

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 10.1-18



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Gospel of John: John 10.1-18  
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## Introduction to *John 10.1-18*

Drawing on familiar and powerful Old Testament images, Jesus declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd of Israel. In our text He begins to unpack the meaning and significance of that claim, and to explain the work He had come to do as Good Shepherd.

We can learn much about our own callings by paying careful attention to how Jesus showed the Father's love by His life and work. The power of God can flow through us and lift us to higher stages of life if we will follow the example of Jesus, as He leads us into the green pastures of the Lord.

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## 1 Sheepfold

Read and meditate on John 10.1-6.

Jesus makes yet another extraordinary claim, which He will elaborate throughout chapter 10: He is the good Shepherd. This claim has enormous theological and practical implications, as we shall see.

<sup>1</sup>*“The man who does not enter in the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in through some other way, he is a thief. <sup>2</sup>He who comes through the door into the sheepfold is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The sheep are his; they hear his voice. He calls each one of them by name, and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>They follow him, and know his voice, as he before them goes. <sup>5</sup>A stranger though, whose voice none of them knows, they will not follow, but will flee from him; the voice of strangers is unknown to them.”*  
<sup>6</sup>*This illustration Jesus used, although they understood Him not, and did not know what He was saying to them.*

- John 10.1-6

Reflect

1. A sheepfold is a place of safety and rest. In what ways is this an apt metaphor for salvation? Can it also represent the Church? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, thank You that I am one of Your sheep, and that I dwell forever in Your sheepfold. Help me to know...*
2. In this illustration, who would be the “doorkeeper” of the sheepfold, and who would be the “shepherd”? How does this help us understand the work of salvation which we have because of Jesus? *You are my way into the sheepfold of God, Lord Jesus, and I thank and praise You as my good Shepherd. Lead me today to...*
3. Meditate on verses 3 and 4. These verses point to the intimate and personal nature of our relationship with the good Shepherd. How do you experience what these verses suggest? *You know me by name, Lord, and I know You, so that...*
4. To follow the good Shepherd is to know (recognize, delight in, obey) His voice, and to go in whatever direction His voice indicates. How does this work out in your life? How would you counsel a new believer to recognize, delight in, and obey the voice of our good Shepherd? *Lead me today, Lord, to every next step of my discipleship, and I will...*
5. Today as always, “strangers” are seeking to woo the Lord’s sheep away from following Him. What are some examples of the strange voices that tempt the Lord’s flock? How can we recognize these? How can we resist their allure? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Keep hold of this, that Christ’s sheepfold is the church. Whoever would enter the sheepfold, let him enter by the door; let him preach the true Christ. Not only let him preach the true Christ but also seek Christ’s glory, not his own. For many, by seeking their own glory, have scattered Christ’s sheep instead of gathering

them.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ – personally, intimately, obediently, joyfully. How can you encourage the believers in your Personal Mission Field to grow in this precious gift?

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD *is* my strength and my shield;  
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,  
And with my song I will praise Him.  
The LORD *is* their strength,  
And He *is* the saving refuge of His anointed.  
Save Your people,  
And bless Your inheritance;  
Shepherd them also,  
And bear them up forever.

Psalm 28.7-9

**Psalm 28.6-9** (*Angel's Story: O Jesus, I Have Promised*)

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.  
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.  
In You our heart rejoices, You help us by Your Word.  
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, Lord.

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure:  
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.  
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face;  
With shepherd's care, Lord, keep us forever in Your grace.

## 2 Door to Life

Read and meditate on John 10.7-10.

The sheepfold of the Lord is the place of safety, security, and life, and Jesus is the door.

<sup>7</sup>Once again  
He said, "I say to you in truth, I am  
the sheepfold door, <sup>8</sup>and all the others who  
have come are thieves and robbers. The sheep do  
not hear their voice. <sup>9</sup>I am the door, and he  
who enters by Me will be saved, and he  
will come and go and find green pasture. <sup>10</sup>For  
the thief comes but to kill and steal, no more;  
but I have come so that they may have life.  
I've come that they may have abundant life."

- John 10.1-10

Reflect

1. Most sheepfolds don't have an actual door or gate, just an opening to let the sheep in and out. Typically, the shepherd himself sits in the doorway, and is thus the "door of the sheep" (v. 8). Why do you think Jesus considered this an apt metaphor for Himself? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I know I'm coming in and going out through You when...*

2. In Jesus' day – and even through all of Israel's history – "thieves and robbers" had been prowling among the sheep, proffering false views of safety, security, and life. To whom was Jesus referring here? How were they stealing, killing, and destroying the Lord's sheep? Do such "thieves and robbers" exist still today? Explain. *Lord, I can recognize "thieves and robbers" by...*

3. What do sheep do in green pastures? What are the green pastures of the Lord's sheep? Why must we go through Jesus to get there? *Feed me, Lord, in the green pastures of Your Word, and I will...*

4. What did Jesus mean by "life" and "have it more abundantly"? How would you describe the life Jesus offers us to an unbelieving friend? *Let me know more of Your abundant life, Lord, and I will...*

5. Jesus said those who are saved will "go in and out" through Him. To what does this refer? What does this going in and out through Jesus look like in your life? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

"He is the Way, because he leads us through himself. He is the Door who lets us in, the Shepherd who makes us dwell in green pastures, bringing us up by waters of rest and leading us there. He protects us from wild beasts, converts the erring, brings back what was lost and binds up what was broken. He guards the strong and brings them together into the fold beyond with words of pastoral knowledge." *Gregory of Nazianzus (fl. 372-389 AD)*

The door of your home provides protection for you and your family. It is also your portal to the outside world, and the way for welcoming guests. Jesus is the Door of the sheepfold. Everything in our lives hinges on Him. How do you experience that?

*Closing Prayer*

Return to your rest, O my soul,  
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.  
For You have delivered my soul from death,  
My eyes from tears,  
*And* my feet from falling.  
I will walk before the Lord  
In the land of the living.  
I believed, therefore I spoke,  
“I am greatly afflicted.”  
I said in my haste,  
“All men *are* liars.”  
What shall I render to the LORD  
*For* all His benefits toward me?  
I will take up the cup of salvation,  
And call upon the name of the LORD.  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
Now in the presence of all His people.

Psalm 116.7-14

**Psalm 116.7-14** (*Mit Freuden Zart: All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*)  
Full well the Lord has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.  
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.  
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,  
And dwell with them forever.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.  
What shall I render to the Lord for all His blessings to me?  
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love  
And pay my vows most truly.

### 3 The Good Shepherd

Read and meditate on John 10.11-13.

In claiming to be the Good Shepherd, Jesus drew on a storehouse of prophetic promises. No one who heard Him would have missed the significance of what He claimed.

<sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. As such, I give My life for all My sheep, that they may live.  
<sup>12</sup>The hireling, he who does not own the sheep, no shepherd is, for he will leave the sheep and flee to save himself whenever he the wolf sees coming. Then the sheep will be exposed and caught and scattered, <sup>13</sup>for he cares not for them.”

- John 10.11-13

Reflect

1. Jesus claimed to be “the” Good Shepherd – not just “a” good shepherd. This suggests that the idea of *the* Good Shepherd was in the minds of people in Jesus’ day, something everyone understood and perhaps cherished. What was the source of this idea? Can you think of any Old Testament references? Complete this prayer: *You are my Shepherd, Lord Jesus, and I am Your sheep. Therefore...*

2. Let’s look at Psalm 23. David referred to the Lord as his Shepherd. In this psalm, what makes the Lord the Good Shepherd? *I thank You, my Shepherd, that You do so much for me, including...*

3. In Psalm 100, God is referred to as Israel’s Good (v. 5) Shepherd – or, rather, they are His sheep. This fact appears in the psalm to have worldwide significance. How can you see that? Why should that be the case? How would Jesus’ claim to be this Shepherd have impacted those who heard Him? Is this still true today? Explain. *Thank You, Lord, that within Your gates we find...*

4. How would you describe the effects of God’s shepherding as these are presented in Ezekiel 34.10-31? What happens when God shows up to shepherd His flock? Was Jesus announcing the inauguration of something new? Explain. *Thank You, Lord, that You gave Your life for us, so that we could live for You and...*

5. Who were the “hirelings” Jesus had in mind in these verses? What marked them out as such? What differences can you identify in the relationship between the Good Shepherd and His sheep and the hirelings and the sheep? Do such hirelings exist among the flocks of the Lord today? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Suppose someone has sinned—grievously sinned. He ought to be rebuked, excommunicated. However, if he is excommunicated, he will become an enemy and will plot and do as much harm as he can. And so, for the time being, the pastor who seeks his own and not what is Christ’s keeps quiet and does not reprove the person so that he will not have to put up with the annoyances of their attacks or lose what he truly follows after—the advantage of human friendship. But look! The wolf has caught a sheep by the throat; the devil has enticed a believer into adultery. And yet, you are silent—you do not censure. As a hireling, you have seen the wolf coming, and you fled. Perhaps you answer and say, ‘See, I am here: I have not fled.’ You have fled because you have been silent; you have been silent because you are afraid.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Do we, though we are the Lord’s sheep, have shepherding responsibilities toward one another? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD *is* my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You *are* with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
Forever.

Psalm 23

**Psalm 23** (*Taladh Chriosda: Song of the Christ Child*)

The Lord my Shepherd is, and I  
Shall not want; He makes me lie  
In green pastures, leads me by  
Refreshing waters, still.

Restore my soul, Lord, day by day;  
Lead me in Your righteous way  
For Your Name's sake, Lord, I pray,  
According to Your will.

And though through death's dark vale I go,  
I no fear of evil show,  
For Your rod and staff, I know,  
Shall guard and comfort still.

A table You before me spread  
In the midst of those I dread,  
And with oil anoint my head;  
My cup You over fill.

Thus goodness e'er shall follow me;  
Mercy all my path shall see;  
Your house shall my dwelling be,  
Forever after still.

## 4 He Knows His Own

Read and meditate on John 10.14, 15.

Jesus knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him. This relationship of love is the basis for a life of following Jesus and knowing God.

*<sup>14</sup>“The good shepherd will be there for them – and I am He – because I know My sheep, and they know Me as well. <sup>15</sup>Just so, the Father knows Me, and I know Him, too. And I lay down my life for all those who My sheep are.”*

- John 10.14, 15

Reflect

1. Jesus now begins to unpack the work of the Good Shepherd, and the work, by implication, of *all* shepherds of God’s flocks. In how many ways did Jesus *know* His disciples? How did He come to that knowledge? Complete this prayer: *You know me, Lord, and You know that I...*
2. How many different levels of “know” are involved in the gift of eternal life (Jn. 17.3)? Should we expect grow in knowledge of Jesus (2 Pet. 3.18)? How is that accomplished? *Lord, I know that I am growing in knowledge of You, and of the gift of eternal life, when...*
3. How does knowing Jesus help us in knowing the Father (v. 15; cf. Jn. 14.9)? What are the primary resources available to help us in knowing Jesus? *Help me to make good use of all the resources for knowing You, Lord. I could use some improvement in...*
4. Jesus knew and loved His sheep so well that He understood the only thing that would really help them was that He should lay down His life for them. This is the second great work of shepherds, to deny themselves, humble themselves, and make themselves servants of those they know and love (cf. Phil. 2.5-11). As you assume the duties of a shepherd to others, what will this require of you? *Give me a heart to serve, Lord, as You serve. Today, let me...*
5. The Good Shepherd sets the pace for all shepherds in the Lord’s flock, and for each one of us as shepherds to one another. Shepherding begins in relationships of mutual love and trust, where people seek to serve one another as Jesus did. Would you say that this kind of shepherding exists in your church? Are you shepherding the people in your Personal Mission Field? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Christ did not endure death against his will on our behalf and for our sakes. Rather, we see him go toward it voluntarily, although he could easily escape the suffering if he did not want to suffer. Therefore, in his willingness even to suffer for us, we shall see the excellent quality of his love toward us and the immensity of his kindness.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Meditate on Jeremiah 23.1-4. When the Good Shepherd comes to secure His flock, He will do so through the work of faithful shepherds. Can we expect to shepherd the Lord’s flock unless we are willing to follow the example of Jesus? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
You who lead Joseph like a flock;  
You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth!  
Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
Stir up Your strength,  
And come *and* save us!  
Restore us, O God;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Psalm 80.1-3

**Psalm 80.1-3, 17, 19** (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!  
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!  
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:  
Stir up Your pow'r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

## 5 Other Sheep

*Read and meditate on John 10.16.*

Jesus is the Shepherd of one flock, and that flock is made up of many nations and peoples, tribes and tongues.

*16 "I have other sheep as well,  
not of this fold, and I must bring them all,  
and they will hear My voice, and there will be  
one flock, one shepherd."*

- John 10.16

*Reflect*

1. Jesus continues to explain His work as Good Shepherd. He had previously said that He "goes before" His sheep and "leads them out" (vv. 4, 3). Where should a shepherd lead the sheep entrusted to his care? Why is it important that he go before them? Where is Jesus leading us? Complete the following prayer: *Lead me today, Lord, and show me what You want me to do in my Personal Mission Field. Thus I will...*
2. Jesus mentioned "other sheep," by which He referred to the Gentiles, all those outside the fold of the people of Israel. Why were the Jews of Jesus' day so animated against having anything to do with the Gentiles? Can congregations become this way toward people – especially lost people – who are not part of their community? How does that happen? *Lord, I pray for our church, that we might...*
3. Jesus said He must "bring" those other sheep "also." How did Jesus bring sheep into the Father's sheepfold? What did He do? *Lord, many of Your sheep are still scattered and lost in the world. You have called us to...*
4. Should shepherds in today's churches be bringers of sheep? What would that look like? How can you encourage and help your church's shepherds in this work? *I pray for our shepherds, Lord, that they...*
5. Lost sheep do not naturally find their way home. They must be sought, and they must be brought. What would a local church look like that was diligent in seeking and bringing lost sheep into its fold? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

"So listen to this unity being even more urgently drawn to your attention: 'I have other sheep,' he says, 'who are not of this fold.' He was talking, you see, to the first sheepfold of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But there were others, of the race of the same Israel according to faith, and they were still outside, they were of the Gentiles, predestined but not yet gathered in. He knew those whom he had predestined. He knew those whom he had come to redeem by shedding his blood. He was able to see them, while they could not yet see him. He knew them, though they did not yet believe in him. 'I have,' he said, 'other sheep that are not of this fold,' because they are not of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But all the same, they will not be outside this sheepfold, because 'I must bring them along too, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd.'" *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Jesus is not in the business of merely finding lost sheep. He's in the business of building the Lord's flock. What's the difference?

*Closing Prayer*

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!  
Serve the LORD with gladness;

Come before His presence with singing.  
Know that the LORD, He *is* God;  
*It is* He *who* has made us, and not we ourselves;  
*We are* His people and the sheep of His pasture.  
Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,  
*And* into His courts with praise.  
Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.  
For the LORD *is* good;  
His mercy *is* everlasting,  
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

Psalm 100

**Psalm 100** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Shout to the Lord with joy, O earth!  
With gladness serve His matchless worth!  
Before Him sing with joyful words,  
And know that God alone is Lord!

He made us all, and not our hands –  
His people, we before Him stand.  
A faithful Shepherd, He will keep  
And for us as His own sheep.

Enter His gates with thanks and praise;  
Extol His Name through all your days!  
Give thanks to Him, and bless His Name!  
His praise forevermore proclaim!

God is the Lord, so good and kind;  
His love we evermore may find.  
His faithfulness is ever sure;  
To every age it shall endure!

## 6 Loved of the Father

Read and meditate on John 10.17, 18.

Laying down His life for His sheep was no easy road, but Jesus could travel it because He knew this is where He would experience the love of His Father.

*<sup>17</sup>“Therefore, He loves Me – the Father – for I give My life that I may take it back again. <sup>18</sup>And when I die, none takes My life from Me; instead, I lay it down by My own will, so that I may, by My own power, take back My life again. The Father has appointed this command.”*

- John 10.17, 18

*Reflect*

1. Verse 17 can be a bit confusing. It appears to make the Father’s love for Jesus conditional, that is, based on Jesus’ laying down His life for the Lord’s flock. But this condition is removed when we remember that the Word of God agreed to become incarnate and to lay down His life from all eternity past. It is *inherent* in the Word – in Jesus – to receive the Father’s love, and to show it, and His own, by laying down His life. This quality in Him attracts the love of the Father, which love He expresses by laying down His life. Which makes *us* – all who believe in Jesus – the “end of the line” for the love of the Father and the Son. How should we respond to such love? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, I am amazed that You love me, and that our heavenly Father loves me. Thank You. Today, let that love reach and flow through me to...*

2. Now we learn that laying down His life is not the end of the story. Jesus said He would lay down His life so that He might take it back again. If He always intended to take back His life again, why was it necessary for Him to die? Why not just keep on living? What role does the dying of Jesus play in the Father’s love for us, and Jesus’ love? *You laid down Your life for me, Lord. Today, I would lay down my life by...*

3. Jesus freely offered Himself unto death, so that He might exert His *power* to overcome death and live again (v. 18). This too is part of His eternal remit from the Father. What kind of power is this? Of what is this power capable (cf. Eph. 3.20)? Do you experience this power? Should you? *Lord, let Your power be at work in me today so that...*

4. What does it say about Jesus that He embraced the Lord’s command to lay down His life? Should His doing this serve as an example for us? In what ways should we lay down our lives in Jesus’ Name? *Lord, I would prefer to have others lay down their lives for me; however...*

5. Jesus said it was the calling of the Good Shepherd to lay down His life for the sheep. Specifically, what did Jesus have to lay aside and lay down (cf. Phil. 2.5-11)? Should the shepherds of God’s flock today lay down their lives for the sheep? How? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“If we see ourselves in our own child, we are drawn to an intensity of love whenever we see that child. In the same way, I think God the Father is said to love his own Son, who lays down his own life for us and takes it again. For it is a work of love to have chosen to suffer—and to suffer shamefully—for the salvation of some. It is a work of love not only to die but also to take again the life that was laid down in order to destroy death and to take away sorrow from corruption. Although the Son is always beloved by reason of his nature, it is evident that Christ is also beloved by God the Father because of his love toward us. Naturally, this gladdens

the heart of God the Father since he can see the image of his own nature clearly and perfectly shining forth through Christ's love for us." *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

God's love is eternal, unconditional, and unchanging, and is most visible in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. How should we respond to this love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? What can keep us from responding this way?

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD reigns;  
Let the earth rejoice;  
Let the multitude of isles be glad!  
Clouds and darkness surround Him;  
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.  
A fire goes before Him,  
And burns up His enemies round about.  
His lightnings light the world;  
The earth sees and trembles.  
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,  
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.  
The heavens declare His righteousness,  
And all the peoples see His glory.  
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,  
Who boast of idols.  
Worship Him, all *you* gods.  
Zion hears and is glad,  
And the daughters of Judah rejoice  
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.  
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;  
You are exalted far above all gods.  
You who love the LORD, hate evil!  
He preserves the souls of His saints;  
He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97.1-10

**Psalm 97.1, 6, 9-12** (*Darvall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;  
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;  
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.  
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

All you who love the Lord, despise sin's wicked ways!  
Praise Him Who guides us by His Word through all our days.  
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

## 7 Jesus, Good Shepherd

Read and meditate on John 10.1-18.

Jesus declared Himself to be the promised Good Shepherd, Who, by the Lord's command, must lay down His life for His sheep, and thereby gather all His scattered sheep into one fold. Thanks be to God!

<sup>1</sup>“The man who does not enter in the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in through some other way, he is a thief. <sup>2</sup>He who comes through the door into the sheepfold is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The sheep are his; they hear his voice. He calls each one of them by name, and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>They follow him, and know his voice, as he before them goes. <sup>5</sup>A stranger though, whose voice none of them knows, they will not follow, but will flee from him; the voice of strangers is unknown to them.” <sup>6</sup>This illustration Jesus used, although they understood Him not, and did not know what He was saying to them. <sup>7</sup>Once again He said, “I say to you in truth, I am the sheepfold door, <sup>8</sup>and all the others who have come are thieves and robbers. The sheep do not hear their voice. <sup>9</sup>I am the door, and he who enters by Me will be saved, and he will come and go and find green pasture. <sup>10</sup>For the thief comes but to kill and steal, no more; but I have come so that they may have life. I’ve come that they may have abundant life. <sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. As such I give My life for all My sheep, that they may live. <sup>12</sup>The hireling, he who does not own the sheep, no shepherd is, for he will leave the sheep and flee to save himself whenever he the wolf sees coming. Then the sheep will be exposed and caught and scattered, <sup>13</sup>for he cares not for them. <sup>14</sup>The good shepherd will be there for them – and I am He – because I know My sheep, and they know Me as well. <sup>15</sup>Just so, the Father knows Me, and I know Him, too. And I lay down my life for all those who My sheep are. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep as well, not of this fold, and I must bring them all, and they will hear My voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, He loves Me – the Father – for I give My life that I may take it back again. <sup>18</sup>And when I die, none takes My life from Me; instead, I lay it down by My own will, so that I may, by My own power, take back My life again. The Father has appointed this command.”

- John 10.1-18

*Reflect*

1. Why is this image of a shepherd and his sheep particularly apt for our relationship with the Lord? How does it teach us to think about the Lord's relationship to us? Our relationship to Him? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You are my Shepherd, and I...*

2. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus *knows* His sheep, *leads* His sheep, *guards* His sheep, *lays down His life* for His sheep, and *brings other sheep* into the fold. Should the shepherds of our churches be doing such things? Explain. *I pray, Lord, for the shepherds of our church, that they might...*

3. What "wolves" threaten the Lord's flock in our day? How should our shepherds guard and defend us against them? *Give grace to our shepherds, Lord, that they may know how to defend Your flock and to...*

4. Jesus indicates that *power* flows through self-denial, the kind of *power* that leads to a higher and fuller experience of life. How should we expect that power to work in our lives? What does it mean for you to "lay down your life" so that you might "take it back" again? Is this to be a normal part of every believer's life? Explain. *I want to know Your power at work in me, Lord, so that...*

5. A shepherd considers his sheep extremely valuable. He knows them personally. He leads them to places where they can feed and be safe. He guards them, brings others to add to the flock, and denies his own comfort and convenience for their sake. Why? What promise do sheep hold out for a shepherd? What does the Lord want to do in and through you? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"To be troubled was proper to the flesh, and to have power to lay down his life and take it again when he wanted was no property of people but of the Word's power. For human beings die not by their own power but by necessity of nature and against their will. But the Lord, being himself immortal but having mortal flesh, had power as God to become separate from the body and to take it again when he wanted to.

Concerning this David speaks in the psalm: 'You shall not leave my soul in hades, neither shall you suffer your holy One to see corruption.' For it was appropriate to the flesh, corruptible as it was, that it should no longer after its own nature remain mortal, but because of the Word who had put it on, it should remain incorruptible. For since he was conformed to our condition, having come in our body, so we when we receive him partake of the immortality that is from him." *Athanasius of Alexandria (295-373 AD)*

The love of the Father is bound up in the self-denying love of Jesus for dumb sheep such as you and I. How great that love must be! Whom can you tell about that love today?

*Closing Prayer*

I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel;  
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.  
I have set the LORD always before me;  
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will rest in hope.  
For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.  
You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16.7-11

**Psalm 16.7-11** (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

I bless Your Name, O Lord; my mind instructs each night.

You teach me by Your Word, and guide me in the right.

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;

Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.

But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;

Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,

You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;

Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

*The Gospel of John: John 10.1-18*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why did Jesus choose to identify Himself as our Shepherd?
2. What does Jesus do for His sheep as their Shepherd?
3. In what ways should Jesus' example as our Good Shepherd be instructive for us? For church leaders?
4. How does the power of God work to elevate us to a higher life in Him?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 10.1-18? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

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Thank you.