

# The Good Shepherd

by Keith Price

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*In 'The Good Shepherd', Keith Price explores Jesus' role as the protector and guide for His followers, emphasizing the importance of recognizing His voice and the significance of His sacrifice.*

**Duration:** 30:20

**Scripture:** Exodus 13:21, Matthew 6:33, John 10:1-18, John 10:27-28

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ", "Spiritual Guidance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and responding to the voice of Jesus, who is portrayed as the good shepherd. The speaker uses the analogy of sheep and their relationship with their shepherd to illustrate the relationship between Jesus and his followers. The speaker highlights the trust and love that the sheep have for their shepherd, and how they eagerly follow him because they know he will lead them to good pastures. The sermon also acknowledges that humans, like sheep, have gone astray, but Jesus, as the good shepherd, guides and leads them back to the right path.

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## Transcript

Let's pray. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of music. Thank you for the gifts you give to your church, such as our music team and Paul now, using those fingers that you created to stir us once again to think about you, Lord, and to prepare our hearts now to hear your voice as Grant has prayed.

Now, I pray, that's exactly what we will hear. Lord, it may be some for the first time. It may be others of us.

It's been a while since we've really heard your voice, although we cover it up well. Speak, Lord, then, in the stillness while we wait on you. In the name of Jesus, our Lord, we pray.

Amen. Well, let me add my welcome also to the South Delta Baptist Church. It's good to see you again.

The summer is almost gone. We're still not all back here, but I think we possibly will be two weeks from now, and we're looking forward to a great, great fall as Pastor Doug gives us leadership and our pastoral team. But welcome to South Delta this morning.

If you haven't been here during the summer, then we've been going now for three or four months through the Gospel of John, and we've been seeing some of the tremendous images. You see, life is a journey, and the Gospel through John is a journey. And the Gospel through John actually picks up and brings into fulfillment the journey that God's people in the Old Testament had.

They went from the land of Egypt, and they went through the desert, and they eventually got to the Promised Land. And en route, God did all kinds of marvelous miracles for them. He fed them.

He showed them the way to go. He refreshed them with water. He guided them in all kinds of ways.

John picks those up, and about half a century after Jesus' crucifixion, John now, who would likely have been the last apostle to have died, he now says, now I've got it. It's finally sunk in. I can see it now.

I've seen the light. Why didn't I get it when Jesus was speaking? Well, for the same reason that I never got things all at once, and I still don't have them all yet. And you didn't get things all at once.

It takes time. But John now says, let me look back at what Jesus has said. It's all tied in with his people, the Jews in the Old Testament.

Now he says, those who trust in him, those who come to the foot of the cross at Calvary, and by faith and in repentance respond to his offer of forgiveness, he sends his spirit into their hearts. Now Jesus then becomes to them the fulfillment of all these Old Testament things that we've been reading about. So John goes into those, and we've been thinking of them over the months.

We saw, for instance, that Jesus was the tabernacle. Now, have you heard of that strange word? I did tell you some years ago, some, it seems like years ago since I came, some weeks ago, I did tell you that, in actual fact, there was a tabernacle, a kind of a tavern in the Old Testament, you'll forgive that word, but that's what it means, a temporary dwelling place, an inn, an overnight stop. They would pitch their tents, and they had a big tent in the middle where they worshipped God, and the glory of God was in that tent.

Now then, Jesus said, I'm pitching my tent among you. His tent wasn't a canvas tent, his tent was his body, and his soul and his spirit showed the very glory of God. Not only that, he was God also.

God-man, the God-man, as much God as if he were never man, as much man as though he were never God, and he pitched the tent of his body among us so we could see God's glory, but he said, you can't start the journey until, first of all, you're covered by the blood. So he goes to the cross, but the way he's introduced into that is John the Baptist, in John chapter 1, when he was baptizing, he points to Jesus, he says, look, do you remember that lamb that you had in the Old Testament? You sprinkled the blood on the doorposts and the lintel? Hey, guess what? It was by that lamb you were saved and protected. Jesus, look at him, he's the lamb of God.

Well, if we're going to start the journey, how will we have food? Moses gave us manna. Yes, but Jesus says, I am the bread of life. I'm the real food for your Christian journey, and you will feed on me through my word, and God, in a marvelous way, will keep you strengthened for the journey.

We can't go without water. Where's the water coming from? Look in the Old Testament. Moses struck the rock, and God miraculously allowed water to come forth, and people could drink.

Ah, Jesus said, I am the rock. The apostle Paul says that in 1 Corinthians 10. That rock was Christ, and he was smitten on the cross, and the water came forth, the water of the Holy Spirit that we saw some weeks ago, and God will refresh our lives by the water.

Not only that, but how will we see our way through the wilderness of this life? We don't know how to make decisions, which way to go. Ah, Jesus said, you know you had the pillar of fire to guide you in the

wilderness? I now will, because I am the light of the world, and whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. And indeed, John, Pastor John, spoke on that, didn't he, a couple of weeks ago, when we did our last session on John, and he spoke about that marvelous chapter 9, where we saw that Jesus was indeed the light of the world.

Now, a lot of those things come into John's gospel, but today, as you've already seen, we're going to talk about the Good Shepherd, and I'd like you just to open, if you've got a Bible, then open it to John chapter 10, verses 1 to 10. If you don't have your own, then there's one in the pew, and if you look on page 769, you'll find John's gospel, chapter 10. Just a slightly different translation, but to translate Greek into English is like trying to play on the piano something written for a violin.

You can't get all the beauty out, and it takes several translations, so this gives us the gist of this. So Grant has so well read it to us. What I'm going to do now is, I'm going to, today, this morning, sum up, give us some little lessons, be selective, just two or three things, because we're going to have communion a little later.

What I'm going to do is be selective, and in John chapter 10, verses 1 through 18, we've got kind of a morning time, an afternoon time, and an evening time. It sort of moves in that way, although, Grant, I wouldn't be divisive over that, but in the morning time, how the shepherd comes to the sheepfold and calls his sheep out, and how during the daytime, and particularly in the afternoons, as maybe they're going up on those high plateaus there, they will find some part that may be green. Not too many of those in Israel, but they would find some, and the shepherd would lead his flock into pasture, and then we'll finish there until next week, because we're going to take up this same passage next week again in the morning, and in the evening, I'm going to have one more summer in the Psalms, and we're going to finish with the Shepherd's Psalm, Psalm 23, so it's all about shepherding, and it's going to get us ready for Awana and for all kinds of other activities that we've heard about, but this morning, in our communion, I'm going to go on to the evening time, and in the last few verses of our passage, we're going to see that this one has the wolf, has the animals come when the shadows lengthen, as the animals attack the flock.

This one, the good shepherd, gives his life voluntarily for the sheep. He has power to lay it down and power to take it again, and we're going to see that just briefly as we come to the communion table. So first of all, let me give you a picture of what the first 18 verses are.

There are a lot of different little expressions used, and if you're not familiar with the Bible, you won't understand this. In fact, it tells us in verse 6, Jesus used this figure of speech, which means an allegory, not a parable so much, because a parable has one main meaning, but an allegory, you can take the various parts of it, and you can say this means that, that one speaks of that, this one represents that, and so on. So in verse 6, Jesus used this allegory, but they didn't understand what he was telling them, because God had blinded the minds of those who didn't want to believe.

This morning, if you want to believe, if you want to know more about this great shepherd of the sheep, then this morning, I would invite you just to listen as I just tell you what these various people represent. I won't take them in order, but the order in which I think will help you. The good shepherd, verse 11, I am the good shepherd, obviously that's Jesus the Christ.

In the next line, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The sheep here are primarily Jewish believers. If you look a little later on, in verse 15, is it? No, verse 16, I have other sheep that are not of the sheep pen.

The sheep pen is the land of Israel. It's the sheep fold where the sheep are kept, but other sheep don't belong to that land of Israel. They are the Gentiles, and many of us this morning are Gentile Christians, and they are the other sheep.

I have a little bit of both pens in me, so that's all right. I'm fit to speak on this passage, maybe. Then, not only that, but notice, will you, in verse 7, I tell you I am the gate for the sheep.

Or, again, look at the same expression in verse 3. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. Now, then, the gate means two different things. The first main parable is the good shepherd, or the allegory, but within that allegory is another little allegory known as I am the door.

I am the gate. I am the entranceway to the sheep fold, but in the first main allegory, then the gateway is the office of the Messiah, verse 3. The office of the Messiah, and so it is that the man, the true shepherd, Jesus, enters through the gate, which is the office of the Messiah, for he is the Messiah, God's anointed one, and in the Old Testament, he is predicted and prophesied when he was to be born, where he was to be born, how he was to be born, how he would live and minister, how he would die upon a cross, and 50 of these predictions came true in 24 hours, in Calvary, when Jesus died. So, therefore, that's the office of the Messiah, and the true gate is the one that comes to fulfill all of those, is the one that comes through that gate, rather, to fulfill all of those.

Not only the gate, but then, I want you to notice, too, in verse 3, it says the watchman opens the gate for him. Of course, some people think that the watchman is John the Baptist. I'm not going to argue or split a church, but, frankly, the watchman, I believe, is God the Father himself.

He opens the gate. He says, all right, you are the true Messiah. You can come and look after your sheep.

Not only that, but then, in verse 9, what will happen is, when we go into that fold and come out of that fold, we will come in and go out and find pasture. The pasture for the Christians is the Christian life. It's the life for the capital L. It's the life that Jesus brings us into.

It's the life that, now, I've experienced for nearly half a century, and how I thank God that he transformed my life one day in Hong Kong. But that's what the pasture, the good pasture, is. Then, you also look, again, in verse 12, and it says that the wolf comes, and what happens is, the one who's not the shepherd abandons the sheep and runs away.

Who is the wolf? Well, I suspect it's the evil one himself. It's Satan, or maybe his cohorts, his agents. And then we would look, perhaps, on first the hired hand in verse 12.

The hired hand would be not, indeed, the true shepherd of the sheep, one that really doesn't love the sheep, one that doesn't get up and cuddle them and commune with them and get to know them, and they run to him. No, he's just a hired hand, and he's in it for some other purpose. And, again, the hired hand, very likely, will speak, indeed, of those people that are not the true shepherds, and, of course, will run away.

We'll see some of that next week. I won't get into that today. Then notice verse 1, the end of verse 1, the thieves and the robbers who climb over the walls.

The thieves and the robbers, again, we don't know, but probably those are false messiahs, for there were many of them just before Jesus came, and they claimed to be the messiah. They were revolutionaries.

They had political aims and purposes, very often, and they sought to lead the people, but they climbed over the wall.

They couldn't come through the gate for the simple reason they couldn't fulfill those prophecies. They weren't born in Bethlehem. They weren't born at the right time.

They weren't born of a virgin. They didn't live the kind of life. They didn't die on a cross in the way Jesus did.

They were false messiahs, thieves, and robbers. And then, of course, you have the stranger, which is in verse 5. The sheep will never follow a stranger. A stranger is someone comes up and tries to get them to follow him, but not only will they not follow him, they'll turn on their heels and run away.

So those are some of the pictures here. We'll pick up more of those next week, but let me, what I want to do now is just zero into one thing for the morning and one thing for the afternoon. That's one, I don't mean to say that you're going to be here all afternoon.

I mean, I'm going to pick one thing for the morning of the shepherd and the sheep, and one thing for the afternoon. It's a wonderful thing, you know, that we are called sheep. We don't like that very much, but we are told, aren't we, that all we like sheep have gone astray.

We've turned everyone to their own way. And frankly, the similitude of sheep and people is downright embarrassing, because that's what we are. And Jesus knew that, and he's the good shepherd, and he leads us.

And if only we're honest with ourselves and would just de-swell our heads a little bit, we'll realize that that's exactly what we are like, just like sheep. After all, we started singing up here, you all joined in. We came in here, you all followed us in.

You see, no, no, other than that, I mean, in all kinds of ways in life, we're like sheep and we go astray. So let me come to the one thing, but let me lead up to it. Let me just give you a kind of a running commentary of the first verses here.

Notice that this is exactly the continuation of what Pastor John spoke on two weeks ago, when he was in John chapter 9, and he went right through it. And I just heard that sermon, John, just two days ago in my car radio. I turned it on.

Wow, I wanted to preach it. That was right on. Thank you so much for telling us how we're all different ways we react when Jesus does a great miracle in our lives.

Now, the Pharisees reacted in the wrong way. You claim to be God, so you aren't genuine. Well, you did this on the Sabbath, so you're not genuine.

They just looked for the things to poke holes in if they could. And of course, there was no justification for that. But now at the end of chapter 9, Jesus says to the blind man in verse 38, 37, that you've seen the Messiah and he's speaking with you.

The man says, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. And Jesus then makes this statement, and now I believe the Pharisees, who are in chapter 10, actually listened in. For judgment I've come into this world, so that the blind will see.

That's like you. That's what he was saying to this blind man. The blind will see, and those who don't know Jesus and are open to listening about him, they will see.

But those who see or claim they can see will become blind. They won't be able to see anymore. So the Pharisees chipped in here, and they say to him, what? Are we blind too? And Jesus said in verse 41, if you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin.

But you've seen the truth, and you've rejected it. You've got all these prophecies in the Old Testament to show you that I am the one that should come, and you've rejected it. So now you claim to see, your guilt remains.

I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. So there's a sense in which they too will be included in those thieves and the robbers, along with the false messiahs, because they were leading the people astray.

They were blind leaders of the blind. So it's picked up from that, but look what it means. I tell you the truth, or verily, verily, our Old Statement would say, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

Now there were two kinds of sheep pens in Israel. In those days, you'd have a kind of a rural one out in the fields, or on the plateau, or up in the hills, and you'd have a sort of a semi-rural one in the village, or down in the town somewhere. The one in the town would be a more permanent structure, and you may have several flocks, and several shepherds may bring their flock, and there'd be a watchman looking after it there, and he'd let his flock in, and they'd mix with all the others.

How will he know? Oh, well, they've got numbers on, so he knows the numbers. No, no, no, they are going to know his voice when he comes next morning. So that's the kind of pen they have.

And then they have that gate, and that gate is such that, in fact, the watchman would only open it to genuine shepherds. But when they got out into the country, or when they were too far away from the village, and they wanted to stay the night, and it was reasonably decent weather, then what would happen is they would have a temporary pen, a temporary sheepfold, and they would sort of build it, put it together. There may be one they'd used before.

It wasn't quite as strong as the other, and you could sort of still see through it in that, but it was some protection from the animals, and some enclosure so the sheeps wouldn't wander. It wasn't very nice, Mark. You imagine having hundreds of sheep in there.

First, there's not much grass generally, but inside a sheepfold, when all those feet are trampling it down and eating the last blade they can find, it's nothing but muck and dust in there, and the shepherd wants to come early in the morning and get them out, because the sheep are desperate to get out with the shepherd and for good pasture. But what happens is, in that kind of a place, there isn't a gate. So the shepherd then, in the rural type, actually lies down, and he makes himself in such a position that any animal wanting to get in has to crawl over his body, or any sheep wanting to get out has to go over his body.

Jesus therefore says, I am the gate. Do you want to come into my sheep? Do you want to come in to be a part of my flock? Then to get into the pen, you have to come through me. He's the only way we have of salvation, my friend.

I don't know whether you're struggling to live the Christian life these days. You're struggling to do that, but you've never come in through the gate. You've climbed over the walls yourself.

You've tried to, sort of, you've oozed yourself into Christianity by some spiritual osmosis, and you've sort of found yourself inside the pen. Maybe you sang in the choir first. Maybe you took up some little role somewhere or other in the church, and they didn't ask you too many questions, and before long you were part of the deacon's board.

Who knows? You may be there right now and may not know Jesus Christ. After all, we don't know. How does the pastoral team or the deacon's board know? Only God knows your heart, and if you've never come through Jesus Christ, he's the gate of the sheep, and then you must come to him because there's no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved, says Acts 4.12. Jesus said in John 14 and verse 6, I am the way, the truth, the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. So he would lay down in the gateway there, and he became the gate. All right, all that just to explain the background of verse 1, so you can see we're going to get a long way because I've got five minutes.

I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate, now Jesus is hinting about himself here because he's the only one that can enter by the gate, he's the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the door for him, the gate for him.

Now, I told you some think that's John the Baptist and some think that's God the Father. I believe the latter, but let me read you what it says at the end of John 1. The end of, or rather in the middle of John 1. Next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, verse 29, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He's the watchman pointing to the shepherd.

This is the one I meant. Come on, I'm the watchman. Sheep, listen to this one.

He's the watchman, he's introducing him. A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. That's Jesus because he's God.

I myself did not know him, but the reason I came, says John, baptizing with water here in Jordan, was that he might be revealed. And now, look, he's come and he's asking to be baptized. Then John gave this testimony.

I saw the Spirit. So now, not only is John the watchman, but he's saying God himself is the one that pointed him out. I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on Jesus.

I would not have known him except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me. The man on whom you see the Spirit come and remain on him, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. Now look what John says.

I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God. John was the watchman. God the Father was the watchman.

He explained it to John. John explained in human language and everybody knew. So here's the watchman.

And the watchman, God the Father, John the Baptist, who was his agent, opens the gate. The watchman opens the gate for him, verse three, and the sheep hear his voice. They listen to his voice.

Imagine that maybe you're in the semi-rural one in the village or the town and there are several flocks there. And the watchman sees somebody coming. Oh, he recognizes George.

So George comes. He's the shepherd. He's got his sheep in here.

They're about, oh, about 35 of these sheep are his. So he goes and he says, okay, you just stay there now. I'll send my agents inside and they'll whip all around there and they'll hook on to everyone they think is yours and drag them over here.

That's not the way you do it. That's not how God does it in our lives. He doesn't force us to toe the line.

He gives us this marvelous example. But the shepherd, when he just comes there, as soon as he gives that sound, then they have strange, weird sounds sometimes, like I used to have strange, weird sounds speaking to my children. The youngest daughter is over here this morning and her family, and she knows I had the most weird sounds.

Her name wasn't her name. It was another name. All kinds of things.

And they will call the sheep by their different names, three feet or black ear or something like that, that reminds them of this one. And they'll just call them by name. But even before they call by name, they just got to say one word in a certain tone.

Oh, the sheep look up. And when they look up, they just listen for their name. And one by one, they come.

Other times, they don't even need to hear their name. They recognize the shepherd's voice. They know the tone of voice.

Oh, my friend this morning, can you recognize the voice of the good shepherd? Do you know when God is speaking to your heart? For there's a sense in which there's another sheepfold this morning. It's the sheepfold of your life. And inside it dwells the real you, that like sheep have gone astray.

And it's just you in there. And when the shepherd comes and knocks that door, or when he comes and just speaks a word in your ear, as God's Holy Spirit convicts you, do you hear his voice? Do you respond to him? But notice what the sheep do. It says, the watchman opens the gate for him and the sheep listen to his voice.

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Let me go on a verse. And when he has brought out all his own, he doesn't miss any you know, it's all is all.

He goes on ahead of them and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. So three things happen. We used to have three hours in school when I was small, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Well, here are another three hours. And you've got the three hours now that are important when Jesus the good shepherd speaks. Number one, you recognize that voice.

Number two, you respond and you lift up your head and stop chewing the grass and you look and say, that's my shepherd. But thirdly, you don't stop at that point. You recognize, you respond, and you run for

the closer the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep in Israel, the faster those sheep run.

They know there are goodies there. They know he's going to lead them out into good pasture. They know he loves them.

He's going to tickle them under the chin and cuddle them and just whisper goodies in their ears. They've got all kinds of wonderful things for them. So it is with our shepherd.

And when he calls us, we need to respond like that. Where do we hear his voice? Well, as we're in our own sheepfold, we can hear his voice primarily in this book, the scriptures. This is the safest place for you to hear his voice and not get mistaken.

And as you read it, or as it's read this morning, as we have several times the scripture, then did you hear his voice? Did you relate to that? Did you say, I know that voice, I think that way, God's spirit has caused me to think that way. Then you respond. And you say, all right, I'm going to respond and I'm going to run.

But not only in the scriptures, but also maybe through a friend. Maybe a friend has brought you this morning. You've seen something in their lives, something that someone within you is responding to.

You can see and hear that it's the voice of God. You can see him in their faces and hear him in their voices. Maybe it's through radio or television.

Maybe it's through reading a book, a book that suddenly brought you face to face, perhaps a Western sunset there, a sunset at night. And as you look at the sky and all its glorious colors that Keith Price can't see, then you say, isn't that marvelous? I can see God, but that's not enough. You know, you've got to see him as the creator, but you've got to say this one who was the creator became flesh and dwelt among us.

And he's the one that's my shepherd calling me now to serve him and to worship him. So you recognize the voice, you respond to it, and you run to him. Why do we not follow? We'll often recognize and we'll respond with our heads and lift them up, but we won't run to him.

Or we say we will on Sundays. And I know I'm one of you, so easy to do that. I know I'm human.

You can't be a Christian before you're human. You can't be a pastor before you're a Christian. I mean, you've got to be human first.

And it's in us all that we want to go our own way. That's the whole point of sheep. We've all gone our own way.

And we want to have my way. I want to insist on my rights. Why did you do that? I'm going to find out.

And I gradually lay it all down in the way I want. So I won't follow him. I won't be willing to go into the places that he wants to lead me.

How do I follow him? I follow him now by being led out into green pastures. And I'm going to have to turn my morning into my afternoon to finish because I've already gone overtime because it's a short session this morning. And so how do we follow him? Well, look what it says in verse 7. We'll come back to this chapter next week twice.

Verse 7, I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen. I am the gate.

Whoever enters through me will be saved or will be kept safe, as you find in your margin. It means that if you come through me into the sheepfold, you'll be safe from the attack of the animals. He will come in, but then also he'll go out and find pasture.

So what happens now is Jesus, the one we follow, when we follow him, we're feeding in the pasture that he has led us into. Oh, what a marvelous pasture that is. Do you know what it's called in verse 10? It's called abundant life.

For I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. Abundant life. That's what I've said several times in the last six months.

You know, I'm always doing things in the air like this, either around the microphone in circles, or I love capital L's, because they have two directions. It has me in the corner here, but it has God up that way and has others out that way. And true pasture, life abundant, life with a capital L, is life with a relationship vertically to the Good Shepherd, who we're going to see in a few moments at this table, gave his life for the sheep.

Not only did I become a Christian, but I've continued to get to know him and hear his voice, and I can't wait for him to talk to me, not just each morning, but throughout the day. And then also there's a relationship out here, because there are other sheep around, and now I, as a Christian, am to go out and have that relationship with Christians, not always in the cloister. We're to be out there.

We're only coming here to charge our batteries. You don't come in here to live the Christian life. This is just to plug your shaver in.

This is, and then it's going to work for the rest of the time, as it were, right? Sorry, hairdryer ladies, I see you don't use shavers. Okay, and so you plug it in, and this is the battery recharging. Then we go out and meet the needs of the thirsty world that God calls us to.

Well, I keep talking, don't I? And it's gone on and on. But anyway, let me bring this to a close, and I'll go into it in a little more detail in some other areas next week where we have a full-length message, but it will be over in reasonable time even then. So let me ask you, do you know the shepherd? Can you recognize his voice? Here's the key question.

Do you really want to follow him? You see, the main reason we don't follow, believe it or not, is because we don't really want to follow. We want to have all the benefits of being inside the sheepfold and protection. Oh, yes, I'm a Christian.

I'm saved. I'm born again, born from above. Thank you, Lord, you've given me all that.

I'm enjoying that, and now I'm going out to live my own life. No, you come in for that protection, and you go out into the pasture. Do you hear his voice? Do you follow him? Does he, as he gives you the lead for a shepherd in the east, of course, walks in front, and all the sheep will follow him, and those that are closest will be in the front, and, of course, all the other sheep will follow any other sheep.

So that's why they keep following him. Do we follow him? Now, as we're going back to school at this time of year, or as we're starting a new church year, and you need to give your life in service for God, you say, I've got too many other things to do in materialism and other things I want to pursue here, or I want to go off and study this or learn that. Well, this is good, but frankly, where are our priorities? Are our priorities now to be given to the shepherd? Do we do what he says and go out and find pasture and live life to the full? Well, let's pick this up next Sunday morning, and then again the Sunday evening as we tie it in with Psalm 23, but I'm going to call upon our team now just to give us some more worship material, and we're going to, I trust, worship the Lord in our hearts, and bear in mind what we've read this morning, and just in a few minutes we'll come back to the communion table, and then the deacons will come down here, and we'll serve communion to those who would care to partake.

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