

Good morning, My name is Jeff Hollis, and I am one of the Pastors here at Grace Auburn Church. If it is your first time here, I want to say welcome and how glad we are that you are joining us today. In January we began a year-long study of the Gospel according to John and today we are continuing with John 10 verses 1-21.

Last week, Pastor Lee took us through the entirety of Chapter 9. We saw Jesus give sight to a man blind from birth. This man was not only healed physically but spiritually as well as he saw that Jesus was the messiah. This healing should have been a time of rejoicing and joy but instead the religious leaders of the day threw the man out of the synagogue and wanted no more to do with him. He was discarded from the fold of Judaism and left out for the wolves to devour him. However, he had never really been part of that fold in the first place. He was a member of another flock and that was made evident in his healing and trust in Christ. I want us to remember that as this week we find Jesus teaching concerning not only the discourse of last week, but also telling the jews of the day as well as us today who he truly is.

I want to give a little more context before we jump into the text for today.

In the Gospel of John there are 7 “I AM” statements made by Jesus throughout the narrative. Two of those seven are contained in this Chapter alone and I want to look closer at what Jesus is telling us with these statements.

When the “I am” is rendered in the original language the greek phrase ἐγώ εἰμί (ego eimi) is used. The second word of this phrase in most cases is used alone to mean “I am”, but when ἐγώ (ego) is placed before it there is a greater emphasis given to the claim. This New Testament usage reflects the Old Testament “I am” seen when God introduces Himself to Moses and charges him with the task of telling pharoh to set the Hebrews free. Exodus

3:14 reads “God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”<sup>1</sup>

This is where we get the personal name of God, YHWH, which comes from the Hebrew of this verse and is translated I am who I am. This name tells of the eternal, unchanging, self-existent nature of God and gives us a better understanding of who He is.<sup>2</sup> In this act God is coming to his people in a personal way that would be fully realized in the birth of Jesus. From here we come back to the Gospel of John which is markedly different from the other 3 Gospels and seeks to show us more of **who** the person Jesus is in addition to what he has done. If we recall John 20:31, which is the lens through which we are to read the entire Gospel, it reads <sup>31</sup> **these are written (the words of John's Gospel) so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

In these 7 “I am” statements throughout this Gospel, Jesus tells us who he says he is and he uses the same language God used to tell Moses who he was. He is showing us that he is the Christ the son of God and through believing this that we may have life. I don't want to overlook this fact and want us to remember this as we read the text today. The Jews of the day certainly wouldn't have missed the claim Jesus was making. OK end of excursus. Let's open to John 10 and read verses 1-21.

### **I Am the Good Shepherd**

**10** “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 3:14.

<sup>2</sup>

strangers.”<sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup> There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup> Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” <sup>21</sup> Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Remembering the context from last week and the statements Jesus has just made, there are 3 key points I want to focus on from this selection.

1. A Warning
2. A Promise
3. A Welcome

**The warning** - In verses 1 and 9 Jesus speaks of thieves and robbers. He says “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber,” and “All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.” He then goes on to say in verse 10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” Clearly there has been an imposter claiming to provide safety and life for the sheep of Israel but those that are the Sheep of Jesus did not listen. Remember the blind man in chapter 9? Let’s look at the old testament prophecy of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 34:1-10 reads “The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? <sup>3</sup>You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. <sup>4</sup>The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. <sup>5</sup>So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; <sup>6</sup>they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

<sup>7</sup>“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: <sup>8</sup>As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, <sup>9</sup>therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: <sup>10</sup>Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eze 34:1–10.

The Pharisees and religious leaders of the day have been feeding off of the Sheep of God or abandoning them outright. They have been serving themselves and have forgotten their call to care for God's people. The Truth is standing right in front of them and they are seeking to kill him. Jesus is warning the Pharisees that they have failed in their role and that the true shepherd is here. This has been a trend throughout the history of Israel that was not isolated to the first century alone. Just read Judges and Kings. Jesus has come to fulfill this prophecy and bring His sheep into his fold.

This leads us to my second point - The promise.

Let's go back to the prophecy of Ezekiel 34 again.

Picking up in verse 11, God says, **For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup> And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup> I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.**

What a beautiful picture of redemption and care. God himself is coming for his sheep. No longer looking to hired hands to care for his flock. We read this looking back to the finished work of Jesus on the cross, and we see the truth and beauty in these words. We were the lost, we were those that have strayed, he has bound us up. In Christ he has done these things for us, but the religious leaders of the day would have known this prophecy and would have heard the words of Jesus in the light of God's words through Ezekiel and they denied him.

In verses 9-10 Jesus says, <sup>9</sup> **I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

Jesus is continuing the shepherd motif in these verses but there is a literal interpretation as well. The promise is that He is the way to salvation, but more than the way He is salvation itself. There is no other. He is the door. He is the only way by which we are saved and through him we find pasture and rest. We are fed, cared for, sustained, given rest and have life in Jesus alone. He is stating this plainly for the Jews to hear. Some were able to see and others were not. Verses 19-21 read <sup>19</sup> **There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup> Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" <sup>21</sup> Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"** This division shows that some were listening and some could see what he was doing, but ultimately we know that the Pharisees denied Him. In doing so and seeking His death they were actually fulfilling God's promise to his people.

Continuing in verse 11 Jesus says <sup>1</sup> **I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

In verse 14 he says again, <sup>4</sup> **I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I**

lay down my life for the sheep. Here we see the promise of redemption through the death of Christ. He is willing to lay down his life for those that are his sheep and that He will do so of his own volition. Verses 17-18 <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” Jesus is proclaiming his authority over the Jewish leaders that would seek to kill him. He is not beholden to their human agenda and is in control of what is happening at all times. He is also speaking of a new type of abundant life alluded to in the previous verses. An eternal resurrection life. In His death he will usher in a new era of life by taking our sins upon himself and setting all who believe in him right with God. We will see Jesus reaffirm all of this in chapter 14 verse 6 as Jesus speaks to doubting Thomas saying, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Finally, point three - The welcome.

In verse 16 Jesus says, <sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. With this statement Jesus is confirming that the Kingdom of God is not only for the Jews, but is open to all who put their trust in Him for salvation. He is welcoming all who would believe in him into his flock and proclaiming that he is the true shepherd. This would once again push back against the ideals of the elitist pharisees. It would have been incomprehensible to them that a non Jew could gain access to the Kingdom of God. Throughout the Gospels this is confirmed in the few instances seen where Jesus heals or blesses gentiles that come to him, However Jesus himself is not seen going to Gentiles. A major question within the early church was Will the gentiles have to convert to Judaism in order to become part of the fold? If we remember the blind man again he was thrown out or excommunicated from Judaism. He is most certainly in the kingdom. We can

gain insight from this and discern that it is through faith in Jesus not an adherence to Judaism that makes someone a member of his flock. Ok, so you don't have to be a Jew but how will you hear of Jesus if you are not a Jew in Israel? That's where the disciples come in. They were charged with proclaiming Christ and spreading his Gospel and through them so are we today. God has chosen through his infinite wisdom to use his spirit within his people to bring his truths and kingdom to the ends of the earth.

So what does all of this mean for us here and now? Let's look at it through the same framework.

### 1 - Warning

Even today there are those who are leading the sheep astray. I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to Israel this past May and it was an incredible experience. I got to see where Jesus walked on water, where Jesus talked with Peter, the actual stones of the second temple that had been thrown down in AD 70. But in the midst of all of these awesome biblical historical sites were the Jewish and Arab people of the Land of Israel. It was these people that most affected me while I was there, not the ancient artifacts or beautiful scenery. Most of the people there had no idea who Jesus was or if they did they thought of Him as simply a good prophet of old. We know this is not the case, but that is the misguided story that the people of that land are told. They are not being led to the truth and it is a place where many simply don't want to hear. Israel is one of the top 25 unreached countries in the world by population and a large part of that is due to the same obstacles Jesus spoke against 2000 years ago. However, this is not the only instance where the same warning we saw in Ezekiel applies. Here in the United States there are numerous false teachers or cultural idols that we are exposed to on a daily basis. The empty promises of the self help movement, the war on absolute truth, or the lies of the abundant life now that the prosperity preachers teach as biblical truth. These are just a few examples of false messiahs claiming to

be the way, the truth, and the life. Claiming to give us rest and provide for our needs. We are being lied to. Christ is the only path to the father. He is the door and the Shepherd. We look to life eternal with him, not our best life now. There is absolute truth and it is Him, His word, and His promises. I would hate to know that this world was the best we could expect. All who look to this world, this culture, or themselves for satisfaction will remain eternally unsatisfied. However, we that place our hope in the promise of what has already come in part and is coming in full, God's kingdom through Jesus Christ, will have eternal satisfaction in Him.

## 2 - Promise

The same promise that Jesus made to the Jews and gentiles of the 1st century is available to us today. While our daily lives may look different than those living in 1st century Israel our desires are the same. Each of you would like peace, rest, and life in abundance wouldn't you? This is available to us in Christ. He is the only way. When David wrote Psalm 23 he was living in the hope of a savior and trusting God's promises. This Psalm is the perfect explanation of the promises of Jesus and what those that trust have in Him for eternity will have. When we keep our eyes on Christ and look to him as the source of truth, though our earthly lives are filled with trials and hard things we walk in hope of the promises of God. Let's look at Psalm 23

### Psalm 23

**1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

God cares for us and looks after us. He provides for and watches over us.

**2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.**

We can rest knowing that he is near. We can drink our fill from the only source of truth.

**3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

When we look to other things for sustenance he welcomes us back in his grace. He sets our feet upon his path for his glory. His grace leads us home.

**4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

Even when things here couldn't seem any harder he is with us. In our loss and in our tears he is leading us through walking alongside us in our grief. We find comfort in Him when it seems there can be no comfort found anywhere. His promises are sure and we look to him even when we don't think we can.

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

Even when everything seems against us and our enemies surround us we can trust in him as if they weren't even there. We are blessed beyond measure through life in Christ and when we place Christ above all other things the enemies of life become right sized and manageable.

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

We have an eternal hope and home in Christ. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ and in the midst of the trials and hardships we face here we look to Christ and praise him because he is worthy, he is merciful, and he is good. This life is temporary and we do not look to what is seen but to what is unseen – Life everlasting in the presence of our father.

Finally, 3 - The Welcome

There are still those that have not heard. The welcome still stands until Christ returns and sets all things right. There are still sheep that have yet to come through the gate and into the fold. This may be the first time you have heard the call of the Good Shepherd's voice. If not the first for you then there are still millions who have yet to hear the name of Jesus and perhaps it will be you that Jesus speaks to them through. Maybe you will be the one to welcome them with the truth of the Gospel that we have the Good Shepherd

and Christ alone is the way the truth and the life. It is by His grace through faith that we are made right with God and welcomed into the fold.

Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg,

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gave his life to protect his sheep from predators—from sin, from judgment, and from death. He didn't die simply to be an example or to demonstrate the depth of his love. He died because his sheep were in real danger. He died in our place, and by his death we are saved”

Not only this but he did not stay dead. He rose to life having fully satisfied the fathers wrath for our sins. We are no longer under the curse of sin and our Shepherd is alive. We have to follow him in everything. He is there leading us. In him we have all we need. The world would seek to tell us differently but the truths from Psalm 23 stand and when we are tired he gives us rest, when we are hungry he feeds us and goodness and mercy follow us as we dwell with him forever. Look to the Good Shepherd, the Great I Am, Jesus. He is here with us now. May we rest in Him alone.

Let's pray.