son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.

Prophecy and say to them, even to the shepherds, thus says the Lord God, ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves, should not shepherds feed the sheep? Bah, bah, bah.

Well, the words of God is the Bible. Sorry. That's all I'm going to read of that part right now. You can read it for yourselves if you want. But that's talking to those who are not faithful shepherds. That's talking to anybody who stands up here and pretends some of the gospel that is not this gospel.

[12 : 35] That feeds himself and not the flock. That is there for his own self-aggrandizement. That is there to feel a big shot. That is there to get money. That is there for any reason apart from the glory of God.

And the proclamation of his name. And the extension of his kingdom. All these things combine, don't they? And we mustn't fail to preach the full counsel of God.

We mustn't just take, well, I like this page, but I don't like this stuff. I don't like Paul, so I'm not going to preach for any of the Pauline epistles because I just don't like Paul.

Well, I happen to like Paul. And whether I do or not doesn't matter because it's scripture. And we need to pay attention to it. And we need to read it. And we need to know it. And it says also, if you're a hireling, you're not giving the warning.

You're not giving the warning to the sheep. You're just running away and leaving them on their own. Just like the watchman who failed to give the warning. We're told about the little test, aren't we?

That if the watchman gives a sound, a cry, and the people ignore him, that's not his fault.

[13 : 45] So if you're a faithful preacher and he's preaching the gospel of Christ and he's saying, you need to repent of your sins. What did we say this morning? First died, first sin, and rose from

the dead.

If he can't say that to you, then they're not proclaiming the message of the gospel. They're not warning you. They're not saying, flee from the wrath of the con.

Because we're all. We've got nothing, no entitlement except to that wrath unless we're in Christ. It's the only way. There's no other way.

There's no way of being good enough. There's no way of being right enough. There's no way of being holy enough or anything else except in Christ Jesus. So there's these dangers.

There's these dangers that are not protected against. And then there's the danger of the outside force. The wolf who actually comes in to destroy the flock. Now the wolf might be a wolf in sheep's clothing, of course. We hear that, don't we?

[14 : 46] It's a commonly known phrase. A wolf in sheep's clothing is someone who pretends to be a sheep, but is really a wolf. And it's not a funny kind of story like Red Riding Hood with the wolf in the bed and that sort of thing.

It's deadly serious because we're talking about spiritual truths here and we're talking about spiritual enemies. Our enemy is Satan. The accuser of the brothers and sisters.

The deceiver. The enemy of God. Lucifer, the fallen angel. All these things are true of him. He hates the Lord. He hates his people.

He doesn't know who will be elected. He does not know who will make it to heaven. And he will try his best to make sure that people do not get there. And he will take away people from the flock.

And that's happened. That happens in flocks. If people are taken out. Taken away. They're in the fringes. Like we've seen the wildebeest herd. When the lions are prowling around. It's always the ones on the fringes.

[15 : 48] The ones who are not staying close. The ones who are not getting the benefit of the mass of the herd. Of that inertia.

That strength. That forward movement. The ones who are on the edge. They're the ones who are falling off. So we need to be part of the fellowship. We need to be part of the fellowship. To have the benefit of our protective shepherd.

Jesus Christ. So Satan. Satan is our enemy. He doesn't care for the flock. In fact he hates the flock. He wants to destroy the flock. And any wolf is of Satan.

Whether he wears sheep's clothing or not. So false prophets. You have to watch out for them. How do we know they're false? If they're not speaking the word of truth. If they're coming up with some new interpretation.

That is not in accordance with this word. So what else does a good shepherd do? Apart from warning of danger. Protecting against danger.

[16 : 50] He also provides for and guards the entrance to the flock. He says, I am the door. Jesus says here, I am the door. Well I think. I read this anyway. I believe it's true.

That there were times in these days. That these shepherds. Remember they're not shepherds in the western isles. They're shepherds in Palestine. And they would sometimes like lie across the door of the cave.

And the mouth of the cave. Or the fence enclosure where the sheep were. And they were like the door. In other words, you can't get to these sheep unless you come through me. That was the kind of way they spoke.

And they might have a cudgel. And they might have a staff. Or a rod. They had both those things. And they were there to defend the sheep. To protect them. To keep them in.

And to keep attackers out. They did not just close the padlock and go home. And put their feet up for the night. Remember when Jesus was born.

[17 : 46] There were shepherds tending to the flocks at night. It wasn't an easy job. It wasn't a cool job. It was a dirty, filthy, mucky job. A hard job. A cool job.

See places like Palestine. Boiling hot to the day. Freezing cold at night. They were there on the hillsides. Watching over the sheep. Night time was a danger. That's when the wolves would come. That's when the enemies would come.

Under cover of darkness. And that's still the way. Under cover of darkness. That's where the danger is. Where there's darkness. There's danger. Where there's light. That's where the truth is. Well.

We see. Here. He's talking about himself. Being the door. Being the door. Being the protection. Being the actual door. As he's lying across there. And nobody's going to get in.

Without getting to him. And you can't get through Jesus. That's a trouble. You can't beat him. No one can. No one has ever been able to. Many have tried. So.

[18:44] So it's not just a figurative thing. Say. Not just saying. In some airy fairy way. I am the door. He actually was. Saying. I am the door. I really am. I'm the door. He's stopping the sheep.

Going off. For their own good. And he's. For their own good. He's stopping them going off. I should say. He's also blocking the enemy. From coming in. He's the protection. He's the buffer.

And he says. I know my sheep. Like I said earlier. Some of these shepherds. They really do know their sheep. And they know their voices. We had a. There's a guy. In back. In Baddisfil.

Who. The sheep. And I used to marvel. He used to walk up the road. And sheep would follow him. Because most of the people. They tend to drive the sheep. With dogs and so on. They drive the sheep forward. And they're behind.

Maybe on a quad. Or maybe walking. Or maybe in a car. Or maybe in a pick up. Or whatever.

Usually with dogs. This guy. He did have a dog. But right. Yeah. But he would walk up front. And maybe with a wee bit of food.

[19:41] Or something like that. But they would follow him. His sheep. But they would follow him. Well that's the kind of picture we have. In the New Testament shepherds. They would go out ahead. They would fall. They would be. They didn't have a cow.

With a bell on. They had the shepherd. The shepherd would be. And they would follow. Because they knew the shepherd's voice. Well that's the picture Jesus is giving. He leads. He leads from the front. The uh.

i think it is of the infantry corps in the united states army is follow me and the idea there is the officer doesn't quite to the top ranks but say lieutenants and captains and so on majors they're supposed to lead from the front not from the back not like field marshal haig until in the first old war not way back at the back but leave from the front follow me my name follow me i'll lead you into battle you've got a hope and confidence in that kind of person he's putting his life on the line he's not sending people out to be killed he's saying i'm with you i'm in front in front of you if anything's going to be hit first it's going to be me i know that that's that's the motto i see it but i also heard it from a preacher who actually was in the capital he wasn't in the infantry anyways he was in the tanker but he was an american west point officer so he knew that was what it was about and that is what it's about jesus leads from the front jesus knows his people he knows his flock and they know him they know his voice they understand his voice and they won't leave from him because they know his voice they trust him when he says no he means trust he means being intimate with and jesus says if you abide in my word then you're my disciples indeed that's what he that's a relationship he has with his sheep with his flock and he says also he says you if you you will know the truth and what will the truth do what do you think the truth does the truth will set you free free from your sin free from your iniquity free from your transgression free from the power of satan which is binding us all until we know him until we're members of that flock so he's he's providing for and he's guarding the entrance to the flock he's saying he's the door and he's he's that blockade he's that protection he's that buffer and he and and that's what he does and then he keeps us in his well in his fold and if you only enter through him then you know you're entering the right way there's no other way to come to christ except through christ you can't come in some sort of back door and pretend to be what it is it's like he says of the man at the wedding farm at the wedding feast that had no wedding garment he said i don't know you but i'm here you know i must be all right i don't know you you have to leave you haven't been invited now jesus doesn't say that to anyone who comes to him he says that to those who pretend to come and come in another way so don't be worried about that that's not anything to put you off because if you haven't come to christ yet his promise to us is he will never turn away anyone who comes to him never he doesn't say you have to have a perfect motive he doesn't need to say you have to be thinking the right way he doesn't say your theology has to be right he doesn't say anything like that he doesn't lay down conditions he says if you come to me if you seek me you will find me that's a promise it's not a maybe it's not that's what i would like to happen jesus doesn't have to say that's what i would like he doesn't have aspirations he doesn't have hopes in that sense he knows because he is god he's almighty he's all powerful people talk about spurgeon's i think didn't he i love spurgeon so how do we protect god how do we protect defend the word of god he said i would no sooner defend the word of god i would defend a lion i'd let the lion roar i'd let the word of god speak for itself i'd let jesus speak for himself he doesn't need my endorsement that's not what's going to convert convert or convince anyone it's himself it's his truth we're just

obliged to try to present the truth as best we can however feebly and trust in the holy spirit to make that meaningful to hearts that don't yet know him and make that wonderful to those who already do know him and maybe are perhaps really going on in the faith or maybe you're having a pretty lean time about themselves because god knows each heart here doesn't he he knows each situation he knows where we are spiritually he knows if we're nowhere spiritually he knows if we're struggling nobody up here or even i would say your elders your own minister they don't know exactly what's in your heart they may have an idea from conversations with you but they can't know everything and we can't hide things can't we we're good at hiding things and not being honest with ourselves and with others so jesus christ is the one we cannot hide from him we cannot argue with him we cannot gainsay him but what was he talking about he's talking about his protection he's keeping us his his his guarding the wolf can't get in because he would have to come in through christ and he can't come in through christ because christ will allow it christ will allow him to be coming in he'd have to bring another gospel some other gospel like paul said you're believing another gospel which is no gospel at all because there is only really one gospel there's only one truth there's only one good news the good news of the gospel of jesus christ the gospel doesn't change it doesn't have to change because it's the 21st century doesn't have to change because we're a different society doesn't change for any reason at all because it's eternal jesus christ the same yesterday today and forever the reeditor the hebrew says don't be caring about restringing their verse doctrines and paul said that's what i saw the other gospel paul said in in galatians didn't he i'm harwell you're so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of christ into another gospel which is not another don't make any mistake it's not another but there are some that trouble you and those people who will pervert the gospel of christ so don't be troubled by such people just don't pay any attention to their their lives whether wherever you're here whether it's in the god channel whether it's in a book whether it's on tv whether it's something in the street whether somebody comes to your door don't believe it if it's not about the christ of god if it's some other strange and weird doctrine if it's something that sounds to be true some somebody doesn't say you need jesus christ and him alone for salvation if you say you need jesus and spot something not true you see you need something else out on jesus not true jesus is the shepherd the good shepherd and he is the he's the door and thirdly then he gives his life for the sheep in some cases well and of course in the case of jesus he did give his life for the sheep because he gave his wife in cavalry but he gives life also to the sheep he leads them to pasture to new pasture what's pastured to a sheep it's just ambrosia isn't it it's just what they need they love that pasture and that's neat well we need jesus christ as a sheep he needs that pasture we need to have him we need to have be in him ourselves because he's the only one that can give us that life the life that we need the life everlasting and this is we told he gives abundant life he says the thief doesn't come except to steal and kill and destroy but i'm come for different reasons altogether the opposite reason so they may have life and that they may have it more abundant more fully more

completely he's the giver of life ultimately he's the giver of all of our lives in the sense that he's the creator but much more so because that's for all mankind but much more so for his own people he gives eternal life and don't let you anyone think they're not amongst his people or not destined to be amongst his people because that's not the scripture the scripture is whosoever will believe who's ever will will be saved we'll believe not maybe you're good enough none of that stuff we can't believe that kind of thing and i don't but we don't hear it from the pulpit but we hear it from other places and we hear it in our head and we hear the devil saying it sometimes well so if we hear from the pulpit you want to get out of that church whatever church it is because that's not the gospel this is the gospel that jesus christ saves sinners who calls it of whom i am chief because with the law entered the offense might abound where sin abounded what grace grace did much more abound much more so so jesus christ as the good shepherd did the ultimate the ultimate sacrifice of himself for the sheep he substitutes his life for their life and he says himself i'm the good shepherd the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep he said it very clearly there he said he does not say i've come to establish a new religion he said i've come to give my life for the sheep even as the father knows me so i know him so i lay down my life for the sheep and in romans paul says while we were yet great strength in due time christ died for whom the godly the ungodly christ died for the ungodly christ died while we were ungodly christ died for us as ungodly people no not those who loved him but those who would come to love him for scarcity for a righteous man will one die yet maybe for a good man someone even dare to die but god commands his love towards us and that while we were still sinners that is still following after sin so in since and deep in sin still desiring sin because

we're always sinners in the sense that we do sin but devoted to sin while we're still devoted to sin christ died for us so what do you think with the good shepherd are you under his care now is he looking out for you is he the one in whom you're trusting or is there someone else or is there no one is it yourself do you care lots of questions and i don't know the answers in your mind necessarily but we all have to answer for ourselves that's the fact of it isn't it the good shepherd he warns us he warned of a danger he provides and guards and he gives us life for the sheep if you're christian you know these things are true you know these things are true for you but we're not post-modernists here are we we don't say it's my truth but it's not truly truth no he can't say things like that it's the truth of god and that is absolute truth this is an age doesn't believe in truth much does it not absolute truth it's true today but not tomorrow true in a sense but not really that's not what god says god speaks eternally and he said this is the truth the truth the truth and the truth will truly set you free from the bonds of sin so if you're a christian are you walking in him if not repent and go back to him he'll always receive

[32 : 27] us back and i speak to myself as well as to anybody here that needs that we need to return to him in ways in every way in our lives but if you're not a christian here this evening there he is he's there in the gospel he's offering himself in the gospel he's freely available there's nothing to stop you nothing to stop you but yourself you're the only one that can stop you no i can't stop you if i would no christian here could stop you if they would if they wouldn't you can stop yourself by not doing it they're not listening but not paying attention they're not desiring god did not desire in jesus christ you need to bring yourself under the shepherd's care if you're not there already because he's the only way there's only one plan there's only one way there's no other way there's no other savior jesus christ is the only one who can possibly save us he's the good shepherd he says it of himself he doesn't boast he doesn't boast he doesn't say anything mostly he says only what's true but he says he says it's only he says john eight except you believe that i am he that i am he who am i saying i am you'll die in your sins he's not trying to frighten anyone he's just telling them that's what jesus does because he is true he's saying repent come to me trust in me be one of my sheep don't worry about being a lion or tiger or anything else just be one of my sheep you'll be glad to be a sheep in the sense of spiritual sheep these sheep are relatively defenseless they do the wrong thing often they're in danger they go the wrong way but we believe we have a shepherd not like any earthly shepherd that can possibly miss count or miss out or not find a sheep that's gone missing we got a shepherd who never loses a sheep not a true sheep not one is really a sheep he never loses one let's be thankful to be if we are in christ to be of the flock of god and there will be one flock and one fold in the end and if we're not let's desire that beyond anything else that we can have beyond whatever you can have in the world whatever your desires of your heart are this is more important this is greater because this speaks into eternity whatever you don't do in this life will only last for your lifetime or it may be you may be a legacy for others to follow and it might be for several generations but sooner or later people forget they forget alex from christian they forget everybody else here but jesus doesn't forget us and he doesn't leave us on our own and he offers himself hear him jesus i just passed back to some heard those words from heaven as everybody else they heard this is my beloved son in whom i'm well pleased hear him let's hear him today and from that on forever amen let's pray