



John 10:11-18

"The Good Shepherd"
Pastor Patrick Bowler
9-17-2023

Consult the Scriptures:

John 10:1-18

(See also Acts 20:18-35; Ezek. 34:1-24; Ps. 23, Matt. 18:12-14; Jn. 17:20-26;
Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4)

Consult the Scholars:

[Gary M. Burge] "Jesus assumes his audience understands the scene he is constructing. In the desert at night sheep were often herded into walled enclosures that either backed up against a cliff face or were at the end of a canyon. Such enclosures (still used today by Palestinian shepherds in the Judean desert) had waist-high stone walls topped with thorny branches. Such a pen was entirely for safety so that the sheep would not become prey to wild animals. One small doorway (or opening) in the wall served as the only entrance and exit. The shepherd would either close this area with dry thornbushes or would himself serve as the sentry in the opening.

Not only can sheep identify rightful shepherds by their access through the main gate, but they also recognize the voice of their shepherd (10:3-5). The Middle Eastern shepherd is well known for having personal devotion to his sheep. He talks to them and sings to them. Often shepherds will carry a short flute and use a repeated tune so that the flock has a consistent auditory cue to follow. Jesus notes that this shepherd does not simply lead any sheep but rather

leads 'his own' (10:3b). That is, just as Arab shepherds today can separate personal sheep from larger flocks by using peculiar calls, so Jesus knows his own sheep, they recognize his voice, and he leads them (10:4). Note that this shepherd does not drive the sheep; rather, he is out in front, leading the way.”¹

Discuss:

1. One of our stated values as a church is: “Leadership Matters.” Biblically speaking, why does leadership matter?
2. Read *Acts 20:18-35*. What is Paul’s primary concern in this passage? What does he urge the Ephesian elders to do?
3. Compare the above passage to *Ezek. 34:1-24* and *Matt. 23:1-36* and discuss. What are the marks of these particular shepherds? How do they compare to the “*thieves and robbers*,” “*strangers*” and the “*hired hand*” in *Jn. 10:1, 5, 12-13*?
4. Read *Psalms 23* and contrast the “*Good² Shepherd*” (*Jn. 10:11*) with those mentioned above. In what ways has Jesus shown Himself “good” to us?
5. Pastor Patrick mentioned that the fact that a shepherd would have to lay his life down assumes a couple things about the sheep: (1) that they are vulnerable, and (2) that they are valuable. How does this relate to the Gospel with regards to Jesus’ intended meaning in the passage?
6. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹ Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), p. 289.

² The word “good” (*kalos*) is not in regards to skills but to quality (moral) and character. The word could be translated “noble.”