

This is Jesus

John 10: The Good Shepherd

- I heard a story of a guy who was looking out over a pasture, that was loaded with sheep... there were hundreds of sheep out there
 - They weren't one flock, there were actually a few shepherds out there that had their flocks intermingled
 - The shepherds were talking amongst each other, hanging out, and letting the sheep graze and play.
 - But then the time came for them to go, and all of the shepherds started calling out to their sheep
 - The guy thought, well this is going to be a mess, there's hundreds of sheep out there!
 - But then he noticed that all of the sheep began to make their way back to their specific shepherd
- It was an incredible sight to behold, not a single sheep was lost or left behind, or went with the wrong Shepherd
 - I began to watch videos this week of sheep being called by their shepherds, and it's incredible that no matter how many other people try to call them, even if they use the same call, the sheep only respond to their shepherds voice
 - However, if the sheep don't have a shepherd, they're not just going to follow someone else... they're gonna be lost and wondering around
 - The relationship between a shepherd and his sheep, takes time, and is a very intentional and intimate relationship that develops over time of the shepherd taking care of all of the needs of his sheep. The sheep learn to trust and love the shepherd
 - Shepherds who did not have that intimate relationship with their sheep, would not have any of those sheep be able to recognize their

voice and it would leave the sheep directionless, not knowing where to go.

- God rebuked the leaders of Israel in Ezekiel 34: He said to the prophet, ***“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My***

sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.” -Ezekiel 34:2-6 (ESV)

- Now fast forward to the time of Jesus and we see Jesus seeing the same exact thing happening to the people of Israel all over again.
- Matthew writes in his gospel, ***“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” -Matthew 9:35-36 (ESV)***
- Jesus recognized their need, not just for A shepherd, but for THE Shepherd, which He has come to be.
- We pick up John’s narrative in chapter 10, when Jesus says, ***“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. But He who enters by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them.” -John 10:1-6 (ESV)

- You ever have those conversations or situations where you think someone's trying to pay you a compliment, but you're not really sure how to take it?
- Like I remember years ago, whenever I was a young floppy haired youth pastor, I got the opportunity to preach on a Sunday. And I felt

that it went well, but afterwards, I had a lady tell me that they were visiting for the first time, said she enjoyed the service, but admitted that when she saw me get up to preach, she leaned over to her husband and said, “We should have stay home today...”

- So, I know what she was trying to say, but I couldn't help but think, “What about me says, you shoulda stayed home today??”
- I think those listening to Jesus here could be feeling something similar
 - It says, they didn't really understand what He was trying to say
 - They could be thinking, “Ok we hear your Shepherd analogy...but what are you saying about us? Are you calling us sheep?”
 - Sheep weren't know for being the brightest animals in the pen
- But I think this can actually be one of the most comforting teachings of Jesus because when

you think about it, there was only one responsibility that sheep had.

- That was to follow the voice of the Shepherd
- That's it! The only thing that they have been brought up and trained to do is, learn His voice, and follow it.
 - And it's not like these sheep are gullible, dense, wishy-washy beings that will follow whatever voice they hear
 - No, they will not follow a random voice
 - So the enemies tactic, is not always to get us to follow a different voice, they just want us to stop hearing His voice.
- Now, Jesus is in the midst of still calling out the Pharisees in this passage...at the end of chapter 9, He's letting them know that their arrogance and self-assurance is keeping them in spiritual blindness.
- And you can feel a little bit of Gods rebuke from Ezekiel 34 in this passage because He's

pointing out the type of Shepherd that the people really need

- But He goes as far to let them know that they're not actually shepherds at all!
- ***“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. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.” -John 10:12-13 (ESV)***
- Jesus let's them know that no matter how highly they think of themselves and what pedestals they put themselves on, they're really not shepherds
 - At most their just hired hands.
 - And because they have no personal investment in theses sheep, the enemy is going to take advantage of it.
- Jesus tells us what the entire purpose of the enemy is, ***“The thief comes only to steal***

and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I Am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” -John 10:-11 (ESV)

- So if the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy,
- **JESUS COMES TO PROVIDE, PROTECT, AND SAVE**
- STOP AND PRAY
- **JESUS COMES TO PROVIDE**
- Two things that we see Him providing in this passage is identity and direction
- *And isn't that really what every human being is really looking for and wanting to know? WHO we are, and WHERE we're going?*
- In verse 3-4 Jesus says, ***“The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought***

out all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him...” -John 10:3-4 (ESV)

- He KNOWS His and calls His Sheep BY NAME!
 - He knows who they are, individually, uniquely
 - Can you imagine a shepherd with over a thousand sheep in his fold, and yet he still knows each of them by name??
 - That would be mind boggling!
 - Idk, if you're like me, but I'm so bad at remembering names
 - And I try so hard at it!
 - Because I absolutely HATE the feeling, whenever I meet someone, and then the next time I see them I have to ask them their name again
 - You can almost see an immediate deflation of the relationship, because “Oh, you don't remember my name...”
 - It makes me feel like such a jerk, because it's like I couldn't care enough to learn and

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remember the most basic but personal information about a person

- But thank God I'm not the GOOD SHEPHERD
 - Because He never forgets a face or a name
 - He knows you by name, and He calls you by name
 - Jesus does not call a crowd, He calls individuals
- And why is He so intentional about pointing out the fact that He knows you by name?
 - Because, especially in the Hebrew culture, there was great importance placed on the naming process
 - God was intentional about having Adam name all of the animals at creation
 - Because naming gave significance to every living creature
 - That's why on farms, whenever there is an animal that they know is going to be eaten by the family one day, the farmer won't let

his family name that animal because he doesn't want them to form that personal attachment to something that their going to digest soon

- How many times throughout scripture, whenever God was doing a great work in or through someone, would He give them a new name?
- You see, Jesus want's you to know that He KNOWS YOU BY NAME, because He wants you to know that He places significance and value on your life
- He knows who you are and He defines who you are
- Again, verse 3 says, "He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all His own..."
- GOD CALLS YOU HIS OWN...That's what defines you

- No matter where you were, what you did or didn't do, or what pit or valley you had to be pulled from
- No matter what anyone else has ever spoken over your life or called you
- Whenever you come to the Shepherd and follow His voice, He says you are HIS OWN
 - And this gives a word picture of being a prized possession.
 - It's not just like something you own that sits on a shelf or a closet somewhere
 - No this is a possession that you are proud of and put on display
 - That is where your significance and value comes from! Not by your performance or the opinions of other people
- You have value because HE VALUES YOU
 - And it gives Him JOY to know you by name and call you His own
- He provides you that identity, and THEN He provides direction
 - And in that order!
 - This is what so many people fail to understand, He calls you by name! He calls you His own! and THEN He leads you out!
- You see the thief, wants you to think that you need to be lead first. The thief says *"No, you need to go out and live righteously for a little while first, do a few things that He would be proud of and THEN God will call you His own!"*
- BUT THAT'S NOT THE GOSPEL!
 - There is nothing I could ever do to be good enough for Him. I'm just a sheep! Would you ever expect a sheep to go through an initiation process, or prove itself in some way to the shepherd before being able to be a part of the sheep fold!
 - We don't expect that much of sheep!
- There are no tests to pass before you come into the flock and family of God

- He calls you by name, whether you were looking for Him or not, and if you choose to follow His Voice, THEN and ONLY THEN will He begin to lead you into a new life
- He provides you with true identity, He provides true purpose, He provides true meaning to your life, He provides you direction, He provides you clarity, He provides you rest for your soul
- We see this played out in Psalm 23 when David writes, ***“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.” -Psalm 23: 1-3 (ESV)***
- I find my identity in my Shepherd, I’m His own, I follow His voice, and He leads me in the direction that I need to go.
- And then in verse 4, David goes on to say, ***“Even 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.” -Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

- Which leads us to our second point:
- **JESUS COMES TO PROTECT**
- Jesus says, “ But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” ...then He goes on to clarify in verse 9, ***“I Am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” -John 10:9 (ESV)***
 - Many times, the sheep pen, where the sheep would rest at night, would be an enclosed area, with walls or fence tall enough to keep predators out, and it would only one entrance
 - And many times, especially out in the country side, there would not even be a door or gate on the sheep pen
 - But the shepherd, or the shepherd’s assistant would spend the night laying across the

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entrance, to provide protection for the sheep wandering in the middle of the night...and also to provide protection from predators

- Jesus wants you to know that if the enemy is going to come after you, they're gonna have to go through Him first
 - I wonder if a lot of times, the "attacks of the enemy" that we talk about, are really nothing more than them growling on the other side of the fence
 - Trying to scare us, trying to instill a little bit of fear, a little bit of hesitation into our spirit
 - But the reality is, we're still safe, because they can't get passed the Shepherd
- Financial Attacks: Fridge, Fletch Health Insurance, Radiator, Windshield, Thermostat, Pads and Rotors,
 - But all that it is, is petty attempts from across the fence because we had all of those car expenses at once and then our church family

puts together some pastor appreciation cash that covered a lot of those expenses

- We get hit with 3 months of backlogged health insurance bills and then the State Convention tells me they're going to give us an entire year of free health insurance coverage
- Whenever the enemy is barking behind the fence, Jesus is there to keep showing us, that He's the One here to provide, He's the One here to protect, and He's the One leading us
- You see, what's really different about the way that shepherds lead their flock, is that they don't drive them from the back, they lead from the front
 - Shepherds never have the sheep go somewhere that they have not already gone themselves.
 - If there are any problems up ahead, the Shepherd will take care of it

- If there is any danger, the Shepherd will encounter it first.
- That's why David says He's got that Rod!
 - Because if that wolf or that thief or that enemy is coming to try and scatter or snatch the flock, they're gonna have to deal with the rod of the Shepherd!
- You know following the Shepherd can be scary because we don't always see what's up ahead, and we don't always know exactly where we are going
- But we can rest in the promise that He has come to protect us, He doesn't have us walk away from the valley of the shadows of death...but David says "Even when I walk THROUGH the valley of shadow of death, I don't have to fear because You are with me."
 - And He has His Rod to protect me from the enemy, and He has that staff to protect me from myself
- If you think of the shepherds staff, it would have that hook on the top of it, you know like a candy cane.
 - And the staffs were intentionally made that way because there were times whenever the sheep would get themselves in trouble
 - There were times whenever the sheep would begin to wander from the flock, sometimes they would take a wrong step and fall into a ditch, and the shepherd would have the staff to bring that sheep back, or to pull that sheep out from where it fell
- Know that even if you wander, and even if you fall, Jesus is here to bring you back and bring you up.
 - And being snatched up by that shepherds hook, is probably not going to be comfortable
- But we can find comfort in it because we know there is nowhere we can go from His presence, His love, and His protection

- Even when He has to protect us from ourselves
- So when the thief comes to steal, Jesus comes to Provide
 - When the thief comes to kill, Jesus comes to Protect
 - And when the thief comes to destroy:
- **JESUS COMES TO SAVE**
- Again in verse 9, Jesus says, ***“I Am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” -John 10:9 (ESV)***
 - Jesus is the Door, He’s the Way, the Truth and the Life, Peter said there is no other Name by which we are Saved.
 - We enter into the Family of God by Jesus and Jesus alone
 - Paul tells us that “If we confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe

in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved!”

- And there is no criteria to be met, because Romans 10:13 says, ALL WHO CALL UP ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED!
 - And why do we need to be saved?? Because without Jesus we’re just lost and wandering sheep
 - We’ve been blinded by sin, separated from God, and are headed for nothing but death and destruction...THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH!
- *You see, sheep have this tendency, that whenever a stranger or a predator approaches, the sheep just turn inward, put all of their heads together, and just hope the problem goes away*
 - And all that does is just leave the susceptible to attack!
 - When most creatures would put their backs together and face the danger and try and

defend themselves, or at least run for their lives!...it's like the sheep just put their head down and pretend it's not there

- Now, how many times is that exactly how we live...
 - We just put our heads down, and think if we don't see it it's not there
 - So we'll pretend that sin doesn't exist, or its not a problem
 - We'll pretend that satan isn't real, or that there aren't any enemies of hell trying to keep us from hearing or following the Shepherd
 - We'll pretend that we have things figured out, that we don't need help, that we can handle things on our own.
 - You can have a plan without a purpose
 - You can have fun with no fulfillment
 - You can live a life that doesn't last

- He goes on to day, ***"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*** (I want to provide eternal life for you to have to look forward to forever, but I also want you to live life to the absolute fullest right now, and I provided you identity, significance, value, purpose, meaning and direction, because...) ***I Am the good shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. I know My own and my own know Me... just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."*** ***John 10-11, 15 (ESV)***
- You see Jesus gives us life, because He gave His life
 - And make no mistake, nobody took it, He gave it...verse 18 says, "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..." -John 10:18
- And we so desperately needed Him to Give His life because we didn't have any means or

direction to be able to have any real life, because we were just sinful sheep, lost and wandering.

- Again, THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH! But because of Jesus, He provided the GIFT OF GOD WHICH IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD
- Jesus goes on to say, ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's Hand.” -John 10:27-28 (ESV)***
- Jesus provided the way to eternal life, because as one pastor put it, The Shepherd became a Sheep. Jesus is the Lamb of God. He allowed Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, so that he could be the sacrifice that the wages of our sin demanded
- We couldn't pay it ourselves, so He paid it for us.
- On that fateful as Jesus hung on that cross, that we deserved, Matthew describes that as He hung there darkness covered the land.
- Just as God said it would happen....get this, remember that rebuke that we read from the book of Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 34, God lists off all of the ways that the earthly shepherds were falling short, but then He goes on to promise, ***“As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.” -Ezekiel 34:12 (ESV)***
- The Shepherd has sought you out, He's provided a way for you, He offers you His divine protection, and He's invited you into His fold for all of eternity
- Will you accept it? Will you follow the Shepherd?

- *Or better yet, do you know the Shepherd's voice??*
- Again like we said before, the thief's tactic isn't necessarily to get you to follow a different voice but to keep you from hearing the Shepherd's voice
- And way too many Christians have fallen victim to that tactic. I've fallen victim of it before
 - For some reason we talk about having a relationship with God, but at the same time think that He doesn't actually talk to us anymore
 - So in turn, our entire prayer lives are centered around talking at God, without taking the time to listen for Him to respond
 - And it's kind of a tricky subject because we have seen too many people be manipulative about this, and we've heard blatant false teachers say, "God told me to say this, or God said that," and have used it as a means of gain for themselves
- Just like God rebuked through Ezekiel, calling out the shepherds for feeding themselves
- So in turn, we just kind of stopped pursuing the voice of God in our lives.
- But you cannot be in an intimate relationship with someone that doesn't speak back.
- For some reason we buy into a theology that says, that God calls you into salvation but then goes silent
 - God wants to speak into your personal life, into your specific circumstances, into your exact season of life
 - But would we know it's Him when He speaks?
- Now God speaks to us all in a lot of different ways. He has designed us all specifically with different personalities and temperaments and He knows how to communicate to us specifically
- But do we take the time to listen?

- How much do we value hearing the voice of God in our lives?
 - You make time for what you value...and if you do not take the time to get still before God, and set aside a portion of your day to intentionally allow Him to speak to you, you will not know His voice
- But a common question is, how do we know it's God? How do we know it's not just our thoughts?
 - And that is a great question
 - Because this is something that we learn and grow in. Remember the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep takes a long time of intimacy and relationship before the sheep really know the voice of the shepherd
 - It's not just a switch that is turned on, this is something that we learn, that we grow in, and that we mature in.
 - Just as it takes time for a child to learn and grow in how to communicate, so we need to

learn and grow in our communication with God

- And the first thing that it is going to take is time.
- And that's the number 1 excuse that people have for not pursuing this...we have busy lives! Who has an extra 30 mins to an hour in the day??
- But you have time for what you make time for
- And what you make time for shows where your priorities and values are
 - And as you put together your busy schedule, if the things of God are taking the backseat, your priorities are probably not in order and the enemy will continue to use that to keep you from hearing the voice of God
- So again, how do you know it's the voice of God and not just your thoughts?
- We are going to dig into this a lot more later on in the year when we get to our prayer series, but I at least want to give you 3 filters to run

what you think you're hearing from God through...And first:

- SCRIPTURE: Is It Biblical?

- Is what you think God is telling you, line up with His word?
- He gives us the Bible as a guide to better recognize His Voice
- So does what you think God is telling you, contradict scripture in any way?
 - "Well I think God is telling me to empty my bank account and give it all to a ministry." ...well 1 Timothy 5:8 says, *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*
 - So that might not be Him, that might be you getting caught up in the moment...
- So make sure it's scriptural

- HIS GLORY: Does it Lift Him Up?

- Is what you're hearing more about Him than it is you?
- If I had a nickel for every time someone said, "Well I think God is telling me to do this, because He wants me to be happy...."
 - I'd have a lot of nickels!
 - I'm sorry if it sounds harsh, but if you think the motivation behind whatever you think God is telling you to do, is your happiness or comfort, it's probably not Him
- I don't think Paul would say, "You know God called me to go on all of these missionary journeys and be imprisoned, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and almost starve to death, because He wants me to be happy..."
- Probably not...but the result was God being Glorified and His Kingdom Advanced
- And many times God will call you into temporary discomfort so that it will result in eternal glory
- But the Glory is always His

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- So is it scriptural? Does it lift Him up? and thirdly:
- **YOUR SURRENDER: Does it Lead You To Depend On Him More?**
 - *Tithe story*
 - You could tell from the conversation, that he was only asking in the first place because he knew what he was supposed to do, but he was looking for a justification or a loop hole
 - There are times like that whenever it's almost like we're trying to tune out the voice of God in order to try and get an answer that we want
 - But very rarely will that ever happen
- So let's take the time to learn and grow in this! Listen for the voice of God, write down what you think He might be telling you, Filter it through Scripture, His Glory, and Your Surrender
- I promise you it will be worth it! And I hope and pray we have a group of believers here that truly hear from God.
- You're not going to grow in this by just coming a hearing a sermon on Sundays!
 - Because I don't want to burst any bubbles or anything, but I am NOT the voice of God in your lives!
 - And you know what? I don't wanna be, I don't want that pressure
 - I hope that God speaks to you through our services and sermons, and leads you into truth and knowing Him more through being here, but I want you to know His voice, not mine
- He's the Shepherd not me...when I look at this passage in John 10, to me the Sheep Pen reminds me of the church, this is the place where we all gather under the protection of the Shepherd.

- At most, I'm the gatekeeper from verse 3, just opening the Gate for the Shepherd
- But then when He calls, He calls to lead us out of the pen.
- We follow Him out to pasture, we follow Him out where the enemy roams free, where danger may lie, full of pits for us to fall in
- But we also follow Him out there were where there are other sheep, lost and wondering without a Shepherd
- Now we pointed out that sheep will not follow another Shepherd's voice that they don't know...but I did see one video where a farmer pointed out that sheep will follow another sheep.
- If there are any sheep without a flock, sometimes they will attach themselves to other sheep when they're in the pasture, and then when the shepherd calls his flock back to the pen, they just follow the other sheep, and then eventually that new sheep learns over time to hear and follow the Shepherd's voice.
- Isn't that a picture of what church is supposed to be??
- We follow the voice of the shepherd, He leads us out to where the lost sheep are, we get close to them, bring them back to the pen with us, in hopes that they hear the Shepherds voice
- But we can't lead someone to hear His voice if we're not listening for it ourselves!
- And we're not going to get there if we don't pursue it, daily, consistently!
- But the good new is, we CAN pursue Him, we CAN pursue an intimate prayer life, we CAN pursue the Glory of God because He first pursued us!
- CALL BAND
- **"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." -Psalm 23:6 (ESV)**

- That term follow, is more accurately translated pursue, chase, or run after!
- David is saying Goodness and Mercy is pursuing me, chasing me, running after me....ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE!
 - Even when I run away! His Goodness is chasing me
 - Even when I wander, His Mercy is running after me
 - Even when I fall, His Goodness and Mercy will still pursue me
- And if we can get to the point where allow ourselves to be completely consumed with gratitude, knowing no matter what I have done or will do, His Goodness is going to run after me no matter what!
- Man, then we can live our lives as a response to His Goodness, pursuing Him back, and pursuing others the way He has pursued us!