

JESUS: MORE THAN A MAN

NEW ATTENDEE LUNCHEON

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Main Text: John 10:11-18

There is a character problem in the American church today. Many pastors' gifting has taken them where their character cannot keep them. The character of Christ in the life of the pastor is the most needed aspect of pastoral ministry, but in many cases it is also the most neglected.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:11-18).

Luke 15:5

In ancient, Middle-Eastern shepherds lived in the pasture with the flock and were as much a part of the land as the sheep were. Through a lifetime of shared experience, shepherds nurtured enduring trust relationships with their sheep.

When a tiny lamb was born into the wilderness world, the shepherd took the trembling newborn into his hands, warming it and caressing it.

Among the first sensations felt by the shivering lamb was the tender hands of the shepherd. The gentle voice of the shepherd was one of the first sounds to awaken the lamb's delicate eardrums.

The shepherd lived with the lambs for their entire lives—protecting them, raising them, feeding and watering them, and leading them to the freshest pools and the fullest pastures—day and night, year in and year out.

So by the time the lamb grew to “ewe-hood” or “ram-hood,” it naturally associated the touch of the shepherd’s hands and the sound of the shepherd’s voice with “green pastures” and “still waters,” with safety, security, love, and trust.

Each sheep came to rely on the shepherd and to know his voice and his alone. They followed him and no one else.

Of course, the lambs understood clearly who was in charge. Occasionally, the shepherd might tap an unruly lamb on the ear with a shepherd’s crook. But this was a love tap, embraced in an enfolding circle of relationship. The shepherd smelled like sheep!

When the day’s grazing was done and night was approaching, the shepherd would gather the sheep together and lead them into a protective fold.

Some were crude, makeshift circles of brush, stick, and rocks, forming barricades four or five feet high—safe little fortresses in the wilderness.

Others were limestone caves in the hillsides.

Even today, in Israel, you can see temporary shepherd’s caves.

A shepherd is someone who has a flock. Everybody wants to be a leader.

A church leader who has to assert his authority doesn’t have much.

How Jesus Led:

- 1. Jesus fed and preached to thousands - Luke 12:1**
- 2. Jesus worked with hundreds - Acts 1:15**
- 3. Jesus sent out the seventy-two - Luke 10:1**
- 4. Jesus zeroed in on the twelve -**
- 5. Jesus had a few close friends - Peter, James, John - Matt. 17**