

(John - Part 38): Jesus the Only True Shepherd of the Sheep

by A.W. Tozer

The 10th chapter of John emphasizes the importance of recognizing the true shepherd, Jesus Christ, who comes through the door of the kingdom and meets every test.

Duration: 34:24

Scripture: Psalm 23:1, John 10:1-9, John 10:27

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the theme of the shepherd and the sheepfold, drawing inspiration from Psalm 23. The speaker highlights seven points of attention in the first five verses of John 10, including the sheepfold, the door, the false shepherd, the true shepherd, the porter, the sheep, and the stranger. Jesus is portrayed as the true shepherd who enters the sheepfold through the door and leads his sheep. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and following the voice of the true shepherd, while being cautious of the voice of strangers. The sermon concludes with an invitation to listen to the voice of the shepherd and respond to the call of repentance and forgiveness.

Transcript

Now, we're entering tonight the tenth chapter of the book of John, the shepherd chapter, and I promise you that if you will keep coming over the next few Sunday nights, that if you are a Christian, that is, if you are interested in the things of God, you'll not be disappointed. And tonight I want to sort of begin with the first little section, for that chapter is divided into sections, and I want to read the first six verses. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Jesus now is speaking, of course, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but cometh up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them up. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

And the stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. That's the first five verses, I said six, but it's five because the sixth verse begins a new section, and it said, This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not. Then in verse 7, 6 is a changeover, a modulation into verse 7, Then said Jesus unto them, but the then, we don't know, that could have been a

week later, two weeks later, a month later, or it could have been immediately.

The point is, the first five verses are a union. Now, this is the great shepherd chapter. It is a developing and an extending of the shepherd's song.

I thought when hearing Mrs. Anderson sing that lovely little green pastures that she sang this morning, I wonder how many, if the facts were all in and the truth were known, I wonder how many thousands of hymns have been written on the 23rd Psalm, based on that song. You're new, and almost every time somebody gets up to sing, you're a new song on the 23rd Psalm. And this chapter is a development of the 23rd Psalm.

There are seven points of attention here in these first five verses, seven of them. There's the sheepfold and the door by which the shepherd enters the fold. There's a false shepherd, a true shepherd, the porter, the sheep, and the stranger.

They're there. I didn't put them there to read them in. They're here.

In these first five verses, there's first of all the sheepfold. And I ought to say, I think, that while this has a very intensely spiritual meaning, a lofty and elevated meaning, it is at the same time a very homely and simple illustration drawn from the shepherd and his sheep, and clings and follows very closely to the simple truth about sheep and shepherds. The Lord simply took it and, without any change, elevated it to the heavenlies.

Now, first of all, here's the sheepfold. What is this sheepfold? It is a place of rest and safety for the sheep. And here it is the spiritual kingdom of God.

I believe in the kingdom of God, don't you? I believe in the kingdom of God. I believe in the kingdom of God. I don't believe in a dual kingdom or a dispensationalized kingdom, or a kingdom that is the kingdom of God one time and the kingdom of heaven another, and there's two different things, all of that confusion.

I just believe in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of our Father, the kingdom of heaven, which is the same as the kingdom of God, the safe resting place for those who inhabit the kingdom, the palace, the mansion of the king where his family gathers. And this is the kingdom of God. It's called here the sheepfold, and how lovely and gentle and tender this illustration is.

The sheep are here, and the shepherd is there, and the walls are strong around, and there's only one door, and the shepherd is at the door, and nobody can get in to bother the sheep. They can lie down and sleep because they are safe in the fold. Now, this spiritual kingdom is prepared by the almighty God himself for his people, and comes to us through grace and redeeming blood.

That's how we get it. The world is outside that kingdom, but this blessed kingdom of God was given to us by God himself, and it was through his grace and mercy and his eternal plan of redemption, wrought by his son on the cross of Calvary at the resurrection, that this kingdom, this sheepfold, was made safe. I'd like to have testified tonight, and I'd just like to have told the people that I find myself in the sheepfold.

I am a sheep. We in this country, we didn't raise sheep. Don't raise sheep the way they do over there.

They raise them with dogs here, and they send a dog out after their sheep. They wouldn't send any dogs out after sheep. The dog was driven away with a club, and the shepherd took personal care of these

sheep.

But over here, you know, they raise them by machinery and herd them with dogs. But even though we didn't know how to raise sheep out where I came from, I love this sheep, the little old, long-legged, woolly-tailed lambs staggering around in February and March when they were born. I love to see the sheep.

And there isn't anything quite so tender on the farm as the love of a poor, dumb old sheep for her land. Now, the dumbest animal on the farm, without any doubt, is a sheep. A pig has got a college education compared with a sheep.

Their heads slope back. There isn't much room for brains. Consequently, there aren't many.

But God made sheep to depend upon shepherds. They didn't need many brains. They just needed to know their shepherd well, and the shepherd would provide the brains and the care and the green pastures and all the rest.

Well, that's the fold now. Then there's the door by which the shepherd enters the fold. And before the sheep can come in, the shepherd must take oversight of that fold, and he must know where the door is, and the shepherd, the real shepherd, comes to the door with authority and assurance.

He knows what he's doing because he is the shepherd. Now, this door here is not Jesus Christ, our Lord. Later on, it becomes Jesus, our Lord, because the shepherd stands in the door and becomes the door.

But the opening into the fold is not Jesus Christ. The opening into the fold is the door which Jesus himself enters. In other words, when Jesus Christ came to the world, he had to come through the door of the kingdom in order that he might become shepherd and king of the kingdom and Lord of that fold.

And he had to come through the door. Now, what was the door? The door, in these first five verses, is God's appointed way and carefully indicated in the Old Testament order and predicted in detail in Old Testament prophecy. John the Baptist came preaching, and he made a great many converts.

Here they were, great many converts. Nobody had died for them yet, they simply had been converted to repentance and remission of sin, and there they were. And now someone was to come who shoelaces it.

John was not worthy to stoop down and unloose. And somebody was to come and prove himself to be the true shepherd. And to get there, he had to come through the door.

And it was the door of Old Testament prediction, the door of prophecy, the door of detailed, outlined prophecy and prediction of the Old Testament. He had to come through the Old Testament ritualistic, mosaic way so that when he appeared, he could enter the door and take over and everybody would know that he was the true shepherd. Now, I want you to notice what that door meant to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before he could enter and take over with authority and assurance and call the sheep to him and become Lord of the sheepfold, he had to prove himself. So he had to come, first he had to be of the seed of Abraham. And being of the seed of Abraham, he had to come of the Lion of Jacob.

And being of the Lion of Jacob, he had to come also of the Lion of David. And being of the Lion of David, he had to be born in the country of Palestine. Being born in the country of Palestine, he had to be born in the village of Bethlehem.

Being born in the village of Bethlehem, he had to be born of of a virgin mother. Being born of a virgin mother, he had to be born at a specific time in history. Buddha was born three hundred years too soon.

Mohammed was born several hundred years too late. This shepherd, if he was to follow and come in at the Old Testament door of prediction, he had to be born at a specific time in history laid down in the book of Daniel. Then there had to be fulfillment of detailed predictions.

He had to be called out of Egypt. Oh, there were so many things that he had to do. The sheep had to be scattered, that is, the lambs had to be scattered for a time while the shepherd was slain.

Then the shepherd had to rise again from the dead. Not only all of this, but he had to prove all of this. Now there were false shepherds, Jesus said.

Notice. He said here that a stranger they will not follow. And the stranger, that is, anybody else except the true shepherd, he comes in, he's a thief and a robber because he doesn't come in at the door.

He doesn't prove himself to be the real shepherd. Understand, whatever you've been taught, remember this, that the person who comes in as a thief and a robber, he's not a church member who gets into membership without the new birth, as we preachers like to say. He's not talking here about church members getting into the church, he's talking about the shepherd getting into the fold and proving himself the true shepherd who had a right to be in the fold.

And the false shepherds, the thieves and the robbers, they were the ones who tried to prove they were the true shepherds, they were the messiahs, and they had a right to call the sheep to them. They had a right to enter the fold and take over with authority. And Jesus said that they were the false shepherds.

They were the strangers and nobody would want to listen to them, and they came not to help anybody, but to destroy. Now, I want you to notice that there never was one of these false shepherds that could qualify. A rather amusing and yet very pertinent little illustration of this is the time that one of these false shepherds, who was born too late, came to the United States, or England, I don't remember, which it seems to me it was the United States, and he declared himself to be the messiah, that is, the true shepherd.

And of course, the world grabbed on to him, and a church was opened to him. And he pulled up in a big rig of some sort, as we'd say on the farm, a rig, whether it was back in the buggy days, I don't remember, but he pulled up and they had laid a canopy out from the church door to the sidewalk so his royal majesty wouldn't get his little tootsies dirty on the sidewalk. And just about the time this magnificent carriage drove up, and the now defunct messiah got out to march up in stately dignity and royal pomp to the church, declaring himself to be the messiah, the Salvation Army Band went down the middle of the street.

And what do you suppose they were playing and singing at the top of their voices with the accompaniment of the big bass drum? They were singing, I shall know him, I shall know him by the prints of the nails in his hand. And this fellow had everything but the prints of the nails in his hand. He couldn't show the marks of the nails.

He couldn't show where they'd driven the spikes in his feet. He was a false shepherd, and he wasn't there to help anybody. He was there to line his pockets with what is elegantly known as moolah, which has more power in the Church of Christ today than most preachers have, money.

Well, you see, no shepherd but one, nobody but one could prove himself, only one, and he was our Lord Jesus himself. Now, he was the true shepherd. And I would point out to you that when Jesus came, he came of the seed of Abraham, and he came of the line of Jacob.

Now, he could come of the seed of Abraham and not come of the line of Jacob over where our nurse friend down is. There are people there of the seed of Abraham, but they are not of the line of Jacob in Arabia. They are of the seed of Abraham, but they did not come from the loins of Jacob.

Therefore, no Arab could possibly be the Messiah. And on the other hand, they could have come of the seed of Jacob and still not have been in any wise in the Messianic line. And then they could have been born of the line of David and not have been born in Palestine.

There are a lot of people that have come down from the line of Abraham that were not born in Palestine. Now, I tell you, you can just find them down here all around over the streets of Chicago and all over the world in the village of Bethlehem. But our Lord Jesus Christ met every test, every detailed test.

And then last of all, they took him out and they pierced his side. And he cried, Eloi, Eloi, lemme sit back tonight. And he proved himself to be on every detail, he proved himself to be the Messiah, the true shepherd, the one who had a right to come in at the door with authority and take over and call the sheep and protect them and be their true shepherd.

Now, who's the porter? Well, there was a man who said, Behold, the sheepfold of God is about to appear. Behold, I come to bring you tidings. Repent and be forgiven of your sins, for the kingdom of God is coming in.

And there is one coming to open that kingdom and be its Lord and open that fold and be its shepherd. And I don't know who he is yet, but when he comes, I'll be happy if I can only unloose his shoes, for I am not worthy even to do that. And then when at last the dove came and descended upon Jesus Christ, John the Baptist pointed and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, this is he of whom I speak unto you, saying, There cometh one after me mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to unlatch.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And thus the shepherd opened the door by saying, Behold, the Lamb of God. Or the shepherd said, the porter, I mean, said, This is the shepherd.

Now, John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and he came with all of the Old Testament line converging upon him. And when Jesus Christ appeared, he stepped aside, the porter stepped aside, and turned the sheepfold over to the shepherd. And Jesus Christ, our Lord, came in and finally died for his sheep.

Now, brethren, that's always the trouble with the false shepherd. He wants to live, but he never wants to die. He wants the fleece of the sheep, but he's not willing to die for the sheep.

But the true shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. The true shepherd came not to destroy the sheep, but to destroy the devil and sin. And the false shepherd comes to destroy and kill and rob and fleece the people.

When a man came who was to be the true shepherd, he had to die for the sheep. Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, was ready to and did die for that sheep. Now, the sheep themselves, who are they? Well, the sheep aren't the goats.

There's a difference between sheep and goats. You know, we get our figures of speech all mixed up. Someday when we all get to heaven and we get a new equipment inside our heads, then we'll understand everything.

But in the meantime, we'll fall over one another's feet, I suppose. But there is a feeling abroad that all you have to do to a goat is get him converted and he'll become a sheep. Now, God never performs any miracles like that, brethren.

The Lord never made a sheep out of a goat yet, and there isn't any place in the Bible that indicates that God ever made a sheep out of a goat. A goat is a goat, and he'll be a goat until he dies, and he'll die a goat. But a sheep is a sheep.

A sheep may be a lost sheep or he may be a saved sheep, but he's a sheep nevertheless. Who are the sheep? I don't know exactly who they are, but all over the city of Chicago, there are some sheep. I don't know which ones they are, and if they were paraded before me, and if I were to stand at State and Madison and be asked to pick out the sheep, I wouldn't be able to pick out the lost sheep.

I might be able to pick out the saved sheep they'd be carrying in the Bible, or have the smile of Jesus Saved button or something. I might pick out the saved sheep, but I couldn't pick out the lost sheep. But God knows where the lost sheep are.

And the lost sheep are the sheep that are still lost. Though they're sheep, they're lost sheep. And the Bible never says anything about the shepherd going out to find the goat.

It says he went out to find the sheep. The sheep that was lost. But you know these lost sheep had something that no goat ever had.

They had these lost sheep. They were ready to hear and to come. They knew a voice.

They knew the voice. They were troubled. Old Jacob was a lost sheep.

His brother Esau was a goat. And Esau never, never had any sense of divinity, never any sense of divinity on his life at all. He lived in the red plague.

He ate the same red pot. And he was a decent enough fellow, but he never had anything, any tug, any pull, any lift at his soul. There was never any longing for God, any desire to be different.

He heard no voice. But crooked old Jacob heard a voice. And he was bothered, he was troubled by the voice that he heard.

And he went out into sin, troubled by that voice. But at last you know the story of how he came home. He came home in two sections.

He came home and then he wandered a while and then he finally made it clear through and got his right name and got rid of the old Jacob name and got Israel. He'd been a sheep all the time, but he'd been a lost sheep. And then the Lord had found him.

And you will find, brother and sister, that everybody that ever gets converted is a person who, if they will look at their own hearts, will discover that somewhere back down the line they felt the pull and tug of God. I came from a home that people don't like to have me call them pagan, but they, it was pagan. I called

myself a pagan in an editorial.

The managing editor circled it and said, do you want to call yourself a pagan? I sure I want to call myself a pagan. We were a pagan home. We had no religion around there at all.

Nobody prayed. Nobody knew God. Nobody went to church.

There was an old red New Testament my Uncle Clem had had. He'd died years before. And that was all religion we had around the place.

There wasn't even a hymn book around the place. We were pagans, just pagans. I remember when I was a young fellow, I don't know how old, maybe as old as my friend Harry down here.

I went to bed one night, and I don't know whether I was scared or just exactly what it was, but nobody talked to me about God. But I felt a strange, wonderful something. And I began to talk to that wonderful something.

And finally there was a warmth of delight that came down over my heart as I lay there in my pagan bed there on that farmhouse in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. And I was so happy and delighted that I said to myself, I'm Jesus' little boy. Nobody had ever told me to say that.

Nobody had ever fed that into my mind. I'd never heard the expression. But I went to sleep that night saying, I'm Jesus' little boy.

Well, of course that wore off because nobody knew anything about it. I had no Bible. I couldn't have quoted a verse of scripture if they had been asked.

But something had happened. And maybe ten years later, when I was about seventeen, maybe eight years later, I was converted and knew it and knew when and knew how. You tell me that God wasn't getting a poor old lamb, a poor pagan lamb ready back there all by himself in a dark bedroom in a farmhouse? He was.

I was a lost sheep, but I was hearing a voice. And I didn't know what it meant and there was nobody to tell me, but I was hearing it. I believe in that.

And here are the sheep. I don't know where the sheep are, but I know there are some people that never hear a voice. They live in this world as cold and hard and carnal, and they may be decent, they may be moral, they may be generous, they may be faithful to their wife and family and good pillars of society, but they can never say, I'm troubled, I heard something, I felt a tug, a pull, a longing, something that dissatisfied me.

They're always satisfied with their car and their boat and their stocks and bonds and their houses and their family and their lawn and they're nice people. You feel like a dog in saying anything about them. But they're just made of this world.

They belong down here. The lines between them and God are broken completely. There is no impulse.

They hear nothing. There are drunken bums down here tonight that have been since three o'clock this afternoon guzzling one mug of liquor after another. On their way home they'll cry, curse themselves, and wish they'd gone to church instead.

They're bothered, they're bothered, they're hearing something. They're lost sheep and they don't belong out there in the goat pen. They're the sheep.

Then here's the stranger. Now, these strangers that Jesus talked about, this stranger Jesus talked about, he said, his sheep, wherever they are, wherever they are, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold but clambereth up some other way, the same as a thief and a robber. He that entereth in by the shepherd of the sheep, and to him the porter opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when he put forth his own sheep, he goeth before them into the green pastures, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. But a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. Their strangers are those who come claiming to be, to have a right to the sheep's love, but they're false.

They're there as thieves and robbers. They are there only for themselves, that's all. And these real sheep, they won't hear any such voice as that.

But you know what I have read? I have read, and I think it's accurate, that a sick sheep will follow a stranger. A healthy sheep knows the voice of his master, and he won't hear any other voice but the voice of his master. But if he gets sick and things go wrong with him, then he'll listen to another voice.

And when a sheep wanders off after a stranger, it's because he's a sick sheep. A whole sermon ought to be preached on that, that in the day in which we live, we're hearing all kinds of voices, and the poor, sick sheep are running after shepherds that have no qualification whatsoever. They have no nail marks in their hands.

They have no oil on their head. They have no sacrifice in their heart. They're not out to give, they're out to get.

They're not out to protect the sheep, they're out to fleece the sheep. They're not out to die for the lambs, they're out to slay the lambs for their own aggrandizement. But it's remarkable how many of these poor, sick sheep will follow after such shepherds.

We have them all around, little flocks of sick sheep, anemic and weary, so weary they can't bleat anymore. And they have been run to death and skinned and fleeced to death by the stranger who can't qualify to be the shepherd. He can't.

He wasn't born of the right seed, he wasn't born of the right line, he wasn't born in the right place, he wasn't born at the right time, he wasn't born as a virgin mother, he didn't die on a cross, he didn't rise from the dead. He has no marks on his hands. But the sheep are out following them.

You don't have to go to the false cults to find people running after false shepherds. I'll follow Jesus Christ over a precipice and into the rocks and up the mountain way and across the boiling rivers, but I'm as stubborn as a bull when it comes to following a man who doesn't have the marks of the Messiah on him. He doesn't have to expect me to run along after him and hand him my money.

And you'll find lots of sick sheep he can skin without skinning me. Well, the shepherd is calling. And some of you aren't saved, you're lost sheep, you're lost sheep.

But the reason I know you're sheep is that you're hearing something. Maybe not in the sermon tonight, I don't know about that, but you've been hearing something. You're not satisfied, you're definitely not satisfied.

If you were, you'd be home looking at television tonight instead of being here. You'd be goofing with whoever happens, the current jackass who happens to be on, the court clown who happens to be getting the big pay this year. You'd be goofing and you wouldn't be at the house of God.

And the fact that you're here may indicate that you're hearing a voice, there's a pull, a tug, a lung. The old goose of which I illustrate sometimes who was shot and crippled and came down and they tripped her wings and kept her in the barnyard. And she stayed all summer long in the barnyard.

And she got among the chickens and the ducks. But she was a wild Canadian goose nevertheless. And when the fall came on, she felt something within her.

She wanted to go south. Way back, coming down through those little round eggs that through the mystery of life passed on from the first goose God ever made, clear down to our little old hen goose walking in the barnyard. She'd flap those wings of hers and get no leverage, no traction.

She couldn't get airborne, but it was in her. The old farmer said rather sadly, but with a touch of humor, he said, you know what she'd done? He said she stood by the gate until she finally got up. And he said she pointed her long goosey nose beak to the south and started to walk.

They had trimmed her wings and she couldn't fly. But the instinct to migrate was so strong within her that she figured if she couldn't fly, she could walk. It would probably have taken her two years to make the trip, but thank God at least she was true to the instinct that lay within her.

And there are some of you listening to me tonight. You've heard that story before, but I tell it to you because I want to arouse within you if there's that thing inside of you that you've heard a voice and you've heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. You've heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark road light.

Then in Jesus' name, yield to that voice. Listen to it. Don't turn away.

Have as much sense as a goose at least and be true to the thing that lies in you. You say, how'd I get it? Ah, don't ask me mysterious questions. I can't give you an answer.

I don't know. How did a 10-year-old or an 8-year-old boy that had never heard the gospel and had never been to a church service but once or twice in his life, how did he lie there and pray and he talked to God? I don't know. There are mysteries too deep for me.

But if there's a longing in your heart for Jesus Christ and God and immortality and eternal life, and you're not satisfied with the newest shiny car, you're not satisfied with the tallest, biggest radio, you're not satisfied with all that money you're pulling in, you're not satisfied. In solemn, quiet moments you say to yourself, why was I born? Was this what I was born for? To live and grow up and eat so many times a day? Work and then die? Wasn't I born for something else? Ah, you're hearing the honking, so to speak. You're hearing the honking of the migrating flock.

You're hearing the bleating of the sheep on their way to the fold. Won't you listen tonight and hear the voice? The shepherd is calling. If you can't hear him, I don't know what anybody can do for you.

But if you can hear him, maybe through a song, maybe through something I said, maybe through something I didn't say, maybe through something you heard today on the radio, maybe through none of those things, but just a general dissatisfaction and an aspiration, a longing after God. If you've got it, you have a right to believe that you are of the lost sheep, and the shepherd who proved himself to be the true shepherd, who with authority has taken over the kingdom, he's the Lord of the sheepfold. And he tells them who goes in, come and apply to him.

Say, Lord Jesus, I come to thee just as I am, just as I am. He'll receive you and he'll take you in. He'll make you a found sheep.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2125.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/john-part-38-jesus-the-only-true-shepherd-of-the-sheep/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net