

# My Sheep

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[ 0 : 00 ] But if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the Gospel according to John and chapter 10.

John chapter 10 and if we read again at verse 28, verse 27, John chapter 10 at verse 27, where Jesus says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My sheep hear my voice and I know them.

You know with the lambing season just about to begin, it's always a great time of year. We see all these lambs running and jumping in the fields and it's a reminder to us that spring has finally arrived after a long cold, dark winter.

Of course for the shepherds and also the shepherdesses in our communities, the lambing season, it's a very busy time of year. But you know the context and the culture in which we live in, it certainly helps us to understand and to relate to the shepherd theme of scripture.

[ 1 : 23 ] Because you know from Genesis to Revelation, there's this shepherd theme of scripture which seeks to remind us that the Lord is our shepherd.

Right at the beginning of the Bible in the book of Genesis, we see that Adam's righteous son Abel, he was a keeper of sheep. And from there we encounter many other shepherds in the Bible.

All the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they were all shepherds. The children of Israel, they were shepherds. Moses was a shepherd.

Even David was a shepherd. He was the first shepherd to confess as we sang in Psalm 23. He confessed the Lord is my shepherd. And you know it's interesting that David's confession in Psalm 23, it's a confession that actually led many of the prophets to make the same confession that the Lord is the shepherd of his people.

Because Isaiah said that the Lord will feed his sheep like a shepherd. Ezekiel said that the Lord will rescue and restore and redeem his sheep like a shepherd.

[ 2 : 32 ] And Zechariah prophesied that there will come a shepherd who will be smitten for his sheep. And of course the identity of that shepherd, he is revealed to us here in the Persian of Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus declares himself to be the good shepherd. Peter calls him the chief shepherd. Paul refers to Jesus as the great shepherd of the sheep.

And as you go through scripture, there's this shepherd theme of scripture. And it concludes right at the book of Revelation where John, the apostle John tells us, he says that he's been given a vision of the lamb in the midst of the throne who has been slain for his sheep.

And that lamb we're told is the shepherd of the sheep. And he's a shepherd who will guide his people, his people who have been washed and made white in the blood of the lamb and he will guide them, we're told, to springs of living water.

And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. My friend, the shepherd theme of scripture, it's a wonderful reminder to us of who Jesus really is.

[ 3 : 49 ] Because he is the good shepherd. He's the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. But you know, what I want us to see this morning is that as we consider these verses, I want us to see that our good shepherd, he preaches to us very powerfully and yet very personally.

Because when Jesus preached at the Feast of Dedication, I want to say that he preached a three point sermon. He preached a three point sermon. And I'd like to think that his headings were, My sacrifice, My sheep and My salvation.

And they are our headings this morning. My sacrifice, My sheep and My salvation. That's what Jesus is preaching to us. It's a powerful and personal sermon where he says, he speaks about My

sacrifice, My sheep and My salvation.

So first of all, My sacrifice, My sacrifice. Look at verse 22. We're told that at that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem.

It was winter and Jesus was walking in the temple in the Colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and sent to him. How long will you keep us in suspense if you are the Christ? [ 5 : 13 ] Tell us plainly. In these verses, John sets the scene for this powerful and personal proclamation of Jesus. He tells us that it's winter and that the Feast of Dedication is taking place.

Now, as we said before, John draws our attention to all these Jewish Feasts, not only to give us context to the chapter, but also to give us a countdown to the cross.

Because by this time, by the Feast of Dedication, we're told that it's now winter. It's December. And the next Feast in Jerusalem will be in March, April time.

And it will be the Feast of Passover. In fact, for us at the moment, March going into April, the Jewish Feast of Passover, it actually began last night on the 27th of March.

And it will continue until next Sunday, the 4th of April, which is also Easter Sunday. And you'll remember that it was at the Feast of Passover that Jesus, he practiced what he preached here.

[ 6 : 19 ] He practiced what he preached, that he is the good shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep. But what we see here at this point in John's Gospel, in John 10, is that Jesus, he only has three months to live.

The countdown to the cross is on. And there's only three months to go. Jesus is going to give his life as a ransom for many in three months time.

He only has three months until he is captured, convicted and crucified. Jesus is only three months away from being delivered over to death.

But the thing is, even at this point, Jesus knew all this. Jesus knew what was ahead of him. Jesus knew that his hour was coming. Jesus knew that he only had three months to live.

Jesus knew that he would be the good shepherd who would give his life for the sheep. Jesus knew that he would be slain and slaughtered and smitten for his sheep.

[ 7 : 23 ] Jesus knew that he would be the sinless sacrifice for his sheep. Jesus knew all this. He knew what was ahead of him. Now, I don't know about you, but when John reminds me about the countdown to the cross, I often think, how would I feel if I knew that I only had three months to live?

How would I feel if I knew that my days were numbered? Of course, in reality, all our days are numbered and our lives are already on countdown.

Because like the day of our birth, the day of our death, it is a day that has been appointed by the Lord. But if you knew that you only had three months to live, would you live your life differently to the way you're living it now?

You're my Christian friend. I ask myself this, and you have to ask yourself this as well. Would you listen to the Lord more diligently? Would you look to the Lord more earnestly?

Would you love the Lord more deeply? Would you lean upon the Lord more sincerely? Would you live for the Lord more faithfully if you knew that you only had three months to live?

[ 8 : 42 ] You're my unconverted friend. Would you come to Jesus? Would you call upon this shepherd? Would you commit your life to this shepherd? Would you confess Jesus as your shepherd this morning if you knew that you only had three months to live?

I'm sure that we would all live differently and speak differently and act differently and deal with people differently and even deal with Jesus differently if we knew that we only had three months to live.

And yet our Bibles, our Bibles, they exhort us and they encourage us to live our lives as if every day is our last. We're to live our lives ready for eternity today.

Or to live our lives ready for eternity today because we're not promised tomorrow. And the Bible says to us so often, we don't know what a day or an hour will bring in our lives.

The Bible reminds us that life is uncertain. Death is sure. Sin is the cause but Christ is the cure. My friend, would you deal with Jesus differently today if you knew that you only had three months to live?

[ 9 : 56 ] Whereas John tells us, he tells us it was winter. It's December. Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Chanukah.

And what's interesting is that Chanukah is celebrated at the same time as Christmas. And there are even some similarities with this Jewish festival and Christmas because Chanukah begins on the

25th of Kislev and Christmas as you know it begins on the 25th of December.

And during the eight day Feast of Chanukah, the Jews, they gather together for a big meal and they exchange gifts and they play games much like Christmas. And so you can see why people often think that Chanukah is just like a Jewish Christmas.

But the reality is that Chanukah started long before Christmas and long before Jesus was born.

Chanukah celebrates an event which took place 164 years before Christ was born.

It was 164 BC. But at that time the Jews thought that the Lord had abandoned them because there had been no prophecy in Israel since the time of Malachi which was 250 years earlier than that which was Malachi was around 400 BC.

[ 11 : 25 ] And there would actually be no prophecy in Israel from 400 BC until the birth of Jesus which was zero AD you could say. And so from Malachi to Matthew, from the Old Testament to the beginning of the New Testament there was what we call an inter-testamental period of about 400 years.

And it was during that period where there was no prophecy in Israel. That period you could say God was silent. And because of this the Jews thought that the Lord had abandoned them.

Because of God's silence the Jews thought that the Lord had just left them especially because they were under the power and the oppression of a Syrian king called Antiochus the fourth.

And King Antiochus he had desecrated the temple in Jerusalem and he had commanded all the Jews that they were not to read their book of the law. They weren't allowed to read the Torah and they weren't allowed to worship the Lord.

They were only allowed to bow down to these Syrian gods, these false gods. But in December of 164 BC there was a small band of pious Jews called the Maccabees.

[ 12 : 46 ] And they led this revolt in Jerusalem against the Syrian army. And the Maccabees they succeeded in driving the Syrian army out of Jerusalem and away from their land.

And after their victory the first thing the Maccabees did was cleanse the temple and rededicate the temple to the Lord. But you know when it came to relighting the menorah which was the golden lamp stand in the temple.

When it came to lighting the menorah the Maccabees only found this small jar of oil and there was only enough in it to last one day.

But what's remarkable is that that one small jar of oil it actually lasted eight days until a new supply of oil could be brought.

And it reminded the Jews that even though the Lord was silent, even though there was no prophecy in Israel, the Lord was still with them. The Lord was still with his people.

[ 13 : 50 ] And since then the Jews have celebrated the Lord's continued dedication and devotion to his people with this eight day festival. They celebrate the Feast of Dedication or Chanukah which is the Hebrew word for dedication.

They celebrate the Lord's dedication and devotion to them at this time of year. And you know that's what Jesus sought to remind the crowds in the temple.

Jesus sought to remind the crowds that the religious leaders are they have a deficient leadership and they're not devoted to the flock of God.

Jesus reminded the shepherds that these godless shepherds that he reminded the people that these godless shepherds in Israel who are like thieves and robbers and only seek to kill and steal and destroy.

Jesus said to them that they are not devoted to you. They're not dedicated to you. But Jesus says to the people, I am the good shepherd and I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

[ 15 : 00 ] And Jesus says to them as the good shepherd, I'm going to demonstrate my devotion and my dedication to my sheep by laying down my life for them.

I'm going to demonstrate my dedication and devotion to my sheep by laying down my life for them. And Jesus was powerfully and even personally reminding these crowds and us this morning by saying my sacrifice is for my sheep.

My sacrifice on the cross is for my sheep. My sacrifice is for my sheep.

And that's what I want us to see secondly, where Jesus preaches my sheep. You know when Jesus our good shepherd, when he was at the feast of dedication, he powerfully and personally preached to the people there and to us, he said I am dedicated and devoted to my sheep.

My sheep, that's what we see secondly. So my sacrifice and my sheep. Jesus says in verse 27, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

[16:18] I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. You know this declaration of devotion and dedication towards his sheep.

It was made by Jesus when the crowds asked Jesus a question in verse 24. They asked how long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. And you know it's an interesting question not only because Jesus has repeatedly revealed his identity to the crowds.

Jesus as you know, he has told them who he is. He has told them with all these I am sayings. He has said I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world.

I am the door. And he has said I am the good shepherd. Jesus has repeatedly revealed his identity to the crowds and yet they're still asking here, Jesus, who are you?

[17:17] Who are you? But their question is also interesting because when the crowds asked how long will you keep us in suspense?

They were literally asking how long are you going to let our souls bother us? How long are you going to let our souls bother us?

And it's a fascinating question, isn't it? How long are you going to let our souls bother us? But the question wasn't enough to ask because the crowds, they actually demanded an answer.

They said if you are the Christ, tell us plainly. If you're the Christ, give us confidence. Give us assurance. Don't let our souls bother us any longer.

Tell us who you are. If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. And you know, my unconverted friend, I wonder if you are like this crowd this morning.

[18:19] I wonder if you are asking Jesus, don't let my soul bother me any longer. You know, my friend, I wonder, does your soul bother you at all?

Does your soul bother you? Do you have a care and a concern for your eternal well-being? Do you have a care and a concern for your soul? Do you ever think about your soul?

Does your soul bother you? Does your soul bother you? You know, I hope and pray that your soul does bother you and that it bothers you enough to make sure that this good shepherd says about you, that you are my sheep.

You are my sheep. Don't let our souls bother us any longer. You know, Jesus, he declared to the crowds there, he said to them, you are not my sheep because you refuse to believe.

But Jesus also declared, he declared his devotion and his dedication towards his sheep. You look at verse 25, he says, I told you and you do not believe.

[19:24] The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. You know, I believe that there are some of the most beautiful words in the Bible.

I love these verses in verses 27 and 28. Or Jesus, the good shepherd, he declares his devotion and his dedication towards his sheep.

Jesus says, they're my sheep. They're my sheep. And they're my sheep, he says, because my sheep are purchased.

My sheep are purchased. You know, as every shepherd knows, you can only call a sheep my sheep when you have paid the price for them yourself.

[20:23] And that's what Jesus says. He says they are my sheep. My sheep are purchased. My sheep have been bought by me. My sheep belong to me. My sheep are owned by me.

My sheep have been redeemed by me. My friend, that's how good the good shepherd is. The good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep in exchange for the sheep.

It was Calvary's great transaction that on the cross, Jesus, our shepherd, he bore our grapes and he carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him. And by his stripes, we are healed.

On the cross, Jesus, our shepherd, he was a sinless substitute and sacrifice. On the cross, Jesus, our shepherd, he bore the penalty and punishment of our sin.

[ 21 : 24 ] On the cross, Jesus, our shepherd, obediently died our death. On the cross, my friend, Jesus, our shepherd, he went to the auction mart of Calvary in order to bid for us and to buy us back from the slave market of sin.

On the cross, Jesus, our shepherd, he redeemed us and how he redeemed us, my friend, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by his own precious, precious blood.

On the cross, Jesus, our good shepherd, laid down his life for the sheep. And here is Jesus and he's saying to you this morning, he's saying that he's dedicated to you, he's devoted to you because he says, my sheep are purchased.

My sheep are purchased. But you know, he also says, he also says, my sheep are protected. My sheep are protected and they're protected because they recognise and they respond to the voice of the shepherd.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. You know, we touched on this last Lord's day when we spoke about the call of the shepherd and we said that the call of the shepherd is powerful and it's personal and that we hear the call of the shepherd through the preaching of the gospel and also through the providence of God in our lives.

[ 23 : 04 ] The good shepherd, he calls us to recognise and respond to his voice through the preaching and through providence because every time we hear the gospel, every time we listen to a sermon, every time we read the Bible, even what we're doing this morning, we need to know that the shepherd is speaking to us.

The shepherd is calling us to recognise and to respond to his voice. And also when we're going through providences in our lives, when we're going through the realities of sin, sickness, suffering and sorrow, the shepherd is calling us.

He's calling us to recognise and respond to his voice. He's calling us to come to him and trust in him and follow him.

But as Jesus says, it's only my sheep who have been redeemed that will recognise and respond to my voice. It's only those who have been purchased by the shepherd that are protected by the shepherd because they recognise and they respond to the voice of the shepherd.

And you know, that's always the test of a shepherd. Their sheep will recognise and respond to his voice.

[ 24 : 26 ] Of course, the purpose of sheep recognising and responding to the voice of the shepherd is for their own protection. Because it's by recognising and responding to the voice of the good shepherd that his sheep are called to feed upon the word of God.

They're called away from the dangers of the world and they're called to live within the boundaries of the Bible. They're called away from sin and all these temptations by the shepherd.

But you know, more than that, it's by the voice of the good shepherd that his sheep know that he's there to guide them and to lead them and to provide for them.

And Jesus says, they're my sheep. They're my sheep. My sheep are purchased. My sheep are protected. Jesus says, my sheep are privileged.

My sheep are privileged. I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My friend, the sheep of the good shepherd are privileged.

[ 25 : 37 ] You are privileged this morning if you are a sheep of the good shepherd. And you're privileged not only because you have received the promise of eternal life and that you will never perish, but you're privileged because nothing or no one is able to separate you from the good shepherd.

Nothing and no one is able to separate you from him. It's not what Paul reminds us in Romans 8. He says, who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Who shall separate us from our good shepherd? Shall tribulation, he says? No. Distress? No. Institution? No.

Famine? No. Nakedness? No. Peril? No. Sword? No. No. In all these things he says we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, says Paul, I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth nor any other creature is able to separate us from our good shepherd.

Nothing is able to separate us from him, from us. Nothing is able to separate us or sever us from our good shepherd. Nothing or no one can pull us or pluck us out of the hand of our good shepherd.

[ 27 : 01 ] And you know my friend, you might discredit yourself this morning with doubt. You might have questions and quibbles about your salvation.

You might feel unworthy and even unwelcome and unwanted as a sheep of the good shepherd. But you know when you recognize and when you respond to the voice of this shepherd, Jesus is saying to you, you are my sheep.

You are my sheep and I will never ever ever let you go. You are my sheep. And therefore my friend, you must come to this shepherd.

You must call upon this shepherd. You must confess about this shepherd with David and Psalm 23 and say, the Lord, He is my shepherd.

The Lord, He is my shepherd. Because the truth is my friend, you have never had a shepherd love you like this shepherd.

[ 28 : 04 ] Because this shepherd, he loved you and he gave himself for you. This shepherd laid down his life for the sheep.

And he says about you this morning, you are my sheep. You are my sheep. You know it's a powerful and a personal word of devotion and dedication to the flock.

Where Jesus speaks about, He's preaching to us this morning and He's speaking about His sacrifice and His sheep. And lastly we see Him preaching about His salvation.

You know when Jesus preached at the Feast of Dedication, He preached this three point sermon. He preached my sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation.

And that's what we see lastly, my salvation. Look at verse 31. We read that the Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

[ 29 : 06 ] Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of them are you going to stone Me? The Jews answered Him, it is not for a good work that we're going to stone you, but for blasphemy.

Because you being a man, make yourself God. Obviously the religious leaders, they weren't happy with Jesus's three point sermon about His dedication and devotion to the people of God.

Because the first thing they do is pick up stones and they're ready to stone Jesus to death. But Jesus, He immediately questions their actions and He asks them to do so.

He questions their actions and He asks for justification for stoning Him. He asks them why they're going to do what they want to do because He has done so many good works.

And as you know Jesus, He has cleansed lepers, He has made the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute speak and the dead live. And you know if the religious leaders were going to rate Jesus on how good a rabbi He was, Jesus was in a class of His own.

[ 30 : 21 ] The religious leaders though, they were still set to stone Jesus. And they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy. And according to the Law of Moses in Leviticus 24, blasphemy was punishable by being stoned to death.

But in response to their desired actions, Jesus says something, He says something very, very interesting. He says in verse 34, is it not written in your law?

I said you are gods. If He called them gods to whom the word of God came and scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, you are blaspheming?

Because I said I am the Son of God. Now, Jesus here, He quotes from Psalm 82, which was a well-known Psalm of Asaph.

And it was a Psalm that pleaded for God to judge the religious leaders in Israel for their deficient leadership. In many ways you could say that Psalm 82 was a Psalm that condemned the religious leaders in Israel.

[ 31 : 35 ] But what's fascinating about that Psalm is that the religious leaders in Israel, they were often referred to as gods with a little G. Or sometimes the religious leaders were even called sons of God again with a little G. In Psalm 82 verse 1, we read that God, big G, He stands in the congregation of the mighty and He judges among the gods, little G.

And then in Psalm 86 verse 2, verse 6, Psalm 82 verse 6, which Jesus actually quotes here, it reads, God said, big G, God said to the religious leaders, you are gods, little G.

I know what Jesus was doing here is that He's actually highlighting the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. He's highlighting the hypocrisy because they want to stone Jesus to death for referring to himself as the Son of God.

Even though they themselves as religious leaders, they were known throughout Israel as gods with a little G. And they were known as sons of God with a little G. Therefore, it would be absolute hypocrisy to start hurling stones at Jesus for calling himself the Son of God.

And because this was quoted in scripture, the religious leaders knew that they couldn't deny that what Jesus said was true. Because as Jesus said, scripture cannot be broken.

[ 33 : 09 ] Scripture cannot be broken. But Jesus, He doesn't leave it there because He says that His evidence is not only in word, it's also in deed.

He says in verse 37, if I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

Jesus says, don't just judge me on what I've said. Judge me on what I've done. Don't just judge me on what I've said. Judge me on what I've done because the evidence is convincing.

You've heard the messages. You've seen the miracles. You've seen the signs and you've heard the sayings. And Jesus is saying to them, my sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation is sure and steadfast.

Jesus is bringing His sermon to a conclusion about this personal and powerful proclamation that He's giving about the dedication and devotion to His sheep.

[ 34 : 26 ] And He's saying to these religious leaders, my sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation is sure and steadfast. My sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation is sure and steadfast.

And you know, it was my good friend, J.C. Weil, he said in relation to this passage. And with this I'll conclude this morning.

He said, we're so familiar with the miracles of Jesus that we're apt to forget the mighty lesson they teach. For they teach that He who worked these miracles must be nothing less than very God. They're stamped with the mark of divine authority. For to reject Jesus as God is the height of madness and folly.

Of course, hundreds and every age He says they have tried to pour contempt on Christ's miracles and to deny that they ever happened, but they labor in vain.

[ 35 : 27 ] Let us thank God, says Weil. Let us thank God that as we turn from this passage, Christianity has such abundant evidence that it's from God.

Whether we appeal to the evidence of the Bible or to the lives of Christians or to prophecy or to miracles or to history, we get one and the same answer.

All say with one voice, Jesus is the Son of God and believers have life in His name. All say with one voice, Jesus is the Son of God and believers have life through His name.

My friend Jesus the Good Shepherd, He has preached a sermon to you this morning. It's a powerful and a personal sermon. Jesus has given you three points.

He has talked about my sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation and He has told you and reminded you that my sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation are sure and steadfast.

[ 36 : 35 ] My sacrifice, my sheep and my salvation are sure and steadfast. Therefore Jesus is saying to you this morning, consider my sacrifice.

Come to me as my sheep, commit to my salvation and confess me as your shepherd. Confess me as your shepherd.

Come may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray. All that we would all be able to say, the Lord is my shepherd and to confess with those from a past generation and even a present generation that the Lord remains our shepherd and He will be our shepherd every day of our lives until at last we see that shepherd face to face and that He will guide us and lead us to these living waters and wipe away every tear from our eyes.

O our Father in heaven, that Thou wouldst enable us to see Jesus and to hear His voice and to respond in faith and obedience this morning, that there would be no more lost sheep in this community, that they would all hear the voice and come, come to this shepherd for time and for eternity.

Bless us then we pray, keep us we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. Well we are going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing the words of Psalm 119.

[ 38 : 17 ] Psalm 119 and we are singing the last four verses of that Psalm. Psalm 119 is a Psalm that reminds us about the importance of God's word and how God's word directs us and guides us through life just like the good shepherd.

But Psalm 119 it concludes with a wonderful verse that reminds us about our shepherd. It says, I like a lost sheep went astray, thy servant seek and find, for thy commands I suffered not to slip out of my mind.

And you know my friend if you are a lost sheep this morning, you need to come to this shepherd and you need to confess this shepherd. You need to confess that you are a lost sheep in need of this good shepherd.

So we are singing Psalm 119 from verse 172 down to the end of the Psalm to God's praise. Three going on ride aleigh Sustainions King and favorite weakness He calls all life, all madness, our perfect righteousness.

Let the eyes of man be held to me, I present thy my joys, I long for life, salvation, Lord, and in thy glory joys.

[ 40 : 27 ] O let my soul ev'n dish out, it praises us to thee, and let thy judgment gracious be helpful unto me.

I lie, gallows, she brings us free, thy serenity can find, O let no man, thy suffer not, disdain and all my mind.