

**JOHN 10:11**  
**(OT: Ps 23:1-6; NT: Jn 10:11-21)**

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**INTRODUCTION: I AM the good shepherd.**

- Lots we could say about sheep – none of it complimentary.<sup>1</sup>
  - **Helpless:** Stuck on backs like turtle, warm weather will die in hours.
  - **Vulnerable:** Can't defend themselves from predators – sometimes huddle but often simply freeze – stand there without bleating until attacked/killed.
  - **Stupid:** One BBC article tells of time 1,500 of them followed each other off edge of cliff → 400 died but rest survived bc landed on soft heap of dead ones.
- No doubt something instructive about fact that Bible compares us to them – flock of morons, stumbling around – but that's not our focus today. WHY?
  - As one pastor says: Our focus isn't on the stupidity of the sheep; it's on the love of the shepherd.<sup>2</sup>
  - Not looking at YOU ARE sayings of Jesus, looking at I AM sayings of Jesus!  
*Look away from ourselves → And look to Jesus.*
- This approach faithful to the passage itself:
  - Jesus not frustrated with his flock → You know not frustrated with you today?
  - Instead, he wants us to know something about his heart.

**Transition:** But what?

- In calling himself the good shepherd, what does Jesus want us to understand?
- Grow in our love/affection for Jesus as see three things in this picture...

**1. The Good Shepherd LOVES Us.**

**State: VV11-13: I am the good shepherd.** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a **hired hand** and cares nothing for the sheep.

- Jesus **contrasts** himself with **hired hand** → Someone watching over flock but only bc getting paid for it.
  - When wolf comes to eat the sheep, hired hand thinks: “Not messing with that!”
  - As they turn and run, the sheep are eaten alive.
- But Jesus says: “I’m not like that. I’m the good shepherd.” Look at the comparison:
  - **V12:** Hired hand **does not own the sheep** → But Jesus has bought us at a price.
  - **V13:** Hired hand **cares nothing for the sheep** → But Jesus loves us more than life.
- This idea – that Jesus loves us more than life – is emphasized **FOUR TIMES** in passage:
  - **V11:** The good shepherd **lays down his life** for the sheep.
  - **V15:** I **lay down my life** for the sheep.
  - **V17:** I **lay down my life**.
  - **V18:** I **lay it down** of my own accord.
- In this chapter, Jesus mixes figures of speech: He is the **door**, and he is the **shepherd**.
  - No one image can fully capture all that he is and does.
  - And now he adds another picture → In this scene, Jesus is everything:  
*He's door, he's shepherd – and now he's Lamb, who will be slain for the sins of world.*

## Illustrate:

- I wonder who you love more than life? Who would you lay down your life for?<sup>3</sup>
  - Friend gave awkwardly honest answer that rang true → Described 3 categories:
    - 1. People I would die for without question.** My wife Rosie, my children. No question, no hesitation, I love them more than life. I'd die for any of them in a heartbeat, even though it would be my last.
    - 2. People I might die for but I'm not sure.** Not gonna name any names, but let's be honest – life is precious, not going to it up for anyone. All got people in our lives we care about, but when it comes to dying for them, well, we start to ask some questions, do some mental cost/benefit analysis. Might die for them but maybe not.
    - 3. People I would NOT die for.** Not today. Not tomorrow. Probably never.
  - How many are on the list of people you'd lay down your life for?
    - If we're honest, it's a **shortlist**.
    - You realize Jesus puts you on his **shortlist**? He loves you.
- This love is made yet more beautiful when remember that in Jesus' day – even good shepherds didn't die for their sheep.
  - When Jesus said he'd lay down life for sheep, original audience confused. WHY?
    - In their day – like ours – shepherds didn't die for their sheep!
    - Stick around to protect them, but not to the point of death. WHY?
    - Bc they weren't worth it!
  - And that's exactly the point. Jesus is saying:
    - I'm unlike any shepherd you've ever known → I love my sheep so much that I'll go to ridiculous lengths to save them.
    - This isn't cost-benefit analysis – **this is grace**.
  - You're not just on the shortlist, you're on the shortlist of grace.
    - Though we belong in third category → People for whom no reason he should die...
    - Jesus says: I love you more than life.

**Apply:** Might be blasphemous to say this in Knoxville, but my favorite Manning isn't Peyton – and it's not Eli or Archie either – it's Brennan.

- **Brennan Manning** – Marine, priest, alcoholic, author, and gospel-getting fool...
- Once wrote: *"My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it."*<sup>4</sup>
  - Don't let the discouragement of own **failures**, disapproval of **parents**, scolding of **spouse**, disappointment of **boss**, neglect of **friends**, and certainly not your perception of **yourself** distract you...
  - Like Manning said: Your deepest awareness of yourself can be that you are deeply loved by Jesus Christ...

**Transition:** The Good Shepherd LOVES Us...

- Second thing Jesus wants us to understand is important bc it shows us one of the things we can do with this love.
- Let's get into that by seeing: 1) The good shepherd LOVES us, and...

## 2. The Good Shepherd GATHERS Us.

**State:** Hang with me as we get into one of the great mission verses in all the NT...

- Jesus is in Israel/talking to Israelites → In that place/to that audience, he says: **V16: I have other sheep who are not of this fold.**
  - Continues the shepherding imagery and says:
    - Some of my sheep are from this fold – from Israel...
    - But some of my sheep are not of this fold – from other nations on earth.
  - He then continues...
- **I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice...**
  - I've come for them – for people from other nations too...
  - And they will hear me when I call...
- **So there will be one flock, one shepherd...**
  - One people, gathered from across the world to form one **global church**...
  - United under **one shepherd** – our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Apply:** There are a couple of reasons I love this verse...

### **FIRST: Bc of what it says about us...**

- It reminds us that we are part of that global flock.
  - Never forget:
    - If Jesus didn't come for the nations, he didn't come for us.
    - We are not in Israel → We are not Israelites.
  - Our salvation depends on the fact that Jesus came for the entire world.
- But he did come for entire world, and has gathered us, and here we are – part of his flock.
  - Don't let the miracle of your salvation grow cold.
  - It's incredible that Jesus offers forgiveness/healing to the entire world.

### **SECOND: And building on that – this verse reminds us that he's still at work.**

- Jesus is still gathering his global flock:
  - And incredibly, he invites us to be part of this work.
  - **That's one of the things he wants us to do with his love.**
    - We don't just keep it to ourselves...
    - We seek to share it with others – wherever they are on earth.
- This is why global mission has long been at the heart of our church → *We don't think you can be faithful to the ministry of Jesus without a radical commitment to the nations.*
- **WHY:**
  - Every year we send almost **\$3M to 40 countries** across the earth.
    - Partner with brothers/sisters church planting, youth ministry, media ministry, bible translation, refugee ministry, leadership development...
    - All over the earth.
  - Working on a goal to participate in **500 church plants by 2030** → Come to mission conference next month to hear more about that...
  - We go to **unreached people** in the **unreached places** on earth...
    - We were going to show this video last week...
    - I didn't want you to miss it, so let's play it now → **[PLAY VIDEO]**
- Why do we spend all this time, energy, and money?!?!

- Bc Jesus **loves** the world → And he is still **gathering** his global church.
  - As he saved us, he's still at work.
  - And we count it a privilege to partner in that.
- **[Summary]: One of the things we do with his love is share it with others.**

**THE CLOSE: Invite you to consider how you can do that this week.**

- Is there someone in your life who needs the love of Christ?
- I was in NYC this week...
  - One of our partners said we share our faith by building **wells not walls**.<sup>5</sup>
    - She said that in Australia shepherds don't gather sheep by building a **wall** to keep them in...
    - Instead, they build a **well** to draw them in.
  - So it is with us:
    - We don't need to force people to come to X...
    - Instead, we hold out his love...
      - And then he draws his own to himself.
      - The beauty of Jesus is what gathers people in.
- Loved by X – someone in your life for whom you can be a well of his love this week?
  - Might be in your own **home** – your roommate, spouse, or kids...
  - Might be in your **office** – your colleague, boss...
  - Might be in your **community** – someone at the gym or in your book club.
- How could you embody the love of X for them this week → Hold it out **to them** that he might gather **them in**?
  - Maybe you could **listen** carefully to what their struggling with and **share** how Jesus helped you when you struggled with the same thing...
  - Maybe you could send one of these **I AM sermons** and ask what they think...
  - Maybe you could **serve** them in some practical way – watch their kids, drop off a meal, help them meet a deadline at work...
  - Maybe you could **pray** for them and let them know you did...
- You never know what Jesus will do with these small acts of faith → He might just use you to gather them to himself.

**Transition:** How can we be sure he'll do this? One last thought from the text: 1) The good shepherd LOVES us, 2) The good shepherd GATHERS us, and...

**3. The Good Shepherd LIVES.**

- Remember that Jesus is alive...
  - Yes, he died:
    - Shortlist wasn't theoretical → He wasn't just prepared to die, he actually died.
    - Took on wolves of sin/death → On the cross, they tore him apart.
  - But then he rose again to life:
    - **V17: I lay down my life that I may take it up again.**
    - **V18: I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.**
      - Jesus has defeated our ultimate enemies – defanged/declawed sin/death.
      - Now he is alive, loving/gathering his sheep to himself.
- Loved by him, join him in this → And be a well of his love this week.*

## RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

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### Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John, Volumes 2 and 3*.
- John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*.
- Iain D. Campbell, *I AM... Exploring the 'I am' sayings of John's Gospel*.
- D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*.
- Matt Chandler, *I AM*.
- Ray Cortese, *To Believe*.
- Paul Jeon, *Life Eternal: The Gospel of John*.
- Timothy Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*.
- Andreas Köstenberger, *John*.
- Logos Bible Software.
- Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*.
- Tim Mackie, *Read Scripture: Illustrated Summaries of Biblical Books*.
- R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Christ: The I AM Sayings of Jesus*.
- Christian Wiman, *Zero at the Bone: Fifty Entries Against Despair*.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> These examples are taken from James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel According to John, Volume 3*, 758; and David Stephenson, *I Am the Door*, accessed [here](#) on 1/25/24.

<sup>2</sup> I owe this phrase to Matt Chandler, *The Good Shepherd*, accessed [here](#) on 5/6/20.

<sup>3</sup> I owe this illustration to Paul Jeon, *Life Eternal: The Gospel of John, part 28 – John 10:1-21*, accessed [here](#) on 1/25/24.

<sup>4</sup> Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Chan, the Missional Catalyst at City to City NYC, shared this illustration in a conversation on 1/22/24.