Church, it has been a pleasure to spend the weekend with you. I will say that y'all have been a huge encouragement to a poor country pastor over the last going on three days. Y'all have had many wonderful men fill this pulpit, whether it be Dr. Godwaters and others. I know I'm no David Gilbert, but I'm thankful that I could spend the weekend with y'all.

That said, can we finish our series by turning to John chapter 10? John chapter 10. We're going to read the first 18 verses. However, we're going to focus on John 10, one through six. And as I've said for the last five times, I say again, this whole series has been surrounded by the idea that Christ reforms his church through his word for his glory. And we have seen as Calvin is writing this book called The Necessity of Reforming the Church, he's addressed a few key areas and they've kind of built upon one another.

He's addressed the danger of his day and ours of separating the glory of Christ from the gospel of Christ. And as we segue into John 4, we discussed the glory of Christ being separated from the worship of Christ. And we saw then in John 6, 35, separating the glory of Christ from the grace of Christ. This morning we discussed the glory of Christ and the supper or the sacraments of Christ.

And now we turn to our final segue in which Calvin would discuss separating the glory of Christ from the government of Christ. Now, I understand that I am in the United States of America. And nothing brings us more fear and trepidation than when someone knocks on the door and says, hello, I'm from the government and I'm here to help. So at the first thought of hearing that Christ's glory and the government of Christ are connected may in our crowd seem strange.

But Calvin lived in a day where the office of minister was one bought and sold in which men would fill pulpits, they would fill calls over numerous of churches that they had no possible way of possibly shepherding and pastoring. And he saw people live and die under the care of men who never brought them the gospel. It was bad government. And if you've never been under bad government, you don't know the privilege of being under good government.

And so I want us to just keep in mind as we think of the glory of Christ and the government of Christ, that government is a gift. That if we discuss shepherds in this passage and we discuss elders, we are discussing teaching elders and ruling elders. that these shepherds that God has given us are an absolute gift.

And so we can sum that up in our sermon in a sentence. When Christ's flock is faithfully shepherded, Christ's glory is plainly seen. When Christ's flock is faithfully shepherded, Christ's glory is plainly seen. Let's pray and then we'll read our passage.

Heavenly Father, we come to you tonight as those who are well aware that Genesis chapter 3 verse 6 should have been followed with a deafening silence. That it is out of your free grace and abundant mercy that you seek sinners and you speak words of promise to them. And so Lord, we enter into this time of when Christ is speaking to us through the reading and preaching of the word, acknowledging that hearing your voice is a gift we do not deserve. And Lord, we ask you to pour out your spirit that we would treat this word with all the joy and solemnity of which it rightfully deserves. that it would be the thing of which we treasure and that we leave to our children and our children's children. That it would not simply pass through the ears, but it would be treasured in our hearts. But we

cannot do this apart from your help. And so we ask this in Christ's name. Amen. John chapter 10, picking up in verse one. Hear the word of the Lord.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door of the shepherd is the shepherd of the sheep. And to him the gatekeeper opens, the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pastor. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. He flees because he's a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd.

I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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.

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I'll lay it down of my own. I have authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. And thus ends the reading of God's Holy Word. Now I remind you, John 10 comes after John 9. And in John 9, you know what happens. Jesus heals the blind man.

Nobody believes it. He goes to church. He goes to synagogue between the elders, the Pharisees, and we'll say they bend him over the barrel. They bring his parents in. His parents are terrified. His parents say, well, look, he's old enough. He's a big boy. You ask him.

And again, he tells a story about Jesus healed this man who was born blind. And now he was blind, but now he sees. And the Pharisees enraged at this man who begins to preach the gospel to them. In their rage, they excommunicate him and kick him out of the church. And when he leaves the church, who comes and finds him but the good shepherd, Jesus Christ.

And at the end of John 9, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees and tells them, if you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say we see, your guilt remains. I want you to notice a couple of things before we understand this connection of John 10. First, I want you to notice that this is the presence of the court of the church. If I can use

some modern day language, we may say that in John 9, the blind man appeared to, he appeared before his session. If you look throughout John 9, you will see the language like in verse 34.

They answered him. It was not one man, but it was a group of men. He was standing before a court of the church, and they used a judicial action. They excommunicated him from the presence of the body. The same thing his parents feared would happen, happened to him. Jesus sees an unlawful use of authority by these elders.

And in John 10, he begins to describe the character of true elders. For Jesus to make his glory plain, John 10 is where Jesus begins to expose the false shepherds and the bad government and lay out the map for what a good government and a godly elder, a godly shepherd looks like.

He wants to see people faithfully shepherded. Now, how does he do that? Well, Jesus does two things in our passage. He describes and he demonstrates a true and faithful shepherd. He describes and he demonstrates a true faithful shepherd. And we can say that first, he describes the calling of the shepherd. Notice in verse two, but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

And we read on down later on in the chapter in verse eight, and Jesus says, or verse seven, I am the door. He is looking to men who enter ministry through Christ. This is how our forefathers historically read this passage, whether it's John Calvin or J.C. Ryle. John chapter 10, the first paragraph, is focusing on shepherds. And notice Jesus says, they are known by those who keep the door. It's very important that they're known by Christ. And when we get to this language of known, it's very important what we mean by that.

I know lots of people. I know Hunter. I know him vaguely. We're an acquaintance. I know he goes to RTS. I see him at Presbyterian. I know Hunter, but I don't know Hunter. You know, when it says in the Bible that Adam knew Eve, it means more than that he knew her social security number. He knew her very well.

And when the Bible speaks of us being known by Christ, it is not merely an acquaintance. It is this relationship. It is this being espoused to Christ, to knowing Him and being known by Him in an intimate and loving way. It is this experiential union with Christ. But it's more than simply being known by Christ. Christ knows all of us who profess His name. It's more than simply being known by Christ. Notice it is those who are called by Christ. It says, to him the gatekeeper opens. It is those who are called by Christ.

And as I have discussed with other brothers, I do believe that there is a vast misunderstanding of what it means to be called by Christ. I am personally perturbed when I hear men say that I feel called to ministry because I want to glorify God. Well, I hope everyone here wants to glorify God. I get perturbed when people say I feel called to serve the church. Well, I hope everyone here feels called to serve the church. What marks a call to ministry? It is a desire, a unwavering commitment to preach the word.

Notice what he says here. The sheep hear his voice. How can they hear his voice except that they lift it up in preaching? How can they hear his voice unless like he in Isaiah 40 who is given the message is a herald of the

gospel? We love Romans 10. Oh, faith comes by what? Hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But don't stop there. How can they hear? And last, he is sent.

I know it's 2026, and all of you have your little smartphones, and we've got more Bibles at home than we know what to do with. But when I read the scriptures, The Bible uses the word hear, the verb hear, a whole lot more than the verb read. And yet, which one do we put the emphasis on? Have you had your little private time with Jesus this morning? Or do we put the emphasis on, have you heard the preaching of the word?

A call to ministry is not simply to serve the church, it is to serve the church by preaching. And this is a ministry that Jesus Christ himself calls people into. We see this in Acts chapter 9. We see it in Ephesians chapter 4, that when Jesus ascended on high, he gave gifts to men, and these gifts were word-based ministry. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, these are men who operate and deal in the word. Yes, the church plays a role.

Yes, Presbytery plays a role in confirming that calling, but it is Jesus alone who does the calling. And then not only are they called, they're known by Christ, they're called by Christ, but they're also sent by Christ. Notice it says to him, the gatekeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice.

Well, you know, when Jesus was writing, there was not this thing called Twitter. where I could get on Twitter and someone on the other side of the world could hear me preach. I don't know why they'd want to, but they could do it. We live in a day, that's not the day and age Jesus wrote in. The only way the sheep could hear your voice is if what?

You were near the sheep. The calling of a shepherd is not just a call to preach, it is a call to preach to the sheep wherever they are to be found. I was emailing the former camp director of Twin Lakes recently. He come back from New Guinea. He's on a missionary furlough, and there was five missionaries in this city in New Guinea, and he had a bright idea. He said, man, there's five of us here. We're not all needed. Why don't one of us go out to the country? And a man said, oh, my wife cannot live that far from a supermarket. But the sheep are that far from the supermarket.

Don't they need to feast on Christ? Those who are called to ministry are sent by Christ wherever He sends them. Whatever it costs, whatever comfort they may lack, whatever the duty requires, Christ sends them because He has called them to preach. Why do I emphasize this calling of ministry? Well, there is a danger of falsely entering into the ministry.

Jesus describes them as thieves, robbers, and hirelings. I don't know about you, but those are three titles I would not like to put on my business card. But why does he describe them as that? Because they care nothing about Christ's glory, and they care nothing about the sheep. And I know y'all have realized this, but Christ takes his glory on the salvation of his sheep. They rob Christ of glory. This is a problem perennial through the history of the church. What does Acts chapter 20 say? Paul says, false teachers will arise from where? Not out there, but from among you because they will seek disciples who will follow after them, not will follow after Jesus. This has been a problem since Acts 20.

It's a particular problem for the small church where you are desperate for a warm body. What was the church that said, oh Johnny, he's never involved. I know what will get him involved. Let's nominate him to be a ruling elder. Y'all giggle because y'all know places that's happened. How's that work out? Not well. Do you know what I call that?

Bad government. whether it's a teaching elder that is called to preach, whether it's a ruling elder who's called to rule, who's called to exercise the power of jurisdiction and discipline and admonishing, whether it's a call, when that call comes to care for Christ's flock, he calls you and he sends you because he wants to bless his people with good government for his glory.

Jesus is hammering the call. of the shepherd, but then Jesus describes something else. Not only does he describe the calling of the shepherd, he describes the conduct of the shepherd. He describes the conduct of the shepherd. And there's three very simple things for you to remember. What does he call them to do? Well, one I've already said, he calls them to preach. The conduct of the shepherd is defined by preaching. He speaks to the sheep. The sheep hear his voice. He calls them by name.

He leads them. How does he lead them? He leads them by preaching. This is what Robert Louis Stabney would say of the teaching elder, that he is the general who gives marching orders and direction. And the ruling elder is the field sergeant inspecting the sheep, ensuring they're all on the right path. He leads by preaching.

This is vastly different from what we see in chapter nine. In chapter nine, they say, we know that God has spoken to Moses, but as this man, we do not know where he comes from. They are not preaching Christ. They are preaching the law. They are preaching moralism. They're preaching do's and don'ts. They're preaching lots of things, but Jesus is not one of them.

Do you know what I call that? Bad government. A good government is where the conduct of the shepherd is. He preaches Christ plainly and simply that they may hear his voice. And you may be saying to me, well, Zach, that sounds great, but I've not seen Rob up there preaching any time recently. What about the ruling elder? Is not the ruling elder as well called to go from house to house, to encourage, to admonish? Is not the ruling elder tasked with unfolding the word to troubled souls to help them and encourage them?

Yes, yes, and yes. But secondly, not only is he preaching, but notice what else he is praying. I love that line in verse 3 where it says, He calls his own sheep by name. Oh, that's a beautiful thing. Isn't that not a picture of a shepherd who not only preaches, but he prays for his people? He knows them by name.

I love, one of my joys, the times I've preached here is being in that prayer meeting. That's a special thing. And I love the amount of detail that is given in that time of prayer. It's not one of the prayers that I hear so often that says, Dear Lord, bless Hank. Bless him, Lord. And then moves on to the next person. It demonstrates a knowledge of the sheep.

But isn't that so much different than what we saw in chapter 9? In chapter 9, they didn't know who the man was. They didn't recognize him. They never address him by name. They call in his parents to confirm who he is because they're not even sure it's the same person. They have no knowledge of this sheep because they have never once prayed for this sheep.

We as the conduct of the shepherd is one that is intimately acquainted with the sheep. When the high priest in the Old Testament, when someone would bring an offering, the high priest's job was to inspect the sheep, make sure there was no splot, no blemish, no aches, no pains, no anything. He could tell you every single hair on that sheep. And what of Jesus? Does he know everything? What does Francis Ridley Habergel write?

When my sorrow is a secret between the Lord and me, I know a deeper measure of his sympathy. Whether the burden be so great that dear ones cannot bear to know the heavy grief that they cannot come and share, or whether it be so small that others cannot see why it would seem so great and be a burden to me, either and both, I lay them down at my master's feet, and I find them Alone with Jesus, mysteriously sweet. Why? No one else may know, but Jesus knows. And if that is true of our good shepherd, should it not be true of every under shepherd?

He should not only be someone who preaches to his people, but he should be someone who prays, who's intimately acquainted with them. But then verse three, not only is he preached, not only does he pray, I know y'all are expecting one more pee, He pastors. He preaches, he prays, and he pastors. Verse 3, he leads them out.

Pastoring is a multi-sided coin, isn't it? Sometimes pastoring is going to the hospital and walking with people through times of grief and sorrow, which I'm so glad to hear Mack has a great ministry doing here. Sometimes, Pastoring means sitting on a bed where there is one who has just passed away and comforting the grieving wife crying over him. Sometimes pastoring is changing out a toilet. Pastoring takes a lot of forms.

But the way that Jesus is addressing pastoring in this section is not those kind of pastoring that comes alongside. The pastoring of which Jesus is describing, I believe, contrasts what we find in chapter nine. In chapter nine, they execute church discipline. I know that's an evil word, and I do not have my two nines sitting on the counter just for us to mention in it. But in chapter nine, we see them using church discipline not to bring a sinner to Christ, but to drive a sinner away. That's not how Jesus sees church discipline. What does he say in Matthew 18?

It is for what? Reclaiming a brother. It is for bringing a brother back to Christ. It is for bringing an erring sheep that has gone astray and bringing him back. What did we sing? Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. You know, I was a bad boy when I was little, and I had seen my fair share of frauds. They were not pleasant. But what were they for? To bring me back. What is discipline for? To bring people back to Christ.

It is a means of grace that he has given us a power. He is vested in his officers because he says no preaching is bad government, no prayer is bad government, no pastoring, no discipline is bad government. And you may say, Zach, it doesn't work. Well, I beg to differ. I remember a faithful Presbytery meeting in this room. It's the last time we had Presbytery here. And Dennis Watts, moderating, read a letter from a man who was disciplined by the Central Mississippi Presbytery back in 1972. He had an affair, and he was deposed from ministry. And that denomination,

he did not write to the PCUSA. He wrote to the PCA, and he said, I was reading R.C. Sproul and it come to my knowledge that Christ used your discipline to bring me back to Christ.

My marriage was restored. My faith was strengthened. My life is on a Godward trajectory. I'm walking in holiness because you pastored me. Was it easy? Did anybody enjoy it? Did everybody high five each other after those session and Presbytery meetings? Absolutely not. But did they love the sheep? Yes. The conduct of a good shepherd is he preaches, he prays, and he pastors. But church, you know what I love about my Savior?

We've all worked for people who say, They'll ask you to do things that they would never do themselves. But Jesus, he not only describes the conduct and the character of the good shepherd, he demonstrates it himself. In verse six, they had no idea what he was talking about. So he said, let me make it concrete for you. And instead of describing the shepherd, I will show you the shepherd. Look to me. He describes his call back in John 6, verse 27, that he, his father, placed his seal upon him.

In Hebrews 5, verse 4, it says, he did not intrude into holy office, but like Aaron was called into office. Now, why was Christ called into office? For our comfort. that we would know that this man was sent by his father to procure for us a salvation. And when a man is rightly called and ordained by Christ's church, we know he has been commissioned by Christ to preach his word as his shepherd. That call is for our comfort. Christ himself was called to ministry. But then as we see a shepherd that preaches and prays and pastors, what do we see but an execution of Christ's threefold office? Christ, in our passage, calls out to his sheep, just as a prophet declares a will of God, so too he declares his voice to his sheep. Not only in his humiliation, but even still, Hebrews 12, 23 says, he continues to speak from heaven.

I love Ephesians chapter 2. Not the first half, but the second half. because it says that Jesus Christ himself came and preached peace in Ephesus. You know, I've read the gospel a lot. I never saw Jesus take a summer vacation to Ephesus, did you? He didn't have a lake house in Ephesus. How did Jesus preach to them? He is so concerned about the shepherding of his sheep, he preached through the men who themselves preached at Ephesus. That though the voice of a poor country preacher rings off your ears tonight, Christ by the Spirit presses these words into your very heart because he is concerned about good government because good government leads to his glory.

But what about as a priest? What about a priest? What do priests do? They pray. Jesus is not in heaven on his lazy boy flipping through the infinite number of channels in heaven. What is Jesus doing? He's praying. He prays without ceasing. He intercedes for His saints because He's able to save them to the uttermost. And when we pray, when your elders pray with you, they're not just praying anything. They're entering into Christ's intercession. They're praying in His name, in His merit, in His work.

Because Christ is so concerned about the good government of His church and His glory, He is praying for you through the men He has called to shepherd you. Isn't that an amazing thing? That Christ in heaven is praying for you and as your officers, as we lifted up Wayne and Angie tonight, we are entering in to that intercession of Christ where He is already praying for them.

What about as a king? What do kings do? They rule. He is the ruler and we are the ruled. And he has appointed officers at his deputies to execute that rule within his church. He rules by his word and by his spirit, the scepter that he sways and exercises authority in his church. He is so concerned about good government in his church that he did not go, all right, guys, I'm going back to heaven. This is what I want you to do. Just figure it out. Whatever works for you. Look, you see that business over there is going great for them. Why don't you do church like that? It's not what Jesus said, is it?

Jesus, when he ascended to heaven, he did not leave his reign on earth. He reigns in heaven and he has left for us instructions on what it looks like to reign and rule within his church. He's laid us a pattern, a divine right of government that we call Presbyterianism.

He rules. Why? Because good government preserves his good glory. That when the sheep are well fed with good preaching and well cared for with good praying and well led with good pastoring, Christ is glorified. He extends his ministry through his under shepherds because he's that concerned for his glory. Do you see his kindness? Do you see this great kindness? He describes to us what a shepherd looks like, he demonstrates it, and he holds himself up as the model and paradigm for every minister who will ever be called to office, for every elder that will ever be nominated.

He says, if I can quote 1 Corinthians 11, 1, imitate me as I imitate Christ. Government is a gift Christ purchased with his blood. Don't hear the word government and get covered in the heebie-jeebies. Hear the word government and see this is Christ preserving your good and extending his glory. Church, as we bring this entire series to a close, I hope that we have seen A couple of things.

Our unity is to further Christ's glory. Our worship is to exalt Christ's glory. The free preaching of the gospel of grace is to exalt Christ's glory. Coming to this table and this font is to increase Christ's glory. Government is to increase Christ's glory. It is that all-consuming thing which will fill all of eternity and should fill all of our drive and ambition as a body. And I must offer again as I've offered many, many times already. This Christ that has given such good gifts to us cares about His glory and it is magnified by your participation, your salvation in Him.

And he calls you today that if you do not know this Christ, to come to him, to submit to his reign, to be under his prayers, to hear the preaching of his word, to have Christ clad in that threefold office, be your savior and live for his glory. He invites you out of your shame, out of your sin, into union with him. If you have not come to him, It is not because the door is not wide open. He could not open it any wider. His arms on the cross demonstrate that it is the pulpit from which he preached love to the world. He invites you in.

Do you share in that glory? Church, do you further that glory? Among this body, in this community, throughout this Presbytery, around the world, are we delighting, enjoying, and extending the glory of Christ? That is the necessity behind reforming His church. Can we pray? Heavenly Father, Too often. Too often. Church government has been the section of theology to collect the most dust. It has only been appreciated when problems arise. Very rarely do we notice it until it goes wrong.

But Lord, we come here today that Christ has not left us to our own devices, but he has set up for us a good government that we may see his glory extended beyond this place. And we ask, oh Lord, that he would exercise his reign among us with Mac and Rob and Jamie and Wayne. that you would bless their ministry as shepherds among us here and their involvement in the bigger church and our Presbyterian denomination.

And we ask, Lord, that among us, among our children and our children's children, that you would raise up more elders, some whom you would give to teach and to teach powerfully and to bring many souls to Christ, and some that you'd give to rule, to shepherd and lead and guide your people. And we ask, Lord, not just from this body, but from all places. Lord, the fields are white with harvest. Would you call men to ministry, that they may preach the word in season, out of season, here, there, and everywhere, at all times, all places, for your glory is to be desired above all things. We pray that you'd bring students into RTS, and Greenfield, and Westminster, UK, and Mid-South America, and the other seminaries that faithfully uphold right doctrine and godly ministry. We ask, Lord, if you were to begin revival, would you begin that revival in calling men to ministry? We ask these things in Christ's name, amen.