

## **The Gospel of John - #38 - 10/10/2021 - "The Super-abundant Life!" John 10: 1 - 10**

God wants everyone to experience the abundant life that Jesus offers, and we can by...

**Introduction:** IL- Arthur Smith, songwriter- "If you have Jesus, there's more wealth in your soul than acres of diamonds or mountains of gold!" So beautifully personified in the Savior as we see in today's text- starting in verse 10 and going backwards to verse 1...

### **...accessing the Only Door- because Jesus alone gives life! (Verses 7-10)**

This chapter is a continuation of the previous one and is the final public discourse Jesus has with the Jewish leaders and the crowd who stayed close to listen to Jesus. Jesus once more explained why He came into the world- specifically to bring new life to those who believe on Him for eternal life. Unlike Satan and his followers, who had as their sinister goal stealing, killing and destroying, Jesus came to give life- not just existence but REAL life, abundant life- the kind that only He could give. To have that abundant life, anyone who comes to Jesus in faith and trusts Him to do what He said He would do will be saved and have every blessing Jesus offers as they walk humbly but confidently through the Door to the sheepfold. Jesus is the only One who can claim that title and give out those unearned and super-abundant blessings. Pointing out the unrepentant hearts of the Pharisees and Sadducees as thieves and robbers, Jesus is clear that they are not the Door and though trying to climb into the sheepfold without accessing the Door they utterly fail! Instead these thieves are stealing anything good and God-honoring from people, killing them spiritually and sometimes physically, and destroying any sign of spiritual interest their blinded followers may have. They clearly are willing and waiting to add bloodshed to their thievery and robbery. They are spiritual kleptomaniacs! Jesus condemns them and makes it clear that He alone is the Door to the sheepfold and the only One who can make life worth living, in an abundant way. The sheepfold is not Judaism or even Christianity but rather a personal relationship with Jesus. Those who reject Satan's wicked words and ways, as those who pretend to be shepherds but are not, can discover that Jesus can and will fulfill His plans for us and enable us to grow in abundant faith and confident trust, thereby receiving abundant life! So, it is clear that Jesus is the only Door to a right relationship with God. He is the only means of salvation and of the super-abundant life! The Apostle Paul writes, in 1 Timothy 2: 5- "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus!" Those who trust in Him alone can "go in and out and find pasture!" Going out to the green fields of grass and cool, clear water, then returning to the fold at night is a picture of tasting God's wonderful provisions in a spiritual meal of truth and feeling safe and secure in God's fold as one of His well-loved sheep! Psalm 34: 8 invites us to "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" What can we understand about the abundance God so readily gives His own? It means that our future is secure. It means we can see the world the way God sees it. It indicates that there is no reason for fear of or intimidation by Satan or any feeling of failure or regret for a misused past. Previous sins that dogged my steps are forgiven and washed away. I can have sweet fellowship with Jesus since He opens that door widely and I can know that Jesus will protect me as I stay close to Him, right by the Door! The abundant life Jesus speaks of here implies a continual process of learning, practicing what Scripture teaches, and maturing as one of His special sheep. Are YOU one of His sheep? Do you know how abundant life is because of Jesus or are you just getting by,

sort of! Jesus came to give, not to get, so that we could get more, get the most, out of life from Him!

**...trusting His Unmistakeable Voice- because we hear it daily through His *Word*! (Verses 4b- 6)**

The sheep follow Him because they know His voice! That doesn't happen overnight, but takes time as the sheep follow one particular shepherd, hear the tone of his voice and become aware that his voice rings out what they have come to expect as the voice of safety and protection! Jesus is the Shepherd who provides and protects, unlike the false shepherds who plunder and punish! Those false shepherds use stealth and violence to gain a following. They offer false hope, lots of false promises, using false teaching that doesn't line up with Jesus' words. And they do it all with obviously false motives! John says, in verse 6, that Jesus used a figure of speech that these religious leaders and some of those in the crowd did not understand. That phrase, "figure of speech" refers to earthly truths connected to a heavenly meaning. Jesus was painting a mental picture here. The door is not hanging on its hinges and doesn't need a lock or key. Jesus is the Door and He opens the way for His sheep to enter and find rest. If the crowd that day could have nailed down that imagery they would have benefitted spiritually and perhaps have even give themselves to the Lord by faith. But for those who are already His sheep, the challenge is to listen to that distinctive voice and to truly pay attention to it- to the written, inspired Word of God given to us through the Father, Son and Spirit. That voice of Jesus is not an audible voice to be picked up by those with big ears, excellent hearing or powerful hearing aids. It is a message from God Himself each time we open our Bibles and read with the intent to put into practice what we hear from the Holy Spirit, that still small voice of direction and purposeful intention. There are so many voices competing for our attention, but His is the only one that we really need to listen to because He is God and His written Word will last for all eternity! The issue isn't the Speaker's volume but the veracity, the truthfulness of His comforting words. **IL-** Jim Jones- Jonestown, Guyana. 1978- 900 members of the cult called the People's Temple died drinking poisoned KoolAid. Too many people are listening to what they think will bring them an abundant life- like money, possessions, power, followers, fame- when all that we truly need to do is listen to Jesus, follow Him and serve Him with the abundant blessings He has poured out on you and me! There is a special ring to His voice, a ring that draws those who make it a point to listen! Is that YOU? Are you living by the very words He has spoken in the pages of your Bible or are you hoping someone will come along with a step-by-step, 1-2-3 process for grabbing hold of abundance in a material sense? Just as one clear example of the foolishness of pursuing money or extreme wealth as a way to attain abundance. **IL-** Facebook's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg lost 5 billion dollars in mere hours a week or so ago when Facebook fell off the "face" of the internet! Praise God for making His will and His way known to His sheep through the pages of His Word! Reading that Word gives us the opportunity to know and follow the Faithful Shepherd daily...

**...following the Faithful Shepherd- because Jesus knows my *name*! (Verses 1- 4a)**

Verse 1 begins with the twice repeated word, "Truly" or "verily" or literally "Amen" and we see those twice-repeated words again in verse 7. That further reminds us of the importance of trusting Jesus' unmistakable voice. As the true Shepherd He knows how man will climb up some

other way to try to get to the sheep and harm them or steal them. Climbing up 10 to 12 foot walls would be hard enough as stone walls, but think of trying that on a sheepfold constructed of thorn bushes! The whole point in verses 1-4 is that only the real shepherd can come in with his flock. The sheepfold out in the large field didn't use a door- the shepherd himself would lay down in the opening where the sheep would enter or leave. He would be there all night taking care of the sheep- warding off any wild animals or thieves and providing tireless protection for each one of his sheep. My favorite part of verses 1-4 is the reminder that Jesus knows His sheep and calls them by name. The sheer numbers of sheep might be a problem for a mere human shepherd to recall all those names, but not for Jesus. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2: 19- "The Lord knows them that are His!" He knows us by name and by character. He assesses how much we truly want that abundant life only He can provide. He knows what hardships we face. He knows when and where we stray from the pack and why. He knows our honesty about the fact that we have failed in some way to listen to Him and have found ourselves in a strange place with no where to turn, except to Him. He comes looking for such wayward sheep, and if they have been hurt through their wanderings, He binds up their wounds and, when necessary, even carries them over vast terrain back to the safety of the fold! When I thought about how our Shepherd knows His sheep BY NAME, my mind moved to John 20: 16. Mary Magdalene was outside Jesus' empty tomb after His resurrection, thinking that someone may have stolen His body. Jesus came up to her and asked why she was crying. She thought at first that He was the gardener but when He called her BY NAME, she recognized who He was and went quickly, excitedly to announce to the rest of the disciples that she had seen the Risen Lord!

**Conclusion:** This amazing picture of the Only Door is full of thought to consider how we will daily trust His unmistakable voice and just how closely we will follow the Shepherd! Please know that, if you are not already one of His sheep by faith you can come humbly to Him, claim His forgiveness for going your own way without Him and by faith receive real life, and begin experiencing the abundant life that will bring glory to Him! If you are already His sheep, thank Him for the abundance He offers. Thank Him for forgiving you at times when you failed to listen to Him through His Word, and determine that you are going to follow wherever the Shepherd leads you in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. Don't forget to praise Him that He knows you so well- not just your name, but everything about you! Praise Him that you are privileged NOT to have things, but to have a relationship with Him for all of eternity!

**IL-** That key word in our text, "abundantly" can be translated: exceedingly, highly, beyond measure, more than one would expect or anticipation". That's the kind of life anyone can have if they will give their hearts to Jesus, walk through that Door, trust His voice and follow Him as Shepherd. YOU can experience that life and its wonderful abundance starting NOW. And you can be confident and richly blessed, full of praise in realizing that HE knows YOUR name!