

I am the Door of the Sheep and the Good Shepherd

Today, our message centers around the picture of Jesus being the door to the sheepfold and shepherd to His sheep. This theme is found throughout the Bible. You can find it in the Pentateuch. It's scattered through the Psalms. It's mingled throughout the Major and Minor Prophets. So, Jesus using the illustration of a sheepfold, gatekeepers, doors and shepherds isn't unique. The illustration as a whole always made sense, because the people could relate to shepherding. When Jesus used the illustration it was one of three major trades: fishing, farming and herding/livestock. However, before we get into John 10, it would be good to read some from Ezekiel 34. It's always risky reading longer passages in a sermon because you can lose the audience, but brethren, you'll want to hear this, because there's very good reason to believe that He had this particular passage (at least) in mind when giving the illustration.

Shepherd of Old: Ezekiel 34:1-24

- **Vs. 1-10** Side note: this is a great reminder for what we should look for in leaders. The greatest leaders are servants. They are men who have certain abilities, but they have to be driven by love for their brethren. If they are looking for honor, power, etc. then they need not be in such a position. If taking the time for brethren is a burden, then they need to bow out. If they feel purely obligated . . . they need to stay away. They have to be driven by a servants heart - they want to help their fellow brother and sister while acknowledging they are qualified. In Ezekiel's time the shepherds abused and took advantage of God's sheep.
- **Vs. 11-24** So, God decides to take things into His own hands. He will be their shepherd and care for them all. The one Shepherd would be His "servant David," but of course, it can't literally be David because he's been long gone. Now we come to **John 10**.

The Door of the Sheep: John 10:7-9

- I'll not speak as much on this one, because Jesus seems to make more of a point of the shepherd, but we want to accept an unapologetic truth.
 - As we'll see later: Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. No one finds themselves among Jesus' sheep unless they go through Him.
 - This carries both the idea of protection (being saved and coming in) and provision (going out and finding pasture).

- They'd not had anyone like Jesus. Their leaders were trying to rob them of their life. Look closely at their actions and you can see they try to enter by another way. They wouldn't have to do that if they were legitimate. You can see it in their behavior, for example, with the blind man. They kept searching until they could get the answer they were looking for. They tried with the blind man, then went to his parents, then called the blind man again and couldn't get what they wanted. So, they called him sinful and cast him out. Meanwhile, this man was trying to point out how legitimate Jesus was - yet the miracle showed Him to be legitimate.
- This is also why, at the end of the day, true sheep won't listen to such leaders. They know the voice of their Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd: John 10:1-6

- *(Show pictures of sheepfold).*
- The sheep know His voice. Reminds me of Isaac and Jacob. He'd disguised himself to feel and smell like Esau and Isaac fell for it. Should have relied on the voice - he knew something wasn't right.
 - **His voice.** Do you look forward to hearing the voice of Jesus? Remember when John the Baptist said, *"The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete."* **John 3:29.** This means you have to be listening - actively listening. You can't be spiritually deaf.
 - **But, what does that look like?** What does that mean? I took joy in something this past week. One Christian spoke to their spouse about an upcoming event. Wondering if they should take part in it. They also called up and we looked at a passage together. They immediately heard the Shepherd's voice. Their answer was something to the effect of, "well, that sounds pretty clear. This is the life I've chosen." Just as Jesus said His sheep listen - I knew they'd listen to God's word. Jesus, the Shepherd, is keeping them safe from the world.
 - **It requires time.** The Shepherd is with the sheep the whole day - if not through the night as well. How much time are we willing to give with Jesus. We know how much time and effort He's put in. Listen, this doesn't mean that we're to live without any hobbies. It doesn't mean we have to get rid of our televisions (though some of you have and I'm sure that's helpful). Having said that - we want to work on our hearts and attitude. Not "what do I have to give up", but rather, "what's going to help me be closest to the Lord." You'll get out what you put in.
- He calls them by name and He leads them out.

- **It's intimate.** Shepherds typically have pet names for their sheep. I think about **Mark 3:16-17** *He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges (Bow-uh-ner-geez), that is, Sons of Thunder).* I wonder what Jesus' pet name for this individual I mentioned might be - haha.
- **Jesus leads.** It's how He does it that is so effective. Sometimes Shepherds will lead by pushing from behind, but others do it by leading. Jesus leads them out. It's very effective. This week, while preparing for the lesson, our Boxer (Seven) got in the room when Ainsley opened the door. When Ainsley was leaving, she tried to get behind Seven and attempted to push her out. It didn't work. I said, "Ainsley, lead the way out and call her name." She did and Seven submitted and followed her out. You better believe I had a smile on my face.
 - Jesus walked the path, brethren. He's a gentle shepherd. He's not asking us to do anything He hasn't done. He also doesn't force us to go anywhere - it doesn't work.
- **We're part of a flock.** Side note: It would also make sense to be invested in other sheep of the same flock and Shepherd, would it not? We talk about how God loves us individually (and He does - He leaves the 99 for the 1), but most of the time is a collective concept. You're a part of a flock, both locally and universally. There's no real concept of you and God alone - you're a part of His family.
- **Vs. 10-15**
 - **Life or death.** This is what it's ultimately about. Jesus was concerned for His sheep. He knew that their current Shepherds were robbing them of life - just look at their treatment of the blind man.
 - Jesus doesn't simply give life - He gives it abundantly. **Do you have that right now?** I hurt for those who go through life, frustrated and robbed by our own doing. If we're not there, we can get there through Him. But we've got to flee from every power that attempts to pull us away from the peace He offers.
 - Remember, Jesus is the way He is because He's invested in us - so many will abandon us because they are only hired hands. Ultimately, we are to lean on Him.
- **Vs. 16-18**
 - Let's not forget - it's not all about us. If you appreciate being in the flock, you'll want to let others know about it as well.
 - **Isaiah 53:4-7.** This was for the whole world, brethren.
 - **John 21:15-17.** There's always time for repentance. Time to be put back to work.