

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Series: Jesus Is...
Pastor Gilbert Silva

John 10:1-21 (ESV) “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. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² 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. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ 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.”

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

The connection between this passage and the previous chapter is made by the reference to the healing of the man born blind in verse 21.

Let me give you an overview of the story from chapter 9 of the man who was blind from birth.

- The people referred to him as the blind beggar.
- When they came across him on the road, the disciples asked Jesus as to the reason why this man was born blind. Was it the result of a sin in his life or the parent's?
- Jesus responds that neither of these were the reason. He was born blind so that the power of God could be seen in him.
- Then he spit in the ground and made mud with his saliva, spreading the mud on the eyes of the man he then tells him to go wash it off in the pool of Siloam.
- By the time the man comes back from the pool Jesus is gone.

- The people are shocked and can't believe that he is the same person. How is it possible that he has his sight? Obviously, he never saw Jesus, he knew that that was his name.
- The people eventually take him to the Pharisees who interrogate him and even drag his parents in to testify whether or not he was really born blind and if he was how is it that he regained his sight.
- His parents being afraid of the Pharisees tells them, "we are sure that he is their son and that he was born blind but if, they want to know how he gained his sight you could ask him yourselves".

John 9:24 (NLT) So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

They referred to Jesus as a sinner because he healed the man on the sabbath. A day in which it was forbidden to work and as far as they were concerned healing someone was working. The response of the man who was healed it pretty powerful.

John 9:25; 32-33 (NLT) ²⁵ "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" ...³² "Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

Again, a miracle was pointing to who Jesus was.

The Pharisees didn't take any pleasure in being educated by a man who was born blind. To the Pharisees the blindness of this man was the result of some sin and so their response...

John 9:34 (ESV) They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?"

- In the end the religious leaders were so frustrated that this man would not give up giving credit to Jesus that they threw him out of the synagogue.

The Pharisees, who were supposed to be the spiritual shepherds of this man, opened the door and threw him out of the synagogue.

However, there was another door that he would go through that would change his life.

John 9:35-41 (NLT) When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him." ³⁷ "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!" ³⁸ "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

This is the account that leads to Jesus declaring himself as the door and the Good shepherd.

Shepherding in a small village

The people of the town knew the images Jesus was using in his declaration.

Most village families owned a few sheep. One of the ways they would care for the sheep was to unite with other families and have one person look out for them overnight in a walled enclosure. Usually one of the sons or daughters of the families would be the one assigned to watch for the sheep. If no one was available then they would hire someone to do it.

In the morning the shepherds would enter through the gate, guarded by the doorkeeper and call out to their sheep, who would respond to their voice. The shepherds would then take the sheep out to the open country to feed.

Anyone with ulterior motives would have to climb the wall in order to get into the walled enclosure because the gatekeeper would not let him in. At the same time the sheep wouldn't recognize their call and would run from him.

In using the image of a good shepherd Jesus is contrasting himself with the Pharisees and religious leaders.

Although they were entrusted with the care for the sheep, the people of Israel, being Israelites themselves, sons and daughters, they acted like hirelings.

They didn't love the sheep. They didn't care for the sheep and they most certainly weren't going to give their life for the sheep. They were the thief and robbers who climbed over walls to get acquire leadership roles only to kill, steal and destroy the flock.

Matthew 23:16 (ESV) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in."

Matthew 23:23 (ESV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.

Matthew 23:25 (ESV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Jeremiah 23:1-2 (ESV) "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have driven them away,

and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD.”

As they did to the blind man, so they did to so many. They would go even further with Jesus and would reject His claim and have him killed.

The Good Shepherd

Jesus was different. He wasn't a shepherd he was and The Good Shepherd.

Isaiah 40:10-11 (ESV) Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

When Herod assembled all the chief priests and scribes to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. They quoted from the prophet Micah (5:2)

Matthew 2:5-6 (ESV) They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Jesus is revealing Himself as the promised Messiah, the Good Shepherd, the ruler of the people.

There are four distinctives of Himself as the good shepherd

1. He is the only door

John 10:1-2 (ESV) “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. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

(Verse 10) I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

He isn't just the door keeper. He is the very entrance itself.

Everyone looks for opportunities, doors, to advance in their lives. They seek those things that promise them peace and safety. They look for that one special person who will make them feel loved and valued. They seek the career that will provide them a sense of purpose and financial security. However, as good as these things can be they cannot provide lasting peace and life.

In any moment those who love you today may turn on you tomorrow, the employment you count on today can be lost tomorrow and the business you spent years building can suddenly fall apart.

There is only one door that we can walk through to find true peace and security and that is Christ. The idea of being the door simply mean the entrance or means of true salvation and peace.

John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Ephesians 2:18 (ESV) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

He is the only way into the fold. He is the only way to be saved.

2. He knows His sheep and the sheep know him

John 10:3-5 (ESV) To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

A sheep would never be afraid of their shepherd as they recognized his voice and would only be afraid of strangers.

When the good shepherd calls out to us and speaks to us, we should feel peace and hope in our hearts, not fear and terror.

John 16:33 (NLT) I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

What a difference between the Lord and the religious leaders.

In chapter 9 the parents of the man born blind were afraid of the leaders and their treats.

John 9:20-22 (NLT) His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue.

3. He dies for the sheep

John 10:11-13 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²He 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. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

(Verse 15) As the Father knows Me, I know the Father; I lay down my life for the sheep.

(Verse 17-18a) For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

Jesus makes clear that he would not die a martyr, killed by men; He would die as a substitute, willingly laying down His life for His sheep.

The Pharisees didn't add to the life of the man formally born blind instead they cut him off. Jesus not only heals the man but he offered him hope and abundant life.

4. Jesus unites His sheep

John 10:16 (ESV) 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.

Today you and I enjoy the protection and peace that comes from knowing the good shepherd. The one who knows us by name, who gave his life for us and brought us into His fold.

He the door and He is the good shepherd. He is the mean by which to be saved and the one who cares for us ever single day. (Psalm 23)

The Pharisees knew far more theology than the man born blind, but they didn't know the true shepherd. But the healed blind man now knew Jesus as his shepherd. Do you?