

# (John - Part 39): The Relationship Between the Shepherd and the Sheep

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the personal relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, and the importance of leaving the fold to grow and experience.*

**Duration:** 52:30

**Scripture:** Psalm 4:4, Psalm 23:1-3, Psalm 23:6, Psalm 46:10, John 10:1-5, John 14:2, Acts 1:8

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the role of a shepherd in taking care of his flock. He compares a mother's responsibility for her children to a shepherd's responsibility for his sheep. The preacher suggests that a mother's actions and the condition of her child reflect her character and choices. He also discusses the idea of performing and applauding oneself in the presence of God, stating that God does not desire us to show off or seek praise from others. The preacher concludes by highlighting the care and provision that a shepherd offers to his sheep, drawing a parallel to God's care for his people.

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## Transcript

Now, in that tenth chapter of John, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth 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 out.

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 will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were, which he spake unto them.

Now, here we have it again, this lovely picture of Christ and his followers, the shepherd and the sheep. And of all the figures used in the Bible to designate our Lord and his people, to me there is none so charming as this of the shepherd and the sheep. It is certainly the most popular and best understood of all the figures.

It's understood even among people who have never seen a sheep at all except in a picture. Those who have lived in places where sheep could not grow and do not grow, nevertheless, somehow managed to get a hold of this beautiful figure and understand it. Now, we deal here with the relation of the shepherd to his sheep, and I point out to you that it is a personal relation.

And again I repeat that it is not as it is with the Western shepherders. The Western shepherd raises the sheep for profit. It's a commercial proposition altogether.

He doesn't know his sheep. He only knows how many sheep he has, that's all. He doesn't know them by name, and there are many of them that will be born and grow up to the age to be sold or butchered, and he'll never see them at all.

Or if he does see them, he'll stand on some knoll. You know what a knoll is? Do you know what it is? A knoll? There are no knolls around here. Everything's flat land, but out home we had knolls.

A little bumpy hill, not much of a hill, an apology for a hill. He might stand on a knoll somewhere and overlook his great flock of sheep and see them as a white undulating surface yonder and know they're his and know their number and know their weight and know their size and how much wool they'll produce and how much meat he can get out of them. But he doesn't really know them.

He doesn't claim to know them. It's a commercial proposition. He lives someplace else, and his sheep live maybe in another state.

But ah, not so with David and the Eastern Shepherd and the shepherds that our Lord knew. He hadn't so many sheep, but what he could take care of them all personally. And he knew them all by name.

He went to the trouble of naming all of his sheep. And they stayed by the shepherd. And while they were by him, there was confidence and acquaintance and affection.

Confidence and acquaintance and affection. But no western shepherd, his sheep have no confidence in him. They don't know he exists.

And if he came out and yelled at them, they'd all run. But the Eastern Shepherd has, he's brought his sheep up, and he knows them from the time they were born. He helped to get them started in this life and nursed them and held them on his shoulder when they went astray and taught them.

And so there's a warm personal relation there. Now that is the beauty of Christianity. The faith that brings us into personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We said in the song that our brother was teaching us here tonight, forget how it's worded exactly, but something that I have found a resting place not in device nor creed. Now we all believe in creed, of course, for creed's what we believe. Otherwise we couldn't say I believe if we didn't, the word creed, credo means I believe, so we do believe in creed.

But our resting place is not in what we believe, but who we believe. And what we believe has meaning only because of who we believe. If we believed a thing, but didn't know who said it, nor where it came from, nor how it got its being, we'd have a very cold and heartless and mechanical religion.

But the beauty of Christianity is that it is not a code nor a creed, though it has its code and its creed, but that it is the religion of the person. Our brother down here said he was saved from a religion. And I

understand, can understand how a man can react from the word religion and from much that's called religion, I myself react violently away from it all because religion without the person is only a chain around the neck.

The man who turns from unbelief to religion is exchanging a chain of iron and taking a chain of gold, but it's a chain nevertheless and it binds him as surely as the chain of iron bound him. But the man who has Jesus Christ lays off all the chains and he has no chain to bind him at all. Here it's the person religion, the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I wish that all of the preachers might begin to preach the person, the person and the presence, these two wonderful truths, the person and the presence. It says here that he leads his sheep. Now, when he leads his sheep out, you know, they must leave their comfortable fold and go forth.

Isn't it a strange thing how we love in the mornings particularly to stay in bed? Back in the First World War, they had a funny little song the men used to sing. I don't recall exactly all the words verbatim, but it was, Oh, how I hate to get up in the morning. Oh, how I'd rather remain in bed.

And they'd sing that mournfully with a wry smile. They loved it. And then one fellow said that the time would come when he would murder the bugler and spend the rest of his life in bed.

That was a funny song they sang in the First World War. Well, we love that. We love to bed down.

Now, it's funny, nobody likes to go to bed. Nobody likes to get up. And once you have bedded down, you hate to get out.

And sheep are like that. They like to rest and stay in the fold. And it's not until the shepherd's voice rouses them that they get up at all and go.

But the Scripture says he leadeth them out. It's almost humorous, and it's certainly pleasant to contemplate, though certainly it's not a wise counsel to follow. You remember those disciples in the early days of the Church when in the Book of Acts they were all assembled in Jerusalem, all of them.

And the Lord had said, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And he had said, Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Now, that was God's formula for the evangelization of the world.

But they stayed tight in Jerusalem right where they had been born, right where the Pentecost had come. And they bedded down in the Jerusalem fold. And then the Lord sent along persecution in that 8th chapter of Acts.

And they were driven everywhere, and they went everywhere. And when they went, they went preaching the word. The Lord led them forth.

But he actually had to send persecution to get them out of their warm, snug nest and get them on their feet and get them going where they should go. So the Scripture here says the Lord leadeth them out. Now, he leads them out for a number of reasons.

There is no food in the fold. The food is in the green pastures. And he has to get them up on their feet and lead them out to the green pastures that they may eat their fill and then lie down beside the still waters.

Then they've got to have some exercise. I believe that a church like this is likely to be pretty well fed. But I am not so sure about the exercise.

We need exercise as well as food. The sheep that lies down in the green pastures and beside the still waters is likely to get very fat and very useless unless he takes some exercise. So the Lord leads them out in order they might get their exercise.

And then there is growth also and experience. The sheep that would stay in the fold would have no experience at all. Now, Christians also must go forth.

They must go forth to work and to travel and to get experience. I said to Brother McPhee yesterday as we were traveling along, I said, Do you suppose... I was thinking about my trip to Virginia and how I hated to go. And I said, Do you think the time will ever come when I'll not feel bad when I have to go anywhere? And he said, No, I don't think so.

The time will never come because I just don't like to travel. I'd have made a good tree. Just plant me in the backyard and put a little fence around me and I'd have stayed right there.

But God won't let it happen. He says, I'll lead forth my sheep. And he didn't say we were to be planted like trees in this instance.

He certainly called it, said we were to be planted in the house of the Lord, but that's another figure of another meaning. But we are to go forth and we are to travel about and do things and get exposed to things. I don't believe in an isolated and insulated Christianity.

I do not believe in sanctification by insulation. I told them down at Urbana and I repeated tonight I don't believe that God will make us holy by keeping us insulated. And put the thick coating of moral and social insulation around us so we never bump elbows with anybody that doesn't believe exactly as we do.

How do you know what you'll do until you're put into a situation? How do you know what you'll do out yonder if you never go out yonder? So the Lord leads us forth that we may get tempted and that we may get experienced. And you wonder that I say that we might be tempted? Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost was led by whom? By the Spirit. Where? Into the wilderness.

For what? To be tempted. By whom? The devil. You didn't follow me but you should.

Being full of the Holy Ghost he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And the same Lord says that as he is in the world so are we in the world. So he takes us out of that snug place and takes us out into the world not to mingle with its pleasures certainly and not to do as it does.

We are to be there as a protest and a conscience to the world. Not to obey and follow the world but to be there anyway. And we Christians, I say, we have to meet our enemies.

They're out there. And then it says, Here he goeth before them. Now I want you to get that.

That he goeth before them. And I want you to know that Christ is always there first. I don't know what your tomorrow may be.

If I did know your tomorrow and I had it in my power to have you reach past by me and write a hasty prescription or a future for you or lay out your little horoscope I wouldn't give it to you. Because it's better

to be in the dark and trust God from day to day than to know all the details down the years. That's why I don't ever recommend that any Christian ever go to a fortune teller or a necromancer or a seer or any of the rest of these madams.

I wonder why it's always women. I never heard of a man... I wonder why it's always the women that tell fortunes. It used to be back in the days of the Depression they had these phrenologists and dark looking women.

I don't know what they were, Syrian or whatever it might be. But these dark women and they had the human head all blocked off into sections. And you went in there and you sat down and for a dollar or whatever it was she told you all about your character and predicted your future.

I don't want to know my future. One step's enough for me. I ask not to see the distant scene.

One step's enough for me. You may be coming into a critical period in your life. Some crisis may be out yonder only a few days or weeks or months away.

And if you knew it was there you'd have weeks or months to worry. But if you don't know it's coming you'll have your Lord and you'll get through it all right. So I don't want to know my tomorrows and I don't want you to know your tomorrows.

Only remember one thing. Christ is always there first. He does not sit back like a general in a comfortable tent and tell his soldiers to charge into the mouth of the cannon.

But wherever he sends them he's there before them. And he's not only there before them but he's there with them. Lo, I am with you always.

And you remember he never asks you to go where he will not go and where he is not going. And he never asks you to do what he has not done and is not doing. And he never asks you to suffer what he has not suffered and will not suffer.

We're in this together, he and we. And we are not alone even though we may think we are. We're not alone.

We're in this together when we threw our lot in with the shepherd and we were his found sheep. We went in with him so that it is now with him. There is that unity, that intimacy, that close connection, that close tie, closer than the tie of husband and wife, closer than the tie of mother and child, closer than the tie of patriotism or love of family is this tie of the shepherd and his sheep.

Now our shepherd is present. Oh, I don't know what we can do to make people see this. Our shepherd is present.

He's here in the place. And this is the most significant thing about this church, the most significant possible thing. Not that I'm here or that either one of these brethren are here.

That's not significant really. What is significant is that we are all sheep gathered around a shepherd and that that shepherd is actually here in the midst. Do you believe in what the Anglicans call the real presence? Of course they use it of the Eucharist.

They use it of the Lord's Supper. They talk about the real presence. But is anybody going to arrest me if I borrow their phrase and they give an application to it they didn't intend? I believe in the real presence too.

But I believe that real presence is not only in the bread and wine. I believe that real presence is in the fellowship, in the hearts of these people. That is the most important thing here tonight, that our Lord, our shepherd is here and we are sheep of his pasture gathered around the shepherd.

That, you know, is the explanation. That's the philosophy back of my bigoted, narrow views of things that I'm supposed to hold, that the posers missed the boat and me living in another generation, they say, and that kind of thing. But I have good logical grounds for my position that when you're in the presence of the shepherd you don't perform and show off to the shepherd our little 18-month-old grandson.

Why, his father has taught him the cutest little trick you ever heard. He can get a job in some youth organization if he just gets a little older because he's got the spirit of it. He'll do some cute thing and then applaud to beat the band.

Applaud himself. Well, applauding ourselves, I don't think the Lord wants us to perform for him and applaud ourselves and applaud each other. He wants us to lie quiet and like Mary, listen to his voice and hear what he has to say.

And if there's any applause, let it come from somewhere else but certainly not from each other. And certainly we don't expect the Lord to applaud us. We're in the presence of the Lord.

Churches ought not to give performances at all. I never like to hear anybody say our choir will give a performance. Uh-uh.

Trained monkeys give performances. But Christians, they minister to the Lord. There's the expression.

They minister to the Lord. But in our day, we give performances. And then they say, this artist will be there in person.

And he will be there in person tonight at the such-and-such Loggerhead Baptist Church. Is that so, brother? Do you expect him to be there in spirit or there by proxy? Of course he'll be there in person or else he won't be there. This artist will be there.

Why, he couldn't sweep off the stage in grand opera. He couldn't sing at the funeral of the leading lady's pet poodle. And yet he's called an artist.

They say our brother will be here in person. This artist will be here in person. And he gets up and saws himself off a solo with a steel saw.

And everybody says, wasn't it wonderful? Brethren, that's not church to me at all. That's not church to me. Church to me is to get where the shepherd is and all put our pride under our feet and get all our heads empty of what we know and forget our family background and who we descended from.

I know who you descended from. You can't fool me. That old scoundrel that you descended from, I know what he did.

He sinned and fell and tumbled into the muck. And you and I are here because we descended from him. But I don't like that.

I don't like to throw this spotlight on men and on people. The shepherd is here. That's the most significant thing that I know of.

Jesus Christ our Lord is in the midst. Here in the 13th of Acts, here was Paul and a lot of the others of them. It tells who they were.

They were the big fellows of the church. Barnabas and Simeon and Lucius and Mammon and Barnabas, I didn't name him, and Saul and the rest of them. But what do you suppose? Had they come to hear these men perform? No.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. And they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia and from thence to Cyprus and so on.

Now that was it. They met and ministered to the Lord. They didn't gather to Paul.

They gathered to the Lord. And the only true church is a church that's gathered to a presence. A group that is gathered to a man is a religious group.

But a group that is gathered to the presence is a church. And so our shepherd is here. How can he be here and yet be at the right hand of God the Father Almighty? Ah, the mystery of the Godhead I cannot understand.

The indivisible substance. That you cannot divide the substance. That he said, I will be with you.

And he said, I will, the Father will send the Comforter unto you. And so we have the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the midst. And yet we have the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost at the right hand of the Father.

We have the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in Africa and in South America and all wherever people are. The indivisible substance, omnipresent and imminent. Oh, the great doctrines of the attributes.

I still owe you six sermons on the attributes. Remember a few years ago I preached fourteen sermons on the attributes of God. And I told you that I had six left to preach on, making twenty.

They say there are seven. And I preached on fourteen and have six more to go. So I believe that God has more than seven attributes.

I believe that the attributes of God are innumerable. And at least I can tell you of twenty. And one of these attributes is the omnipresence, that he is everywhere.

Another is imminence, that he dwells in everything. Now that's not Buddhism. That is Christianity.

Buddhism says God is everything and everything is God. Christianity says no. God is separated in his essence, infinitely removed from everything, including the highest angel that exists.

But that in his condescension he deigns to make the universe his robe and dwells in it. As the bride dwells in her wedding garment, so the father dwells in his universe as in a royal robe. And that's his imminence.

I quote sometimes the old archbishop's marvelous formula that God is above all things, beneath all things, outside of all things, and inside of all things. He is above but not pushed up. He is beneath but not pressed

down.

He is outside of but not excluded. He is inside but not confined. He is above presiding.

He is beneath upholding. He is outside embracing and he is inside filling. Our Father is everywhere and this is God.

That's Christianity, brothers and sisters. Not belonging to the Christian and missionary alliance. That's not Christianity.

You can belong to the Christian missionary alliance and be a lost man. You can be a Baptist and be a lost man and they'd be the first ones to say so. You can be a Presbyterian and be lost.

But you can't be a Christian and be lost. You can't be a sheep of the fold and not be known by your shepherd. So the shepherd is here, omnipresent and imminent, meaning that he's present everywhere and imminent meaning that he's filling everything and dwelling in it.

Now David said, The Lord is my shepherd. You can't get away from David because our Lord Jesus Christ took David's 23rd Psalm and carried it on and wove it into his 10th chapter of John here. How much follows as a consequence that the Lord is my shepherd.

And have you ever noticed the difference? I wrote in one of the chapters in the Divine Conquest about this and I don't suppose very many people got it. I didn't try to explain it. I only used italics, which a writer, if he aspires to be a good writer, never uses except most rarely.

But I used italics there. And I said, We say, *The Lord is my shepherd*. Instead of, *The Lord is my shepherd*.

I wonder if people understood what I meant when I said that. When we say, *The Lord is my shepherd*, why we reduce the Lord to being our servant, to lead us around. David never said, *The Lord is my shepherd*.

In other words, Come on, shepherd, lead me around here. I am the big guy and you're my servant. But in wonder, he breathlessly exclaimed, Look, the Lord is my shepherd.

And the emphasis was upon who was his shepherd, not what the shepherd was, but then who he was. The Lord, he said. Well, I'm the shepherd of this flock and Reuben over here is the shepherd of another flock and Levi over there the shepherd of another flock.

But the Lord is my shepherd. Those wonderful words. And what a difference it is.

The Lord is my shepherd. Instead of flippantly saying, *The Lord is my shepherd*. A Methodist preacher out in the East who has a habit of delivering himself in some pretty cryptic and marvelously wise remarks said recently that in our time we have gotten to using the Bible to gain our own ends and having the Lord serve us instead of our serving the Lord.

I think that came out in Time Magazine. But wiser things have seldom been said than those things. We tend to want to make the Lord our servant instead of being the servant of the Lord.

And the marvel of it is that if we'll humble ourselves to become a servant of the Lord, the Lord in turn will take a towel and gird himself and become our servant. Good old Peter. Good old downright salty Frank

Peter.

When the Lord girded himself with his towel and took the basin and started to wash Peter's feet, Peter got up aghast and said, What? You wash my feet? Why I ought to be washing yours? Who am I that you should wash my feet? I'm on Peter's side on that, aren't you? He was a humble man and a reverent man, and it was too much for him to believe that what the great Lord should wash my feet. Jesus didn't argue. He said, That's all right, Peter, except I wash thee.

Thou hast no part with me. Oh, how wisely! He didn't say, Except I wash thy feet, but except I wash thee, you have no part with me. Then Peter understood, and he humbled himself, and he allowed his Lord to wash his feet, knowing that he wasn't worthy of such a high honor.

And here the Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. And he takes all the care and the responsibility.

Did you ever look at somebody that you had reason to believe? No, I was going to read that, but I dropped it three times, and I'm not going to read it now. I'm not superstitious, but anything that doesn't want to get read that bad, you can have it. What was I saying? Did you ever look at a person that was comfortably dumb and wish that you were like them? I have.

I have met people, nobody here now, of course, but I have met people just so comfortably dumb. They're just so happy and restful and relaxed. And here I am so tense I could bite ten fanny nails any time in the morning.

And these restful, comfortable fellows are just so friendly and easygoing, and their laugh is so restful. And they don't know anything, and they aren't much. And they're just comfortably dumb.

And I have recently said to myself, and I've never prayed that I'd be like that, but I at least have been guilty of a fleeting wish that I could be as restful and as dumb as some of my good friends. Well, I also have been guilty of wishing that I was really a sheep. It must be wonderful to not have a care in all the wide world.

Not a care. Mr. Chase, years ago, Stanley was a little fellow, just a wee little tyke, six or seven months old. He used to come out the house and usually drive me home.

And then he'd, we'd get, he'd go in where Stanley was, and he'd pick him, pick up his hand and drop it, and pick up his foot and drop it. And call attention to how completely relaxed he was. He said he's not going to bone his body.

Just pick him up and he'd just drop, perfectly relaxed. You try to pick me up, I'll be clear out on the floor, wide awake. But little old Stanley was just as relaxed as he could be.

And you say, isn't that wonderful to be relaxed like that? Well, a sheep could, if he only had sense enough, could be as relaxed as possible. Just relaxed because there isn't a care, he doesn't have a care in the world. A shepherd charges himself with every care.

If it is food, he's responsible to find it. If it's water, he's responsible to find it. If it's oil for a bruised head, he's responsible to use that oil.

If it's the foal, he's supposed to know where the foal is. If it's an enemy, he's supposed to know what to do with that enemy. And the sheep only knew it.

He doesn't need to have a care in all the world. Oh, I had preached this, that I could learn it and you could learn it with me. That we could stop this everlasting living two years in advance.

Living two months in advance. Living way down the years. We sometimes discuss this habit of mine of living so long ahead of time.

I argue, Brother McAfee, that sometimes I lie in bed and get things all figured out and then I won't have anything to do the next day when I do them. And I guess I have a little Scripture for it. The Scripture says, Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.

But I don't think that Scripture means lie there and worry. I don't think it means that. Because if we're the sheep of the Lord's pasture, we haven't got a single worry in the whole wide world.

The shepherd takes the responsibility. And it says here, and this is the sheep's own testimony, He restoreth my soul, of course, without which all else is useless. And he leadeth me in paths of righteousness.

Three little words. Four little syllables. He leadeth me.

He and me with leadeth in the middle. The little ring that binds two souls together is the little word leadeth. He and me.

He leadeth me. Why, in my shelves I have the complete works of Plato translated by Jowat, the finest in the English language. You can't get anything as good anywhere else.

And yet Plato never said anything in all of those eight volumes. He never said as much as David said in three words. He leadeth me.

And on another shelf I have most of the major works of Aristotle. And yet Aristotle, for all of his wisdom, never said in all of his works as much as David the shepherd said. He leadeth me.

Ah, my friends, they call Christians dumb. And they say, I've just been reading a book recently on the cults and sects in America. And they call the Christian missionary alliance a sect.

But they admit in that book that it's one of the broadest of the sects and one of the most charitable with a broader outlook toward all other Christians. That's very nice of them. But we know what we are anyhow.

And the sectarian spirit, no, no, my brethren, we daren't have it. We know what we believe, and we know that instead of being stupid, we're wise. Because we have found him, and he's found us, and we're joined together by leadeth.

He leadeth me. David said that. He leadeth me, and he leads me in the paths of righteousness.

And this he will do for his own name's sake. You see, every shepherd was proud of his sheep, and he had a reputation. It's funny how we get reputation for things.

We once knew a woman in another city who was proud of the fact that her brother was the best-known junk man in the whole town. And there are plenty of women who are proud of their cherry pies, and there

are men who are proud of their low golf score, and others who are proud of other things. We all have pride in our handiwork.

Something we can do. Cut down oak, not oak, but ash, trees, and hickory, and would make axe handles out of them. When the snow came and the streams were ice-locked and heavy snow lay on the ground and there was nothing to do, they'd make axe handles and hoe handles.

Didn't turn them out with a lathe as they do now, but made them by hand. And we're proud of them. Oh, how proud they were.

Every man is proud that he can do something better than somebody else. And the farmers out that way were proud of their horses. They were proud of their match teams.

A farmer who really was proud of his farm, he wouldn't have two horses hitched up together, one of them with a white nose to the right and the other with a white nose to the right. One of them with one, say, left rear foot white and the other one with the left rear foot, no, no, no. They had to be perfectly matched.

If the white sweep came down and turned off to the left on one horse, it had to come down and turn off to the right on the other one. And if the left, left rear foot was white on the left lead horse, then the off horse, the one on the right, had to have a left right foot white. And you smile at that.

Did I say it? No, I said rear right. My man, Friday, keeps me straightened out here. But it's hard to explain so I get tangled up.

You know what I mean. They had to be matched. They were proud of that, very proud.

Shepherds proud of the fact that his is the best flock that roams anywhere over the hillsides. And the finer the sheep, the more honor to the shepherd. The shepherd had a stake in his sheep.

And they, by being fat and relaxed and comfortable and well fed and obedient, reflected honor to the shepherd. And so Jesus Christ takes pride in his people. And if he has an obedient, good living, happy people, it reflects honor to his holy name.

And it's for his own namesake that he leads them out in paths of righteousness. So remember that he not only leads his flock for their sake, he leads his flock for his own namesake. And that's what the Scripture means when over and over it talks about his namesake.

He does it for his own honor. He wants everybody to know what a fine shepherd he is and how glorious he is. And so he keeps his flock and he keeps his sheep.

Every mother knows that she will be judged by the kind of children she turns out on to the sidewalk of a morning. You see coming down the sidewalk or riding on the bus, a poor little pale-faced thin little girl with her hair obviously not combed that morning or maybe not for several mornings before, her dress dirty, her stockings torn. You don't blame the little girl.

You pity the little girl. But you say to yourself, wonder about that mother. That mother only knew it.

Her innocent little lamb is telling an awful lot about her, telling maybe that she drinks and lies around and smokes and watches television and reads love stories and lets her little girl go out dirty. You say it's poverty, Mr. Tozer. You shouldn't speak against poverty.

I grew up in poverty. And no man has any tenderer regard for the poor than I. Poverty is one thing. Dirt is another.

And the poorest mother with a ten-cent comb can comb her little lamb's hair back and tie it with a cheap ribbon. And people are saying she's a lovely little girl, not very well-dressed, but she's been taken care of. And I see other kids get on the bus.

One little round-faced doll about that high. I don't think she was too young to go to school, but obviously she did. I think she went to a Dutch school over here, a day school, because she got off.

That was the only thing I could figure. She could be going to that Dutch school. And she got on.

She was lord of the little manor. She was in charge. She had her little suitcase along.

She had some peanut butter sandwiches in there. Her mother let her out carefully, put her on the bus, waved goodbye, and the little girl went to school. Oh, she was taken care of.

Now, she might not have been rich. Probably was. Where she got on, rich people don't live.

And she did it for her own namesake. She said, I don't want my pretty little girl to go with stringy hair and unmatched socks and dirty, unpressed clothes. At least she took care of her.

I never saw the woman before, and I suppose I'll never see her again, but I have a good regard for that woman. I say to myself, for her namesake, she took care of her little lamb. So he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness and looketh after me for his own namesake.

For his own namesake. So for that reason, I will fear no evil enemies, snakes, bears, lions, robbers, even the shadow of death itself. And why? Because thou art with me.

You know, the shepherd could have said, word to the sheep and said, hold the port for I am coming. And the sheep would all have fled in terror into the wilderness and been eaten by the lions. But he didn't say, I'll be there after a while.

He said, I am there now. Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me. Goodness and mercy, these flow out of the shepherd's heart, of course. And he says, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Now, I just want to say a word about that forever, and I'm finished. You know, he's the only person that could put that word forever on there. We can laugh Emerson in one of his ragged poems, for he never wrote a very finished one, but he certainly wrote some profound ones.

And one of his beautiful but unfinished poems, he tells about the farmer and the landowner, and he quotes from the deed, you know, and the articles of possession that are filed in the courts. He quotes how it says to so-and-so and his heirs, forever. And I said, forever? No, no, no.

When a couple gets up to get married, we don't say, in want or in wealth, in sickness or in health, from this time forth and forever. No, no. We say until death shall separate you.

You don't put forever in their wedding vows, marriage vows. Forever isn't in the hand of a man. And if you know what forever means, you don't put forever in a deed, and you don't write forever into your contracts.

And when you get a job, you don't sign a contract forever. The boy who's in Florida and signed his contract to play for the Cubs or the Soxes didn't sign forever. When you go into the Army or Navy, it may seem forever, but it isn't forever.

There's no forever in Uncle Sam's contracts. Jesus Christ alone can put forever in. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

He puts forever in there. The only person who can do it, Moses couldn't do it. Moses went up on Mount Moriah and Mount Pisgah and died.

David couldn't do it. David served a generation and slept with his fathers. Oh, how they loved to sleep with their fathers in those days.

God bless the dear old patriarchs, it says, and he gave up the ghost and slept with his fathers. How we laugh at the quaintness and simplicity of it, and we reduce it now to a few lines in the paper that nobody reads. But in those days, God knew where his sheep were when they died.

They were sleeping with their fathers. In the cave of Machpelah, maybe, or in the new tomb of Joseph. He knew where every sacred blob of clay rested.

And he knows to this hour and this day, though the winds of heaven have dried up the clay that was once a temple of the Holy Ghost and have blown it to the four points of the compass, in the day when the shepherd gathers all of his flock into the presence of the Father, he'll have every one of them, because he puts forever in their hearts. That's why I can't join lodges and link myself up with temporary organizations and get all heated up about something that hasn't got forever in it. God put forever in their hearts, the scripture says, eternity in their hearts.

And if God puts eternity in my heart, then I demand something that's got eternity in it. Scripture says that God made Adam and then he looked around him all the beasts of the field and couldn't find a helping meat for him worthy of him. So he put him into deep sleep and took out a rib and made a woman equal to him that she might be worthy of him, because not a beast was worthy of him.

They named them every one and he named them according to their nature, but not a bit of their nature corresponded with his nature. And he looked at the highest of them all, the anthropoids, and shook his head and said, No, nothing inside of me responds. This is not my kind.

And God said, All right, I'll get you one that's your kind. So he got him Eve. And Eve was worthy of him because she was his kind.

And what he had in him, God put in her the same nature. And they knew each other and responded and became the father and mother of the race. So God has put eternity in the heart of every man.

And we look out on all the world. Radio parades its programs. Television parades its programs.

Magazines pour out their stories. Politics pours out its talk. Business and arts and professions and all the rest, all of them begging for our attention.

Something in my heart says what Adam said about the beasts. No, they're all right and we'll use them. Nice to have them around and they're useful.

But nothing in me leaps up and says, That's my kind. That's it. Because you've got eternity in your heart and the radio has time only.

Business, time. School, time. Your heart says, Eternity, eternity.

Something inside of me longs for eternity. Forever is in me. Three months is a long time for a radio program.

A man holds a job 40 years, well, he gets his name in the paper. Forty years is a long time for a man to hold a job and yet that same man has forever in his heart. And he looks at his job and says, Well, I'll work and I'll be honest and I'll make my living but this isn't it.

Another man looks at fame, he writes, he paints, he's a musician, he has ability and he's known. But that isn't it because that's got time. A man said to Napoleon one time, Napoleon said to his secretary, he said, You ought to be a very proud man.

He said, Why, sir? He said, You ought to be proud. You're my secretary. You'll go down famous in history as my secretary.

And the secretary said, Tell me, sir, who was Alexander's secretary? Napoleon had no word to say. No, no. Fame won't do it.

Fame won't do it. Can storied urn or animated bust back to its mansion called the fleeting breath. Neither all the honor of all the wide world can rouse the sleeping dust.

There's something in me that demands it forever and until I get forever, I'm a hungry vagabond and wander on the face of the earth, looking under every rock and searching behind every star, climbing every tree and plunging into every pool and looking, always looking, looking for that forever. Nobody else has it. But God raised his son from the dead and set him at his own right hand and gave him to be the author and fountain of immortality.

So I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Where's that paper? Changed my mind. Listen to this, my brother.

For I can read my titles clear to mansions in the sky. I bid farewell to every fear and wipe my weeping eye. There shall I rest my weary soul and hide my weary soul in seas of heavenly rest and not a wave of trouble roll across my peaceful breath.

Old John Newton. God bless the old Calvinist. He knew what he was talking about.

So now I wonder, have you got a shepherd? Is he yours? Has he put forever in your toil and forever in your thoughts? Has he put forever in your hopes?

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