

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 13TH-14TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

## ABUNDANT LIFE (JOHN 10:1-10)

John 10:1-21 is a continuation of Jesus' discussion with the Jews after the controversy surrounding the healing of the man born blind.

- Jesus had spoken to them about light and darkness, but now, He changes the image to that of the shepherd and the sheep.
- In Jewish thought, a "shepherd" was any kind of leader of God's people: spiritual or political. People looked to the kings, prophets, and priests of Israel as shepherds (Isa. 56:9-12, Ezek. 34, Zech. 11); as Israel was affectionately referred to by God as the Lord's flock (Ps. 100:3).
- The occasion for this teaching was the excommunication of the beggar from the synagogue (9:34)—the false shepherds didn't care for this man; instead, they mistreated him and threw him out.

Jesus' audience would have been very familiar with sheep/shepherds, and the kind of imagery He used would have made sense to them.

- Sheep pens were circular or square enclosures, probably constructed like a stone fence or a wall and topped with vines.
  - The entrance would have been the only break in the wall, and once the sheep were safely inside, the shepherd would lie down across the opening.
- Jesus shows Himself to be the true, legitimate shepherd that cares deeply for His sheep (vs. 1-2).
- The shepherd comes through the gate, but the thieves and robbers climb in some other way.
  - Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to God's people in the appointed way, just as the Scriptures promised. The "thieves and robbers" didn't come in God's name and way.

The true shepherd knows His sheep, and the true sheep know the shepherd because they know and recognize His voice (vs. 3-4).

- They'll follow the shepherd's voice, but they won't follow the voice of a stranger (vs. 5).
- Jesus is the shepherd and Jesus is the gate (vs. 7, 9); the selfish, false leaders who came before Him were thieves and robbers (vs. 8)—but those who come to Jesus will be saved and can trust Him enough to follow Him.

### "...BY ME...THEY WILL FIND PASTURE" (VS. 9)

Not only does Jesus save us, but He also feeds us with spiritual food ("pasture") that will give us strength in our lives.

- He knows us and leads us in a personal way, giving us what we need if we'll follow Him.
- If you're not willing to follow Christ and eat in God's pasture, don't be surprised when you have an appetite for spiritually toxic things.

### "THE THIEF COMES TO STEAL, KILL, AND DESTROY..." (VS. 10)

The ultimate thief and enemy to your soul, Satan, has a plan for your life.

- He wants to steal from you (your joy, strength, hope, friendships, and relationships), kill you (spiritually, emotionally, and physically), and destroy you (by sending you to Hell).
- He tries to accomplish his plan through deception, distraction, and discouragement.

### "...LIFE, AND HAVE IT IN ABUNDANCE..." (VS. 10)

The Greek word for "life" Jesus uses is "zoe."

- It doesn't just mean to be alive or to have a heartbeat; it means to possess uncreated, never-ending life from God Himself deep within the inner core of your being.
- To have this kind of life means that a part of the divine nature of God Himself (His eternity) is given to you as a gift.

### WHAT IS "ABUNDANT LIFE" ?

- Nowhere in this text are we promised that abundant life means financial prosperity or perfect health.
1. A life of fullness because of God's abiding presence (Ps. 16:11).
  2. A life of freedom because of Christ's victory in our lives over sin and bondage (Jn. 8:36).
  3. A life of spiritual fruitfulness and fulfillment as we do good works (Eph. 2:10).

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD (JOHN 10:11-21)

### "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD..." (VS. 11)

This is the fourth "I am" statement of Jesus in John's Gospel, and in making this statement, Jesus is contrasting Himself to the false shepherds who were in charge of the Jewish religion of the day.

- Why is Jesus worth following? Why is God worthy of our obedience? Because He's good: He's intrinsically good, beautiful, righteous, and desirable.

### 1) THE GOOD SHEPHERD DIES FOR THE SHEEP (VS. 11-13)

Shepherds may take risks for the safety of their sheep, but rarely will they willingly die for their sheep.

- No other religion teaches that its founder died for and in place of human beings.
- The "hired hand" won't defend the sheep and thinks the flock exists for his benefit, but the Good Shepherd lives for and dies for His sheep.

### 2) THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS THE SHEEP (VS. 14-15)

To "know" means to have an intimate, personal relationship with—Jesus knows His sheep and His sheep know Him, just as Jesus knows the Father.

- If you are His, Jesus knows your nature, your needs, and your heart better than you do.
- If you are His, you are growing in and desire to know Jesus more each day.

### 3) THE GOOD SHEPHERD BRINGS OTHER SHEEP INTO THE FLOCK (VS. 16)

The mission of God through Christ was not just for the Jews to be saved, but for the nations to know and worship God.

- God's heart is that all who follow the ONE shepherd (Jesus) would be ONE flock.
- The exclusivist, elitist attitude of the Jewish religious leaders is not the heart of God at all.

### 4) THE GOOD SHEPHERD WILL TRIUMPH OVER DEATH (VS. 17-18)

Jesus had the right and power from the Father to lay down His own life, and He had the power to take it up again.

- The death of Jesus for the sins of His people was completely voluntary: He laid down His life for His sheep because He loves His sheep, and this gives the Father glory.
- People will do almost anything and come up with almost any kind of explanation to avoid facing the truth of who Jesus is.
- The crowd was divided because of Jesus' words, and some of them said He was crazy or demon-possessed (vs. 19-20).
  - But others saw the fruit of His ministry and understood that demons couldn't be credited for the good works Jesus performed (vs. 21).

## THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE (JOHN 10:22-30)

The winter Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah, "the feast of lives") commemorates the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC after it had been desecrated by the Seleucids of Syria (vs. 22).

- As Jesus is in the Temple in Solomon's Colonnade, He's surrounded by Jewish religious leaders who want Him to publicly declare He's the Messiah (vs. 23-24).

Most likely, they're wanting to entrap Jesus and charge Him with blasphemy.

- But Jesus responds calmly to this hostile ambush by reminding them of what He's already told them about Himself and the works that He's performed (vs. 25).
- It's not that they didn't have enough proof, it's that they refused to believe because they weren't His sheep (vs. 26).

True sheep listen to the Shepherd and follow Him (vs. 27), and the Shepherd gives them eternal life so they will never perish (vs. 28).

- Those who are truly Christ's sheep are His and can never be taken from Him because the Father has given them to Him (vs. 28-29).
- No one is able to snatch the sheep from Christ's hand: we are eternally secure in Him IF we are truly His.

Many use the doctrine "once saved, always saved" to assure them of salvation even as they're not living in obedience to Jesus as Lord.

- Vs. 27, Rom. 11:22, and Heb. 3:12-14 make clear to us that "once truly saved, forever following" is a clearer description of what the Bible says about eternal security.
- The evidence of saving faith is not the intensity of emotion at the beginning, but the endurance of that faith over time.

If your faith endures to the end, that's evidence you had salvation from Christ you could never lose—but if it doesn't, you never had it to begin with!

- Jesus did not promise security to anyone but His true sheep.
- God wants you to have assurance in this life that you are saved and belong to God.
- Assurance comes from your faith in the promises of God to save you (Rom. 10:13).

Assurance comes from the Spirit's work in your life to transform you (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:14).

- Assurance also comes from the testimony of the Holy Spirit testifying to our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15).
- If you are a new creation in Christ—justified by the blood of Jesus, given eternal life, and marked by God and sealed by the Spirit—you are His, and no one can snatch you away.

## ACCUSATION OF BLASPHEMY (JOHN 10:31-42)

After Jesus declared that He is one with the Father (vs. 30), those listening picked up rocks to stone Him (vs. 31).

- Jesus asks, "for which of the good works I've performed are you stoning me?" (vs. 32).
- These religious leaders had lost all of their arguments with Jesus and couldn't prove by His words or His works that He wasn't the Messiah.

The charge of blasphemy was their last ditch effort to stop Jesus (even though they weren't following the due process of law).

- It's interesting that the Jews of Jesus' day clearly understood what the Jehovah's Witnesses, progressive/universalists, and others miss—that Jesus clearly claimed to be God.
- Jesus responds to their charge of blasphemy in a very interesting manner in vs. 34-36.

### WHAT IN THE WORLD DOES VS. 34-36 MEAN?

Jesus is quoting Psalm 82:6, where God charges the "gods" (elohim) to show justice and mercy to the people that they rule over.

1. The "gods" of Psalm 82 are supernatural beings ("divine council") who rule under God.
2. The "gods" of Psalm 82 are human magistrates, judges, and rulers who have been granted authority in the earth.

Jesus' point is this: You charge me with blasphemy based on my use of the title "Son of God," yet your own Scriptures apply the same term to others besides God.

- If those who hold a divinely appointed office or those who have a divine position in the spiritual realm can be considered "gods," how much more can the One whom God has chosen and sent (vs. 34-36)?

Jesus' reasoning to them is this: "...if the things I'm doing don't align with the work of God the Father, don't believe me" (vs. 37).

- "...but if the works do align with the work of God the Father, at least believe the works! Then you'll see that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (vs. 38).
- They again tried to seize Him, but He escaped their grasp and departed across the Jordan (vs. 39-42).

## WHO ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

- If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who promises to provide for you REAL life (fullness, freedom, fulfillment, and fruitfulness)...are you following Him and letting Him lead you to that life?
- Or are you following something else?
- The instructions to "follow your heart," "follow the crowd," or "follow your dreams" won't lead you to REAL life.
- Jesus is worth following because He's good, and He's proven His goodness to us.
- Jesus has died for you, and He knows you and what it is you need (vs. 11-15).
- He's offered to save you and give you eternal life that can never be taken from you (vs. 9, 28).
- If you're His, you'll listen to His voice and follow Him in obedience (vs. 4, 27).