



All In Service

Sermon Title: The Heart of Our Shepherd

Date: 8/30/2026

John 10:1-18

Big Idea: No One Cares for You Like Jesus.

In a film that came out this year, a flock of sheep tries to solve the mystery of what happened to their shepherd overnight. One lamb is left out of the investigation - born at the wrong time of year, the others nickname it "the winter lamb" and treat it as an outsider. But the shepherd never did; he held it, fed it, and loved it just like the rest of the flock. That picture points us to our Good Shepherd, Jesus.

Jesus' Care is Personal (John 10:1-6)

The winter lamb in that story never gets a name - just a label for when it was born. But in Jesus' flock, every sheep has a name, and He knows it. **"The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:3).** Think about how easy it is to forget someone's name, even someone familiar, and the awkward moment that follows. That never happens with Jesus - He is never forgetful, never distant, never asking "what's your name again" or "what are you going through again."

That kind of knowing invites something we're often afraid of: being fully known. It's easy to keep relationships surface-level - weather, sports, how's your week - because going deeper risks judgment or hurt. But Jesus already knows every sin, everything you've done, said, or thought, and none of it caught Him by surprise. That truth can break down whatever barrier keeps you from being fully known by Him.

Jesus' Care is Protective (John 10:7-15a)

Jesus contrasts Himself with two other figures - the thief and the hired hand (**John 10:10-13**). The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy, while Jesus came to give life abundantly. The hired hand isn't the owner of the sheep;

when a wolf shows up, he abandons them and runs, because he doesn't truly care what happens to the flock. The thief wants only to take and to steal any joy the sheep might have. Some leaders are like that hired hand - they look out only for themselves, unconcerned with the people they're supposed to protect. Jesus is neither thief nor hired hand. He protects His people from those who have no true good to offer, and He's the only way into the flock and the only permanent shepherd. He gives His life so we can live abundantly - free, full of joy and purpose, overflowing with His love and goodness.

Jesus' Care is All-Encompassing (John 10:15b-18)

Jesus makes clear there are more who need to be part of His one flock, and He wants His people to tell them. He wasn't forced to lay down His life - it wasn't taken from Him or stolen from Him. He knew exactly what would happen and who He was laying it down for. He wasn't merely willing to die for you; He was glad to die for you. **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16)** - not most, not some, but everyone who believes.

Maybe you've felt like the winter lamb lately - like you don't belong in the flock anymore. You've tried to pray and couldn't. You've tried to worship and couldn't find the words. Jesus hasn't moved; if you feel distant, He is not the one who left. And even if you've drifted, His love hasn't run out - Paul says nothing in all creation, not death, not life, not any power, can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:38-39**). Come back to the abundant life He has for you. The Shepherd loves you. He laid down His life for you. He wants you in His flock.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Jesus knows each of His sheep by name and is never forgetful or distant. What does it mean to you that Jesus already knows everything about you and still calls you His own?**
- 2. It's easy to keep relationships surface-level to avoid judgment or hurt. Is there an area of your life you've kept from being fully known - by God or by others? What's holding you back?**
- 3. Jesus contrasts Himself with the thief who steals and the hired hand who flees. Where have you experienced the difference between someone who truly cares for you and someone who was just going through the motions?**
- 4. Knowing Jesus was glad, not reluctant, to lay down His life - what does that reveal about how much He wants a relationship with you?**
- 5. Have you ever felt like the "winter lamb" - like you didn't belong? What would it look like this week to come back to the abundant life Jesus has for you?**