

The Good Shepherd

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[0 : 0 0] Let's come back to God's word for a short time, back to the chapter we had, John chapter 10. John 10, I'm looking really at verses 11 down to verse 18 of the chapter, but taking for our text as you see here, John 10 and verse 11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Again, looking really at the whole chapter together. Now I know for a fact, only because we did it ourselves when three years ago, I can't believe three years ago just now, almost I was with you on placement and we looked even then at some of the I am sayings of Jesus.

Now I know since that your minister has also done some of that and some supply also done some of the I am sayings. Well today we're spending a short time in verse 11, as we heard in the children's address. That reminder that this morning we were before the shepherd of our souls, the one who says that he is the good shepherd. Just a very, very quick recap just before we begin. I'm sure we've all heard this before, but in case some of us haven't and perhaps those online haven't, here we have of course Jesus. He gives two the I am sayings here, as a whole seven or eight I am saying is arguably seven in the Gospel of John. And here we have two of them in this chapter. I am the door, then our text today, I am the good shepherd. Now we know that when Jesus uses his phrase, I am, it is descriptive. He is describing of course who he is. He's using imagery that they understood that I am the vine, I am the bread, and here we see I am the good shepherd. The Colch is also much more going on as we're behind the scenes. Jesus is saying much more than simply a description of who he is. In the simple, simple phrase, Jesus is telling those who are listening, telling the Pharisees, but also telling the disciples and telling us that when he speaks, he is speaking with authority. When he says who he is, he is saying it not just as a man, he's saying it also of course as God. And we know that the exact wording we have here, I am, it takes us right back as a word to the start. Back to Moses, the burning bush. God of course speaks to Moses through the symbol of the burning bush and God tells Moses to go and to rescue his people. And when Moses of course says, who do I say, sent me, how do I begin to describe who you are to your people? What name do I give you? We see God of course telling Moses, tell him that I am sent you. The title God gives Moses, I am that I am. Fully self-sufficient, requiring nothing, requiring nobody else. God who is fully God, God who is enough himself, requires nothing and no one. Perfect, wholly complete. Beyond real human description, I am, that I am. And here we see Jesus using the exact same wording. It's clear enough for us, to those in his day who were a radio testament in perhaps the Greek Septuagint version, the wording of Jesus uses here, when he says I am, the exact same wording that was used by burning bush. So those who's talking to know exactly what he's saying. They see the comparisons straight away. The God who saved the people of Israel, the God who is enough himself, complete and perfect. It was him they were talking to that very moment. I am the good shepherd. So already we see two, I am saying here we see in verse seven and verse eight and verse nine that he is the door. He calls himself the door that is only through him that we have salvation.

Only through entering through him that we can know God, that we can be saved by God. The first short time let's focus on verse 11. What does it mean to know Jesus as our good shepherd? What does it mean for us, those here today who know him as Christians, what encouragement is that for us and those perhaps here who as of yet don't know Jesus as a good shepherd? What could it look like for you? What could it mean for you? Look at it just very briefly in three headings. First of all looking at verses 11, roughly down to verse 13, we see the good shepherd is the one who sacrifices for his sheep. Then verses 14 to the first half of verse 15, the good shepherd is the one who knows his sheep. Then finally the second half, roughly verse 15, down to verse 16, verse 17, the good shepherd gathers his sheep. So sacrifices, knows and gathers. First of all looking, please look at verse 11 down to verse 13, the good shepherd sacrifices for his sheep. We begin the section of our

text with that glorious reminder we have in verse 11. The reminder underpins all that we are going to say today that we are worshiping and hearing about the one who is truly the good shepherd. So in the previous verses in verse 10 we see him describing the thief, the thief comes to do what? To kill, to steal, to destroy. Now immediately he is talking about Pharisees but we also know more broadly Jesus here is describing the thief himself, Satan. All those who oppose the gospel but also Satan himself, the one who comes to steal, kill and destroy the work of the gospel. That's his goal, that's his desire. And Jesus says in contrast to the thief in verse 10, we find him in verse 11, the thief has come to steal, steal the joy of believers, to steal the chances, to steal our assurance. And Jesus says he's come to give, to give life, to give hope. The thief comes to kill, of course our Savior has come to give life through eternal life. The thief comes to destroy, Jesus comes of course to build up his beloved people. We'll see that more as we go on through these verses of the contrast we have here in our good shepherd. Now of course in the children's talk I've already risked myself being cast out of the church, out of the community but the truth is for all my joking I have no idea about sheep, just not a clue at all. But I do know, that's not the case of course for many here and for some faces here in particular [7:17] I know you know sheep very well. I've had to ask as I'll just now to list the top three qualities of a good shepherd or even a good crofter but the same difference for us in our culture. What's the top three qualities of a good crofter? Even the top quality, the number one quality of a good shepherd, a good crofter, we'd have a whole pile of answers I'm sure all very well thought out answers but I wonder if we'd have the answer we have in verse 11. What is the top quality, what's the one thing here mentioned, the first thing mentioned about the perfect shepherd in verse 11? It's he lays down his life for his sheep.

I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Any good crofter, any good shepherd cares for his sheep, loves his sheep and he goes to great lengths to look after his sheep. A few months ago there was a lough close by to my house and there was an island in a lough. I'd walk one morning and of course there was a sheep stuck on the island and I'd say to him, I'd have to go and phone whoever and let them know the sheep's here. I went home and of course forgot all about it and literally the day I had my lunch I thought oh the sheep, sheep, sheep, sheep. So I phoned, no answer.

I'll go again and see if it's still there. I'll go again and I won't say the name because you'll know him. There he was, an older, much older man in his waders, wading out to the island up to his chest and water to rescue this poor sheep that was quite happy to be on the island but it was stuck there so there he was, a man who is well beyond the age and stage of his duty to do that and he was actually, it was a choppy day actually and he was in danger of a water, at least going over his waders and getting soaked and getting a cold at best and if not having worse. A man who cares for that one silly sheep, who cared so much for a sheep he was willing to go and get himself soaking wet to go and rescue it from that wee island. Perhaps a silly illustration but a true illustration but also an illustration reminds us if that's how far we're willing to go for our animals, for the animals that we love and how much more glorious, much more beautiful is the imagery we have here, but a mind we have here, the good shepherd is the one who lays down his life for his sheep.

See the wording here is important, it doesn't say the good shepherd is willing to lay his life down, that itself would be glorious, that itself would be amazing, no but it says the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. We covered this before, I know we have, but the reality is we have to have this reminder that from the very start Christ came for our reason, Jesus came with a purpose, with a goal, with a mission we could say we respect.

Before creation itself, in the court of eternity, the plan was there, the sun would come, the pharaoh would send the sun, the sun would come, be born in his own creation, to live a life amongst us, to feel, to hear, to suffer, to die, to rise again. Every day of his life on earth, one step closer to his end, Jesus knowing fine well what his end was going to be from the very start, came in, born as a wee baby, lived in every way but sins we'll see this evening, every way like us, our perfect shepherd, willing to do those thirty odd years, for three odd years, to live his life, all to lay it down at the end for his sheep, one of the words of Romans, Romans 5 verses 6 to 8, for whilst we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly, for one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one might even dare to die, but God shows his love for us, and at whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

[11 : 40] How quickly even the most caring shepherd, the most caring crofter can lose interest in his sheep, how quickly they can stop caring about that one sheep that keeps causing them problems again and again and again. That's not the case for our good shepherd we find in this verse, he came to find his flock, knowing for a fact we would rebel against him, reject him, hate him, despise him, perhaps spend much of our lives, not most of our lives for some of us, hating him, fighting him, yet he still came, he still came to be rejected by his people, to be hated by his people. Dear brothers and sisters, that's the state the shepherd found you in, when he first as a were saw you, you and I were out there as a were in the moor, way off somewhere, stuck in bogs, tangled on fences, all the other nonsense that sheep end up getting themselves and fanning themselves in, we were out there beyond hope and a total mess, with no hope for ourselves, no help from anywhere else, that's where the good shepherd saw you, that's where he set his heart to save you, that's where he found you, that's where he rescued you from, he didn't come to save you because you were trying your hardest and he came to save you because there was nothing you could do for yourself, you know that, but that reminder he didn't save you because of any of your qualities, he didn't save you because of anything else in you, he saved you because no one else could, in that place of rebellion, in that place of darkness, in that place of death, it's where he finds every single one of his people, his forevows, people, of course he laid his life down, Christian vishid revived us this morning, as a reminder of the breadth and of the full reality of the love of our good shepherd for us as his people, he didn't come to find a healthy flock, he didn't come to pick the good ones out near the rest behind us, he came to find his people exactly where he found us and the messes he found us in, the love of our good shepherd for his flock. In verses 12 to 13 we see that being contrasted with those who have a hired hands as it were, verses 12 to 13, the hired hands, those who might call themselves shepherds but who ultimately had no real care and no real love for the sheep, quite happy to do the job for a while but we see here that the second trouble comes in verse 14, the second the trouble comes, the second the wolf comes, we know that they flee in verse 12. Dear friends there are many, many today who will claim and who will promise to have your eternal interest at heart. I know a good few faces here, some stories I don't know your history or another story and some faces here I don't know where you are just now with the Lord, I don't know where you stand with Him and even if I do know you well perhaps I still don't know, only you know that for a truth for yourself. The fact is there are those around us in the world who will promise to save you, who will promise you so much and yet like the hired hands here when reality strikes they'll be gone. They can't actually help when need the help the most, when it's a wear the wolf comes, when danger comes they're gone. We see that with our friends, our dear friends in our religions seeing last week our dear friends who are of the LDS church, so-called church, they have

a conference starting and the work they do for the sake of a gospel and of a God who doesn't know them, who can't save them. The commitment they have to that is commendable, it's heartbreaking. They're trusting in hired hands who perhaps have good intentions but who cannot save them. When a wolf comes as a wear, when danger comes, when death comes they have no good shepherd to look after them, they're lost. Those around us, those around us in our villages, our friends, our families who they also will be trusting in the world, trusting in various other beliefs, gods, ourselves perhaps, trusting in things and in people that will not save us when it matters. It's good for a while, it feels good for a while, we feel safe perhaps when reality comes we're left out on our own, we're left in verse 12, the wolf comes, that's it. It's only in trusting and only in knowing and loving the good shepherd are we assured of our safety, are we assured truly that we are kept, that we are known, that we are loved. Only by following the good shepherd and him alone and being part of his flock can we know for certain that we are safe. Dear friends again, some places I don't know, our prayer and our hope is that even this day you come to know the good shepherd, stop trusting in the hired hand, stop trusting in those around you who mean well yes but it cannot save you. Only the good shepherd can save you, you see that so clearly from the text, only he truly is able to stop the wolf as it were, only he is truly able to look after you and to keep you and have that promise to you for certain. Only the good shepherd loves his sheep, the love that goes to the grave and beyond, a selfless eternal love for his people. So the good shepherd gives his life for his sheep, the good shepherd sacrifices for his sheep. Then verse 14 down to the first half, roughly verse 15, see the good shepherd knows his sheep. Just as we said, the good shepherd who sacrifices himself for his sheep, unlike the hired hands, he also knows his sheep, the hired hands don't know their sheep, they get paid for a day or a week or whatever and that's it, they move on. The good shepherd

actually knows his sheep. And again, it's always fascinating how well the crofter knows her sheep. Even myself with my abject lack of knowledge, even

I can guess usually which paint markings belong to who in the village. But that's it, that's the limit of my knowledge. But the crofter who actually owns the sheep, and we all know this, they know the temperaments, the personalities, the exact needs of the animal, the intricate, precise knowledge they have of their sheep. That's true for us in a human sense and how much more glorious is it as we're reading these verses, the good shepherd is the one who knows his sheep. Verse 14, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

Dear friends, the shepherd of your souls, he knows his flock. Just as we saw before him sacrificing himself for his people, for his sheep, the same wording as used here, I say the exact wording, it's not something vague, not something general. A shepherd knows the ones he's coming to die for. Also the shepherd knows for certain his people. Not something vague, it's as clear as certain. I, verse 13, 14, I know my own. As we said, the crofter and the moorer knows their sheep and how much more glorious is the knowledge of our Saviour for his precious, beloved people. Dear Christians, today the Saviour of your souls, he knows you. You can't be forged never one who does know you and knows all about you. Of course for us there's a large people that's a comfort for us. We have a Saviour who cares for us individually, who knows us individually. Nothing in our experience is a surprise to him as it were. Nothing shocks him. In our waywardness and our sin. In our own moments of sadness and of tiredness and of anxiety and of every situation we face this day or this week, he knows it. He sees it. Of course it's almost always a surprise to us what we face, what we endure, what we have to go through. To him it's not. He knows his sheep. We've covered this before years ago now. We've got time today but this afternoon, this evening, Ephesians 1, Ephesians 2, we have time. Go read these chapters and see that the depth of the knowledge your Saviour has of you, his precious sheep. Not just he sees and knows you now. He has seen and is aware he has known you from before time itself.

Ephesians 1, Ephesians 2 are the clear examples of many, of many. We have a good shepherd who has known you from before time. Who has set his love on you before time itself. This is at our base of assurance this day. There was never a point for shepherd who did not know his flock. He wasn't somehow pleasant and surprised when one day you appeared in the cross beside him. No, he saw you when you were out there. He set his heart, his love, his plan and action and he came to rescue you and to rescue me. Said before he saw us out there in the moors that were wandering around. Long before you saw him, he paid for you the precious, precious price of his blood. He bought you. He called you his and in time he came and he rescued you. Dear friends of those who has of you yet don't know Jesus, that's our hope today. That's our desire today. You would know that the one who is the shepherd of the souls of his people, he's done it all. The price of the word has been paid. Stop trying to hide around in the cross, out in the moor somewhere. Come, come to the place that's been prepared for you. Come to the shepherd of what work's been done. Dear Christians, as we remind ourselves in verse 14 here, to remind ourselves we have a shepherd who knows his people. This is our reminder even this day. The shepherd of your souls, he has not forgotten you. He hasn't forgotten you. Perhaps in your age, perhaps in your, I don't know, your own wanderings away from him, perhaps in your distance, perhaps in your own mental situation, physical family, I don't know what's going on. But he does. In the midst of your situation, now you're perhaps coming this week ahead of us all, he has not and he does not forget you. You know, wanderings, he doesn't abandon you in our age, he doesn't forget you. I know my own. The wording of that in the Greek and in English is clear, it's definitive.

[23 : 30] Dear Christians, you know this, but remember from his words, the shepherd of our souls, he's not distant, he's not aloof, he's not uncaring. He is close to his people. He walks alongside his people and we know this, we've heard this, but how often we forget it. How often when life becomes tough, we find ourselves drawing away from him. We find ourselves in sin, for honest, we find ourselves drawing away from him. When the opposite should be the case. He does not withdraw from us. I know my own. He's close to his own. And we see here, he calls his own. He leads us by name. And to leave us as a word, no doubt as to the extent of the knowledge he has of his people, we can read in verse 15. I know my own, I know me verse 15 then, just as the fervour knows me and I know the fervour. Now here's perhaps our verse numbers, because we've got confusion for us, of course verse numbers are man-made, they're useful, but we're not inspired. They're added later to help us read the text. If we read verses 14 and verse 15, ignoring the verse numbers and seeing it as it is in the Greek, just one block. Verse 14, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and

my own know me, just as the fervour knows me and I know the fervour. I know my own and my own know me, just as the fervour knows me and I know the fervour. Dear friends, how well does Jesus know you this morning? How well does Jesus know his own people this day? We find out here quite clearly, there's an eternity's worth of knowledge.

You are known as deep and you are known as well in your situation and who you are and where you're going and your future and your past and all that you are just now is known to the saviour of your soul. As much as the fervour knows his son, as much as the son knows the fervour, he eternally knows you. Again to the Christian that's a relief. It's comfort for us isn't it? There's nothing we can hide from him, there's no reason to feel we have to hide anything from him because he knows it anyway. And yet in that full knowledge of all that we are, he still tells us he loves us. He still tells us he is our good shepherd.

So this week as we find ourselves perhaps shying away from him, we see him from reason too. He sees us, he knows us. And for those here who as of yet don't know Jesus, he knows you too, he sees you too. As of yet you perhaps don't worship him as Lord and saviour, but you're still the one who knows you, you're still the one who made you. And you're still the one who one day you must answer to. And if you don't answer to that as your shepherd, the reality is you'll answer to him as judge and we know that to be true. But here we are just now in this day. Gavir de Geva, and there's time for us here. Come and know him as the good shepherd. Don't have him any more hang over you as one who's just waiting, who's waiting for that raft to fall. Come and know him as the good shepherd. Come and know him as the one who knows you, who loves you. The promise is there to leave, nor forsake you.

He knows his own. The good shepherd, your friends, he knows his sheep, he knows them perfectly. We can't grasp the reality of that. We can't grasp the extent of that. But he knows his sheep and he knows us eternally. So the good shepherd sacrifices for his sheep.

The good shepherd knows his sheep and family him briefly. The good shepherd we see in verses 16 and verse 17. The good shepherd gavir his sheep. Of course Jesus, he is talking to a Jewish audience, culturally all Jews around him. Dear brothers and sisters, when we read in verse 16 and verse 17, verse 16 first of all, when we read Jesus saying, I have other sheep that are not of this fold, I must bring them also. Us right here in this small building, in this tiny village, in our tiny island, that we are this very second, the living embodiment of Jesus' words being fulfilled. What's our connections? What connections do we have to a few Jewish peasants? That's aware, a few poor Jewish crofters and fishermen and farmers 2,000 years ago, a few thousand miles away. What connection do we have? We see the connection in these words. I have my people. I have other sheep. Jesus spoke these words and we are fulfilled with these words. We are gathered in this as people. Of course we know culturally, we know from our sources and writings of the time. Of course the Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to come, yes. They were looking for a warring Messiah we could say. One who would come to make Israel great. One who would come to reclaim the land, to come and conquer

[29 : 01] Romans, to come and restore the wealth and fortune they once had. To kick out the Gentiles, to destroy the Gentiles. To see what Jesus says here is something much more glorious than that. I have other sheep that are not of this fold, I must bring them also. See all the way through its scripture. The prophets, even the Psalms again and again, God told his people he would bring in people. He would bring in Gentile nations. And how far away are we, like we said, there's a time and distance from these words of first spoken.

But we are part of that fulfilment, gathering together. We are part of the fulfilment of these verses. The good shepherd is gathering in his sheep. Dear friends, the good shepherd is still gathering in his sheep. We are living testimony off that. Once you didn't care about him, once you didn't know him, once you had no interest whatsoever in who he was, what he had to say. But now who we are worshiping together. Now you love him, now you care for him. Now we seek to serve him and we know we are loved by him and kept by him. That's true for us, it's also true for those around us yet. My question is how can we know for certain, how can we know the good shepherd still has sheep to gather in what we know because we're still here just now. As long as he has his people we will keep going on and on. We'll keep meeting like this. His church will still keep gathering till the last person's brought in. Until that point happens we will keep gathering, keep worshiping him, keep loving him, keep serving him in the places where he's placed us, in the villages, in the jobs he's placed us. The good shepherd still has sheep out in the moors, still waiting to take them into the cross, still waiting

to take them into the places prepared for them. Again the language here is definite. I have other sheep, I must bring them also.

When he calls out to his sheep, as aware it's not as if his voice has been cied away by the wind, no the good shepherd calls out, his sheep hear him and his sheep will come.

Shepherd calls with full confidence that his sheep will hear his voice, they will respond, they will come. Dear Christians, brothers and sisters, this is an encouragement for us. I'm sure even at this very moment we have people in mind, family members, those who love friends, who we would desperately love to see. Come to know Jesus, come to love him, come to attend this building or wherever, it doesn't matter where we attend, come to worship him together. As we pray for them, as we remember them, as we ask the Lord to come and to save our dear family members, our dear friends, our neighbours, wherever we might be. When we come to this verse we are reminded he is yet gathering in his sheep.

When he calls his sheep will hear his voice. Perhaps even yourself today, again, you've come here for years, you've heard the Gospel a thousand times, there's not more. The truth is, this very second, the voice of the shepherd is calling out to you from his word. Don't ignore it. You ignored it up to this point, stop ignoring the voice of the shepherd. See, the voice of whoever stands up here, myself or your minister, you think, well, our voices don't mean much to you, fair enough, we shouldn't. But the voice of the shepherd you can't afford to ignore. As he calls out from his verses he tells you that he is the good shepherd, who has come to live and to die and who lives again for his people. The good shepherd who has promised to take his people as a word beside the green pasture, to give us safety, to give us life and life eternal. That's the voice you can't afford to ignore any longer.

[33 : 19] Dear friends, as you hear the Gospel again even this morning, listen to the voice of the shepherd. Stop ignoring his call for you to come home. It's been prepared for you.

It's been prepared. It's done all the work. Just come. Follow him. Just as sure as his call is also the surety of the nature of his response, we see that at the end of our verses here. I must bring them also in verse 16 and they will listen to my voice. It's tiring, isn't it, brother and sister? It's tiring to share the Gospel. It's tiring to share the Gospel and see no results as it were. As we witness to our friends and our families, we try and give the good news and talk about Jesus and we see that we just don't care, that we just aren't interested, we're just apathetic or against the Gospel, whatever case may be for us individually, it's tiring. But these verses remind us that our job is to give the Gospel out. We don't save anybody. We know that. The good shepherd does. His voice goes out. His call goes out. The Gospel goes out. And working through us, he will accomplish his perfect will and he will bring his people in. Dear brothers and sisters, keep sharing the Gospel. Keep trusting the fact that we are serving the good shepherd who will gather in his people. It takes weeks, it takes months, it takes years, but the amount it takes, according to his plan, perhaps even in our lifetime we won't see it. He will use his people for his namesake and we see that his people will be brought in. And what's the final end goes? What's the final glorious vision of the good shepherd coming? See the final words here, verse 16. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. Dear brothers and sisters, this is what we're striving for, isn't it? We long for this final stage of things. And for all time there's only us and the good shepherd. His sheep with him for all eternity. No more pain, no more suffering, no more death. We'll have him forever, serving him in his presence. Dear friends, that is the desire we have to, that's the love we have today for our shepherd and it's the love we want you to experience to come and to know and to join us in that sure knowledge that one day, a day is coming soon perhaps for us we don't know how long we have. The day is coming, a certain day, we will join with him for all time. Listen to the voice of the shepherd, stop ignoring him. Come and listen, come and follow him. Come and join the flock as it were. Come and have him as a shepherd of yourselves.

This is the power of our heads in that. Quick word of prayer. Lord God we ask that you bless the word to us this day. We thank you for it. Thank you for that reminder we have in it. We have a good shepherd, one who loves his people. One who is the good shepherd who promises never to leave or to forsake his people. The good shepherd who is one who is with us from our salvation to our death and then after that for all time in your presence.

Or do you magnify your word to your people today? Or do you forgive anything that was said that is not in accordance to your word to give you praise? The power is not in the jar of clay or the stanza, the power is in you and your living word. Help us even as you come to sing our final item of praise.

We do so with hearts and minds full of joy, full of thanksgiving. Help us rest of this day to leave this place and to carry on our day. Reminds focused on you. This day that you have given us. This day you made for us.

A day for our rest. Then we can spend time thinking about who you are and what you have done. Glorifying your name. Let's go all these things in and through and for Christ's name's sake. Amen.