

January

Jesus - The Good Shepherd

John 10:11 NIV

*"I am the good shepherd.
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*

Growing up in public school, there were many moments when one of my teachers needed to step away from the classroom and, in her absence, placed a student "in charge" of the rest of the class.

"Listen to, (so and so)," they'd direct. "I'll be right back, but while I'm gone, this student is going to make sure you're doing what you're supposed to be doing."

Truthfully, I never wanted to be the one appointed temporary leader while my teacher was away. It always seemed to end the same way. The room began full of silent students, but a few moments into the teacher's absence, my peers began talking, stood up from their seats, and the teacher of the neighboring class had to step into the room to settle the disruption.

From a young age, I understood two points that important to today's lesson. 1.) There is a difference between one with true authority and someone appointed with temporary control. 2.) A group of students closely mimics a flock of sheep-- easily distracted, at times hard to herd, and where one wanders, others often follow.



Scripture speaks frequently about sheep and the shepherds who watch over them. One passage, the 23rd Psalm might be the most well-known sheep/shepherd passage.

Take a moment to read Psalm 23:1-4,

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me
beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no
evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

What stands out to you from this passage?

Take a moment to read and reflect on John 10: 14-15,

*"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep
know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the
Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."*



David recognized that the Lord was his Shepherd. This is a powerful realization in any person's life. See, when God is *our* Shepherd it means we are not in charge of leading ourselves. It means we are not in charge of being our own protection or our own source of anything.

Our role when we accept Jesus as Shepherd is to be faithful following sheep. It means we don't try to lead ourselves to still waters. It means we listen for His voice to be our guide. It means we aren't left to our own defenses. We are dependent on Him. So, we must look to Him, follow Him and remember that He is the ultimate authority over us.

There is a difference between knowing Jesus is a Shepherd and trusting Him to be our own. In your own words, what is the difference?

Jesus said in John 10:27, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."* In what areas is the Lord leading you to trust Him and follow Him today? In what areas have you taken temporary control over your own life rather than yield to His true authority?



Let's Pray

Father, I pray for my friends like the writer of Hebrews prayed. "Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20-21)

