

The Heart of a Shepherd

In John 9 we read about the healing of a blind beggar. After Jesus healed him, the man was brought to the Pharisees. They refused to believe him, didn't care that he had been healed, and throw him out of the synagogue. The man is simply discarded like a piece of trash. The problem Jesus was trying to confront was the false shepherds of Israel. In John 10, Jesus introduces himself as the true shepherd of Israel. He really loves and really cares for the sheep. Today, as we appoint 3 additional elders ... I could think of no better passage that describes the shepherd. In John 10.1-15 we find a dozen characteristics of a shepherd.

I. 10.1-4 - The Shepherd's Relationship to the Sheep

- A. 10.3a: The Shepherd speaks to his flock
 - 1. *They hear his voice.* Think familiarity. Connected to those they serve.
- B. The Shepherd knows his sheep by name
 - 1. 10.3b: *He calls his own sheep by name.*
 - 2. Close, personal relationships. They know our personalities and needs.
- C. The Shepherd leads his sheep
 - 1. 10.3c: *He leads them out.* They respond to his leadership. He calls, they follow.
- D. The Shepherd Goes Before his sheep
 - 1. 10.4: *When he has brought all his own outside, He goes ahead of them.*

II. John 10.7-10: The Shepherd's Provision for the Sheep

- A. Shepherds feed the sheep
 - 1. 10.7, 9: *Truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. v.9: I am the gate.*
 - 2. As the gate, Jesus is the protector and the provider.
- B. Shepherds bless the sheep
 - 1. 10.11: *I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.*
 - 2. Shepherds want you to abound and thrive in your spiritual life.

III. John 10.11-15: The Shepherd's Heart for the Sheep

- A. The Shepherd Sacrifices for the Sheep
 - 1. 10.11: *The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*
 - 2. A life of devotion. Not out of compulsion ... but out of love.
- B. The Shepherd Protects the Sheep
 - 1. 10.12: He stays and defends them against the predator.
 - 2. Shepherds are passionate ... deeply concerned about their sheep.
- C. The Shepherd Cares for the Sheep
 - 1. 10.13: As opposed to the hired hand, who is not involved in their situation.
- D. The Shepherd Knows his Sheep
 - 1. 10.14a: *I know my own...* Love in a personal way.
- E. The Shepherd is Known by his Sheep
 - 1. 10.14b: *My own know me.* Mutual knowledge. Mutual love. Mutual care.
- F. The Shepherd Serves the Sheep
 - 1. 10.15: *I lay down my life for the sheep.* I will serve.

IV. As We Close...

- A. God is an active partner in what we do here together today.
- B. We move in faith. May we move forward in unity.