

# The Shepherd and His Sheep

by Keith Price

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*Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads us through the wilderness of life, protects us from the wolf (evil one), and gives us abundant life and pasture.*

**Duration:** 43:29

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of international mission work and the need to support it. He references John chapter 10 in the Bible, where Jesus is described as both the good shepherd and the gate for the sheep. The speaker emphasizes the need for individuals to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and to follow him daily. He also encourages listeners to seek protection and nourishment from Jesus, comparing it to sheep feeding early in the morning when the grass is fresh.

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## Transcript

Let's quieten our hearts once more as we prepare to hear the word of the Lord. Lord, that's some expression. Refiner's fire.

We can only imagine what it would mean if we went through all the processes that you sometimes need to put us through. And Lord, I sense that most of us singing that now meant my one desire is to be holy. But Lord, I know in my life I had an extra longing as I sang that.

That longing that tomorrow, or Tuesday, when I'm back at work, my one desire will be to be holy. And Lord, that means that we are going to follow you, for there's no difference. We can only be holy as we follow you.

And Lord, as was prayed earlier in our before the service, we don't like being called sheep. Sometimes they do appear to be very weak and stupid. But Lord, it's so like so many of us.

Indeed, you've said all of us. But there's one thing they do very well, Lord, and we don't do so well, and that is they follow. So Lord, I pray that we may follow, that we may become like you, that our one desire may be to be holy, Lord.

We leave ourselves in the hands of your precious spirit this morning, O Lord, and we ask that he takes your word and applies it to our hearts, that we may have this increasing desire and then the will to do it as we leave here. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I can see you've got a little heavier clothing on this morning than you've had the last few Sundays. It's sort of getting there. Isn't it wonderful how we can depend upon the seasons? I mean, the Lord says, right, I know they're starting the new church here at the beginning of September, so I guess I'd better change the weather so they'll feel like going to church.

And this is what's happening, isn't it? As I said last week, we're all like sheep. We come in here and you all follow us in. So that's the way it is.

And it's the first Sunday of September, and we're going to carry on this morning in our readings through John's Gospel. Now, I've been thrilled to have a chance to go through John's Gospel with you, with Pastor John, the last few months. We've only got up to chapter 10, and this is the first one we're going to do two sessions in.

But for the next couple of Sundays, you'll be pleased to know that Pastor Doug is going to be starting a series of two messages, two mornings and two evenings, and that'll be a wonderful time as our new interim, our new transitional leader will be here, and he'll be sharing with us something of his vision and his goals as we see him open the Word. I'm thankful to God that we've got somebody who's both musically inclined and Mary indeed. Both of them.

It's not that one is music and one's the Word. They're both music and they're both the Word. And so we're going to be excited as we see them leading us during this, these coming months.

So after those two Sundays, I'm going to be away then in San Antonio, Texas over the next couple of Sundays, and we've got Pastor John. I'm sorry, we haven't got Pastor John. He's coming up a little later.

We've got Dr. J.I. Packer coming. And Dr. Jim Packer, as you know, an internationally known Bible teacher and theologian, the professor at Regent College, so well known perhaps for his many books, but particularly that bestseller, *Knowing God*. And Jim Packer is going to be here for those two Sundays, the last one of September and the first one of October.

And then the next two Sundays, Pastor John. Pastor John Imbo is going to be here, and he's going to be opening the Word. I'm not sure whether he's going to stick in John.

I'm not sure about that. We'll have to find out and we'll wait until we get there. And then the last two Sundays of October, I'm going to be back and we're going to be going through the first Sunday anyway.

We'll probably continue John. And then the last Sunday is going to be an international mission Sunday. And I'm looking forward to that whenever there's a fifth Sunday of a month.

That's four times a year, but particularly in the fall and in the spring. I almost said in the fall and the autumn. That's my two minds the other side of the Atlantic working.

But in the spring and in the fall, we'll have an international mission Sunday, and hopefully it will be just laden with all kinds of good things to just let us see that tremendous need across the world. And then that's in the last Sunday morning, and in the evening I will finish with my last message. So this morning, I want you to turn with me then to that passage that we had so very well read to us from John 10.

John 10. Thank you so much, Don, for reading that so meaningfully. It's wonderful when we read the scriptures, not like a newspaper, isn't it? But it's the word of the living God.

So now I've admitted to find out what page it is in your Bible. If somebody will shout out, if you've got a pew Bible, then I'll tell the rest of you. 769.

That's the same as it was last week. That's right, it's the same passage. And we just are going to carry on.

And I'm going to be very brief this morning, and we're just going to pick out three great thoughts in this. And what I want you to remember is that we have led up over these months to seeing that John is on a journey. And a number of you are visiting this morning, and you didn't get that, but John is on a journey.

And as he travels through his gospel, he takes us on a journey that Jesus had taken John on with the other disciples. And that journey, frankly, is the fulfillment, the New Testament fulfillment of the journey in the Old Testament that we saw. You remember, in those books of Moses? And we see how John, although he quotes less from the Old Testament than the Synoptic Gospels, yet in actual fact, after having half a century to think it through, he says, now I can see why Jesus said, I'm the bread, I'm the light, about the water of life, about I'm being the word, about the good shepherd, about the door.

And I can see all these now, because they're all picking up those wonderful stories in the Old Testament. I can understand it now. And what John does is he takes us through.

And you remember in chapter one? Behold, said the Baptist. Behold, said John the Baptist. Behold, the Lamb of God pointing to Jesus.

He said, you remember the lamb that took you all out in the book of Exodus? You remember you killed that lamb and put his blood on the doorpost and on the lintel, and it was only through that blood that you were protected and saved and ultimately you could be taken out across the desert into the promised land. Jesus now is the fulfillment of that. You may not be Jews today, but I can tell you this, that Jesus is the fulfillment of that.

And we all need to have the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ. And a lamb needs to be slain. There needs to be a sacrifice.

Jesus, who was sinless, died for the sins of the world, so you and I could be free to cross that wilderness into the promised land of the Christian life as we possess that land, going on and on, deeper and deeper with Jesus Christ. Then we saw that we had to have food in the desert. Well, Moses gave them manna, that little round white stuff that came down from heaven, like bread from heaven.

Jesus said, I am the bread from heaven now. You're on your journey through life, starting another church year today perhaps, and as you are, I'm the one you feed on. You want to feed and you want to grow and you want to grow spiritually and mature into the Christian faith, then you must feed on me and in your mind inwardly absorb and take in and be saturated with me.

Then he says, you're going to need guidance, aren't you? So I tell you what, they had a pillar of fire in the desert there, but I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So Jesus is the light.

He shows us how to live. He models it for us and he teaches it for us. Not only that, but he said, you're going to get thirsty and need refreshment.

We'll do more of that tonight on the 23rd Psalm as he leads us beside the quiet waters. But he said, look, do you remember that rock they smote? That rock was Christ, says the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. And from that rock in the desert, when they had no water, the water poured forth and the people drank.

Jesus was the rock smitten for us upon the cross. From his death, the Spirit of God flowed into our lives as we trust him. Not into every life, only into those lives who put their faith and trust in him, recognizing that on the cross he took their place and died instead of them.

Not only that, but you know, as we've come to John chapter 10, you need guidance through the wilderness, through the desert of life. I want you to know that I am that good shepherd. You are sheep.

You are sheep. We don't like it and it is embarrassing to think of it that way, but nevertheless we are sheep. But he is our shepherd.

Oh my, I'd rather be a stupid sheep and be in the company of a very good shepherd that knows exactly what he's doing and where he's going than be someone who thinks he's quite bright and find that I'm going to lose the way. So Jesus is that good shepherd. Now then, in our passage in John chapter 10, which is the good shepherd, then I did remind you that there were various characters mentioned there.

And let me just quickly tell you who these are. I want you to notice who these represent. This is not a parable so much as an allegory, where each point really represents something else.

We're not altogether sure on all of them, but most of them seem to be quite clear as we look in scripture. For instance, verse 11, I'm the good shepherd. Who's the shepherd? Jesus is the good shepherd.

Then also, who are the sheep in this allegory? The sheep are Jewish believers in Jesus. Those who recognized in Jesus that he was their Messiah. And they are the sheep.

Then not only that, but we've got other sheep in verse 16. I have other sheep that don't belong to this sheep pen. The other sheep, are most of us here today, would be in the other sheep category, because those would be others, not in the Jewish believer category, but who are Gentile believers, other sheep.

They called them dogs. They couldn't believe they could ever become sheep. But frankly, they were sheep, and he's got other sheep that weren't in this fold.

But not of this sheep pen. The sheep pen that Jesus spoke about was Israel itself. Then not only the sheep pen, but he talks about in verse 1, I tell you the truth, the man who doesn't enter the sheep pen by the gate is a thief and robber.

The gate is the office of the Messiah. And as Jesus completely fulfilled all the things that he was to fulfill, if he was the true shepherd. So that was the office of the Messiah.

And Jesus came in through the gate. Then not only that, but notice also in verse 10, verse 9, the end of verse 9, it says that the person that comes to Jesus will come in and go out of that sheep pen. He'll go in to find protection, but he'll go out to find pasture.

The pasture is that abundant life spoken of in the next verse, life with a capital L, life to have it to the full. And Jesus is indeed just that for us. Then we notice also that the wolf comes in verse 12.

The wolf is the evil one, the arch enemy of the Christian. But as Jesus died on the cross in those death throes, he slew for good the power of the wolf. He just completely disempowered him.

He no longer has any power over us because now our shepherd is the Lord Jesus who died instead of us. Not only that, but verse 12, there's a hired hand who isn't the shepherd. The hired hand isn't the slave of the house who's given himself and will serve like one of the family.

The hired hand is the man that goes down at five or six in the morning to the marketplace and sits waiting in line to see if anyone will choose him to give him a day's work. And here we are. OK, I'll give you a day's work, a penny for the day.

OK, away you come. But he hasn't got any love for those sheep. And if he sees the wolf coming in verse 12, he's not the shepherd.

So when he sees the wolf, he abandons the sheep and runs away. The hired hand is, in fact, like the stranger, the stranger, or rather like the thief and the robber, too. The thief and the robber may well be the previous false messiahs that weren't the true messiahs.

And there were many of them before Jesus came who claimed to be the messiah, but they never came in the gate. They didn't fulfill the prophecies. It may well be that the Pharisees were those because they were leading the people in wrong ways.

And indeed, but we see the hired man would be perhaps like the stranger and the sheep say, who in the world is this? We don't know this voice. And not only do they not come to him, they will turn around and they'll run away from him. So these are some of the things that are in this passage.

Now, I just want to look at three little expressions this morning. I want you to notice that at the beginning of the chapter, it says, I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way as a thief and the robber, the man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. Notice there's only one gate to that sheep pen, only one gate.

It's called the gate in this chapter a few times, the gate. Notice then, and another couple of expressions, one of them now down in verse 16, after having spoken about other sheep that are not of the sheep pen, that's Gentile Christians, I must bring them also, they too will listen to my voice and there shall be, here's the second thought, one flock. So not only is there one gate, but there's one flock.

Thirdly, you notice after that there shall be one flock and one shepherd. One shepherd, the rest of us are under shepherds if we're in shepherding, but here are these three concepts now. One shepherd, one flock, and one gate.

And I just want us to think about that this morning, the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, the uniqueness of the Christian gospel, the Christian message. There aren't many gates, there aren't many shepherds, there aren't many flocks, there's only one real shepherd, the rest of us under him. If you want to call us shepherds, if we're in Christian leadership some way and to one degree or another, we're all shepherding people.

But if you want to call us shepherds, then he's the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, the great shepherd. But really, he's the only shepherd and we're the under-shepherds. And secondly, there's only one flock.

One flock, that means there may be many worship places, many churches, many different denominations, but in those churches, in those denominations, here and there perhaps in some, and maybe more plentiful perhaps in some others, but are those who are truly his sheep, who know his voice. And wherever they are, no matter what place of worship it is, if they know his voice, and they're part of that body, and they're part of that flock, they are indeed a part of the one flock. And then thirdly, there's that one gate.

There's only one entranceway into the kingdom of heaven. There's only one way, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And not only that, but there's still only the one gate, and if you know him, you go in for protection and out for pasture and in for protection, but it's still only one gate. So let's think of those three things. First of all, then, there's one shepherd.

That's what it tells us in verse 16. One shepherd. Now, I don't know whether you know the Old Testament fairly well, but you may know that beautiful passage in Psalm 80.

And in Psalm 80, it's that beautiful part about the shepherd of Israel. And it tells us that when those people of God were going through the wilderness on their way out of Egypt, out of slavery, to live this life to the full in Israel, as they were going there, God was indeed their shepherd. And it says at the beginning of Psalm 80, the prayer, Hear us, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.

And then it speaks to God. God himself, the Father, was the shepherd. He was the true shepherd.

He looked after his sheep. And then in the same general area of the Bible, just a couple of chapters before, at the end of Psalm 77, he said, You know, I've got undershepherds, and they are doing well too. The last verse of Psalm 77, verse 20, the psalmist says to God, You led your people like a flock, but then he's the shepherd, but you led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

So Moses and Aaron were undershepherds. They were faithfully serving God, and they did what God told him to. Not only Moses and Aaron, but you look over at the end of Psalm 78.

At the end of Psalm 78, just before our eighth psalm, it says this, in verse 70, God chose David, his servant, that's King David, took him from the sheep pens because he was a shepherd. From tending the sheep, he brought him to be the shepherd of his people, Jacob, or his people, Israel. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands he led them.

So here you have the great shepherd, who was God the Father, who then he showed that there were undershepherds, Moses, Aaron, David, and likely others too. But unfortunately, by the time you get towards the end of the Old Testament, you're getting into the prophecy of Ezekiel. And if you read chapter 34, all of it is about people who were supposedly shepherding, but were more interested in their own good and their own future and their own goals than the good of the sheep.

And the whole of chapter 34 of Ezekiel is tearing them apart and saying, you've looked after yourself, you haven't bound up the wounds of the sheep, you haven't healed those who were just feeling down, you haven't strengthened the weak, you haven't done all the things. When they've lost, you didn't go searching for them. They've gone off into many countries of the world.

Then he says, but I am going to bring them back, and I'm going to do it through a good shepherd. And so it is that when you come to the New Testament, now Jesus says, all right, God the Father was the sample.

You saw Moses and Aaron and David.

Look at all these others that led the sheep in the wrong way. Oh, there were one or two good ones among them, but largely they led the sheep in the wrong way, selfishly. Now I want you to know that just as the vine was Israel and they produced only wild grapes in Isaiah 5 and in Psalm 80 again, wild grapes, I want you to know I'm the true vine, and we'll get to that maybe one day in John 15.

Similarly, just as you had a good shepherd in the Old Testament, the Father, then you had all these rotten shepherds and they did the wrong things, I want you to know now, just like I'm the true vine, I'm the good shepherd, the good one, as opposed to all these false ones. Not only that, he says, but now I want in this age of grace, in these years between his first and second coming, and we don't think it's going to be too much longer, do we? The things are mounting up, and even secular scientists tell us they can't see how the world can go on another 20 or 30 years. With the exponential growth of everything, not only is it going that way and that way, but it's going up almost backwards again.

It's just growing right up, and we say, Lord, I don't know how we can carry on. Lord said, well, I'm going to return one day. You don't know when, and just ignore those who think they do, but I'm going to come back.

I'm going to come back, but until that time, you, you must feed in good posture, and indeed, I'm going to give you under shepherds to lead you. Pastor Doug is coming in now over the next little while, and he's going to give that leadership with Pastor John and the rest of our ministry team. As he does that, we pray that God will indeed lead us into good posture, and that's the way that he loves to see us lead.

So then what happens is he says to Peter, Peter, I want you to know you're one of those shepherds, and in John chapter 21, after the one on that seashore, Peter, do you love me? Lord, you know I care for you. All right, feed my lambs. Peter, do you really love me? Well, Lord, you know I'm fond of you.

All right, take care of my sheep. Peter, are you fond of me? Oh, Lord, you know that's what it is. I'm fond of you.

All right, I'm going to meet you where you are, said Jesus, because God always meets us where we are, not where he thinks we ought to be, and he met him where he was, and he said, all right, feed my sheep. So here was this shepherd, an under-shepherd, under Jesus, and when you come to 1 Peter chapter 5 and those early verses, he says, I'm telling you, or you under other under-shepherds at South Delta Baptist Church or anywhere else, I want you to know I appeal to you as a fellow shepherd. Look what he says.

1 Peter 5, it says, to the elders among you, which is just a word for old really, you know. It really is. Sorry about that, Doug, but I'm older than you are.

But it really is old and elders. It's just the word old with a couple of extra things added on. It just means an old one.

It's just like, you know, do you know where the word senator comes from? I mean, you know the word senile, don't you? It's the same. Yes, the same root. In fact, if you think you're senile, you may be a senior.

Same root. So anyway, here it is. It's the elders, the older persons, the elders of the church.

I appeal as a fellow elder, not as the great one, no, as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds of God's flock. That's the exact word for pastors.

So you elders in the church, be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers. That is the word from which we get our word bishop. You know the word episcopal, knock the E off the beginning.

You've got piscop, which was the old English word for bishop. So here you've got bishops, or here you have these people who are watching over. They're watching over is the literal meaning, not overlooking, but watching over as they watch over the flock.

So here he says, I want you to know, the elders, the shepherds, overseers, and he's speaking to the same bunch of people here, not because you must. This is the way you must serve. Three things, not grudgingly, but willingly.

I wonder if you're in some leadership this year. Maybe God is bringing you in to lead a small group, to shepherd that group. Maybe God is bringing you in to teach in one class or another.

Maybe God is bringing you in to shepherd people in all different kinds of ways. Oh, I want to ask you this morning, are you going to do it grudgingly or willingly? So he says you must do it not grudgingly, but willingly. Secondly, in the middle of verse two, not greedily, but eagerly, not for what you can get out of it for yourself, but eagerly because you want to serve the Lord.

And thirdly, not lording it, verse three, not lording, but leading. In other words, not lording it over saying, I'm the boss here, you know, there's a my way or the highway, and that's the way we're going to do it. No, no, no, not lording, but leading and leading by example to the flock.

As the shepherd went out in front and Jesus was the good shepherd, as we follow him, that's the way that we're to lead as under shepherds. So all of this, when Jesus says, I'm the good shepherd, he is saying, I want you to know that I am the example now of what God the Father was in the Old Testament and what I want Christian leaders to be in the New Testament. What do shepherds do? Oh my, let me suggest to you before we go on to the second point, that shepherds do a number of things.

Let me suggest seven. Number one, what we've just said, leading. For the shepherd goes ahead of his sheep in those countries.

He doesn't drive them from behind. He goes ahead and they know him and they love him and they follow him because they know his voice, because they love him, because they know he loves them, because he knows them by name and he cares for them. That would take some doing in this church, but it will come after time.

But he knows them by name. And first, a shepherd leading. Second thing, where does he lead them? Into pasture.

So not only leading, but feeding. And that's the job of a shepherd. He feeds them.

And the main way we feed people, and we'll see tonight as he makes us to lie down in green pastures. I can't wait to get under the 23rd Psalm tonight. Hope you've got 29 hours for me to get through it.

Now, we'll just take a little while, but oh, it's wonderful. As he makes us lie down in green pastures. Try this book.

This is feeding, feeding on the word. But you know, we go beyond the sacred page and we feed on Christ himself. I am the bread of life.

And our inner man just absorbs and is saturated with Christ himself. So there's leading and there's feeding. Not only that, but a third thing a shepherd does is protecting.

He protects. So he brings them into the sheep pen at night and he makes sure they're safe there, that no animal can get into them and they won't be fearful and they can lie down and sleep. He protects them.

And that's the task of a shepherd in the church, to protect people, make sure that the enemies of their soul, the enemy of their souls doesn't get in. And all his agents, the cohorts of the damned, don't come in and start to create problems. So he protects them.

Not only does he protect them, but also a fourth thing is correcting, protecting, correcting, because sometimes they do go astray. And of course, he's got his sling there and he'll throw a stone in front of them, they'll whip back the other way. Or some people think they're sheep dogs.

That didn't normally happen in Israel. It was a rare, rare, rare time. I guess they weren't real shepherds when they had sheep dogs.

And goodness and mercy may have another meaning anyway. You come tonight to find out about that. But you see, really, the sheep dogs, they aren't there.

No. He would throw that and he'd bring them back. He'd correct them.

And then he talked to that sheep. He said, now sheep, you know me. You know what I told you before.

You know the trouble you got into. All that poisonous stuff in the grass. You're going to be sick if you don't watch it.

I've got to rebuke you and correct you. That's what a shepherd has to do. Not only protecting and correcting, but also searching.

For you read Luke 15. You remember we had it in the weekend of a time for healing. Remember we went through Luke 15.

And you remember the part before the prodigal son parable. You remember the part where the one sheep was lost and he left the ninety and nine and went searching after the other one. That's what a good leader will do.

He will search, go out and search for those who maybe have gone astray. Not only searching, but also when he comes back, he finds that sheep has got all torn up there in some underbrush and all kinds of other stuff. And he comes back and he starts to put oil on him and starts to heal him and clean him up.

So the healing process is there. And not only that, but once every day, at least that good shepherd will say, OK, come on, George, come on, three foot, come on, black ear, whoever you are, come over to me. And they know their name and they'll come over and he gets them under his arm and he tickles their chin,

just like you do that cat.

And so you run and he just cuddles him and he has that beautiful time of communion and loving. And that's something that sheep looks forward to at least once every day. What a wonderful thing it is.

That's the job of a shepherd to do all those different things. So God says to us, you're under shepherds. Maybe you're shepherding a family today.

Maybe you're shepherding someone in this church in a small group. Maybe you have some responsibilities to shepherd a whole section of the church or the church itself. Then it is.

He's the great shepherd, but you're the under shepherd, he says. And I want you to do these things for there's leading, feeding, protecting, correcting, searching, healing and loving. So there's only one shepherd.

He's the model. He's the example. Be careful when anyone elevates you to that kind of position.

Rather, take the bottom place, the apex of the triangle when it's down here, where there isn't any competition. Don't aim for that place. Not lording, but leading, and leading in service.

So there's the one shepherd. But secondly, I want you to look at the little expression. Oh, it's not in Peter.

The little expression in that same verse, not only one shepherd, but it says there shall be one flock and one shepherd in verse 16. One flock. A flock of sheep.

You say, but wait a minute, they're all different kinds of them. You say he's got this pen over here and that pen over there. Yes, but frankly, those are sheep folds.

Those are sheep pens. Those are sheep enclosures. Those are places where the sheep stay overnight and probably they'll get up four or five in the morning or maybe before.

But that's the place where they're protected. No, no. They may be in different pens and folds, but he says there's only one flock.

You know, some farmers, one of my relatives through marriage, had the largest dairy farm in British Columbia with a thousand head of dairy cattle with the quota, so on, but they were in different places. But it was all the same owner and he was the master of them. Well, he thought he was anyway, and here they have it.

So there's one flock and there's one shepherd, but they're all in different places. Now you'll remember, as well as I do, that Jesus was saying, I've got other sheep in that verse that are not of this pen. This is the pen of Israel.

You're Jewish believers in Jesus. You found your Messiah. You know he's the Messiah.

You've read the scriptures. You've not been just led across the wrong way. You've seen the scriptures.

He was born in the right place, when he should be born, and exactly how he should live and how he should die. And Jesus met that, and you've realized he's the true Messiah. Now then, if you know that and you've trusted him, he said, you are my Messiah.

Yes, you're a Jewish believer in Jesus Christ. You found your Messiah. You're a Messianic Christian, Messianic Jew, whatever you want to call yourself.

You're one who has found your Messiah because you found your Messiah. Then you are a part of the flock that's in the sheep pen of Israel. But there are other pens, and those are the Gentile pens.

And when we get to the book of Ephesians, why, the apostle Paul says, I want to tell you about these two pens. Well, one pen for Israel. A lot of other pens are Gentile ones.

Look at this. Let me read this to you. It's in Ephesians 2, verse 11.

Remember, says the apostle Paul, looking back to when Jesus said, Jew or Gentile, there's going to be one flock as long as you trust me for your Messiah, for your Savior, for your Christ. Same word. Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth, and called uncircumcised by those who call themselves the circumcision, remember that at that time you were separate from Christ.

You were excluded from citizenship in Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants of promise without hope and without God in the world. No wonder in the temple there was the inner part there where only the priests went, and then outside that, of course, was where the men were.

Outside that was the court of the women, and right outside that was the court of the Gentiles, who were the dogs. They couldn't get anyone near there. And so you were excluded from the promises of Israel.

It shouldn't have been because in actual fact, God's purpose in giving the gospel to his people in the Old Testament was that they would tell all the other nations of the world, but they failed to do that. That's why Jesus had to come, so that he could start it all over again. But now it says in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2.13, you who were once far away, that's me, have now been brought near through the blood of Christ.

It's because of Jesus' death that we've been brought near. For he himself, Christ is our peace, who has made the two, that's Jew and Gentile, one, and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, which was in that temple. By abolishing in his flesh, when he died on the cross, he abolished the law with its commandments and regulations.

Not that it was wrong, but you could never meet the standards, and that was no longer the standard. Nobody met it. Only Jesus could, and when he met it, he therefore became the new leader.

His purpose was to create in himself, in Jesus, one new humanity, one new man out of the two, Gentile and Jew, make one new man, thus making peace. And in this one body, Jew, Gentile, the one flock, in this one body, he was going to reconcile both of them to God through the cross. In his body, as he died on the cross, and this was to be one body, as he reconciled them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

So you can see what happens. So consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, says the apostle Paul. You're fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.

And he goes on, you read chapter two of Ephesians, my brother and sister, I've been in ministry now for almost half a century, and I tell you the greatest thrill I ever have, as I'm probably six out of seven times I speak, is usually with people from all different groups, all different kinds of churches, those who know and love Jesus Christ, and are hungry, and know his voice, and love the shepherd, and want to learn from him,

and want to come to him to show how to love others. And I tell you, it's a tremendous joy for me, and I'm looking forward to heaven so much that way, because I hope there'll be one little job I can have in heaven as the assistant introducer of denomination to denomination. Now wait a minute, that doesn't mean to say everybody who goes to a church is a Christian.

Doesn't mean to say everybody who's in this church is a Christian. We tend to think everybody in the other churches aren't Christian. Of course, this church is different.

I mean, we're Baptists. Poppycock. You can be a Baptist and not a Christian.

Yes, some of you get upset at that, because you say, no, I'm going to show you now if you really are a Baptist, then you do this, and this, and this, and this, you believe this, and this, and this, and this. Well, sure, you believe it up here, but your life hasn't been changed. Christ wants to come in and revolutionize our lives.

We are sheep. He wants us to follow him, and the evidence that we truly have been changed is that our one desire is to be holy, and we will follow him Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and the rest of the week. No, no, and you can be an evangelical and not be a Christian, because you can be a nominal evangelical.

You've got all the facts right, answered all the questions right, everything has gone fine. There's only one thing wrong. There's no life for the capital L within us.

My dear brothers and sisters, it's like that in virtually every church I minister in, and it's my privilege to minister in about 40 denominations in different countries. Virtually every church is the same. There's an admixture, and even the leaders of the church do not know absolutely whether that person is a true Christian or not.

Only God knows that. We can only go by the evidence that he's told us to look for. We look for the fruit in the life, not the knowledge of the word.

They can preach, or they can do that. No, it's the fruit in the life that really counts. The fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

And when that is in our lives, and when Christ has moved in, not just a knowledge of him, but we've personally appropriated him, then it is that we can say, yes, I'm part of that flock. So, Lord, I want you just to show me that the church is much wider than one little building. It's much wider than one sheep pen of Israel.

It's much wider than Israel and the Gentiles being put together. For those who truly know you, and only those who truly know you, make up the one body, the one flock. The question really is then, can I have fellowship of that person? Well, you can always have fellowship.

You've got two ears, two eyes, and a nose, and a mouth, and they have two. You can have fellowship in that sense. But can I have Christian fellowship? Well, who's going to judge? You got a whole lot of questions? No.

Are they following? The question is, are they a part of the body of Christ? Does Jesus Christ live in them and dwell in them? If they tell you that, and you can see some evidence like that, then certainly, I don't care what denomination they're from. There may be all kinds of other things that I don't agree with, but

they may not be the non-negotiables. For the non-negotiables that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that Jesus God came in the flesh in the person of Jesus, that he died on the cross and is atonement for our sin, and that we personally need to come in repentance and faith to him, and we need to follow him.

Beyond that, frankly, I cannot see that they're non-negotiables. After all, how can they believe in the inspiration of Scripture when they only became a Christian yesterday, haven't had a chance to read it? Give them a chance to do that. Meet them where they are.

That's what God does. And God will open their eyes. I tell you, my brothers and sisters, nothing has thrilled me more in this half a century of ministry than being able to fellowship with God's people so that the secondary matters, though important, and I have my convictions, like most of us do.

I have strong convictions, but moving around, I don't unsolicitedly share those on secondary matters. But all those non-negotiables, the basics of the Christian faith, I want to fellowship with all who know Christ. For those who have part with Christ have part with me, and I'm not about to exclude them.

No amens. Okay, let's have a look at it. Still no amens.

Do you believe that or not? I'm glad you do. It sure didn't sound like. All right, let's have a look at the last part.

There's one shepherd. There's one flock, but finally notice there's one gate. And notice it's at the beginning of John's Gospel in chapter 10, and I'm not doing much exposition this morning.

I've just taken these general thoughts because we should be spending six weeks on this chapter likely. But here it is, it's the one gate. It's called the gate.

Now then, it's the gate. There are really, in a sense, two ways in which the word gate is used in this passage. If you look here at the beginning in John chapter 10 and the first verse or two, the gate is the place where the office of the Messiah, where the true Messiah will fulfill the promises and go in and all the sheep will listen to him.

But when later on in the chapter, Jesus changes the analogy, the allegory, and he says, not only am I the good shepherd, but I am also the gate. It says, I tell you the truth, verse seven, I am the gate for the sheep. All whoever came before me were thieves and robbers.

But verse nine, I'm the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved and come in and go out and find pasture. Now, he's saying, do you remember I said last week there were two kinds of pens? And in Israel you had this rural pen, which was out there on the mountainside or on the plateau or somewhere in the fields away from the town.

And then you had that semi-rural one, I called it, in a village or in a town that was rather more permanent. And they had a proper gate on that. There was a watchman there.

And we sure saw that God the Father was the watchman who used John the Baptist to open the gate. So in a sense, both of those. But in the ones in the fields where the sheep stayed out overnight, particularly in the good weather during the year, as they did that, then there wasn't a gate on that pen.

So the shepherd himself would lie down facing the sheep. No, and he would sleep there. He would be the gate.

There's no way that they could go out and no way that any wolf could come in except by stepping over his body. And even though it be his dead body, he would fight to the end because he was going to protect them like Jesus protects us. So here he says, I am the gate.

But notice there are two categories of sheep that go in and out that gate. The first one is the category of sheep, the category that comes. And for the very first time, it says, yes, now I can see that Jesus is the only way he's the gate.

I'm going to come through him and I'm going to become a Christian because I'm going to enter into his sheep pen and as a part of his flock. Then there's the other kind of sheep that says, yes, that's right. I came that way, but that was months ago or years ago.

But now I tell you, each night I come into this pen and I'm going to have protection. Each day, each morning, I go out of this pen and I'm going to have good posture. So there are two ways in which that is used.

And this morning, it may be that there are both categories right here. Maybe you see you've never truly trusted Christ. Or maybe this morning you've known just everything I've ever said and you're going to pick up every little mistake I probably uttered and you picked it up already this morning.

But in actual fact, is the life of Jesus Christ in you? Have you come through Christ? There is none other name out of heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, says Acts 4.12. And it's only through Christ, the way, the truth and the life. That means through his death. You can't live his life unless, first of all, you identify with his death.

He died for me. This one is dying instead of me. I accept you as my Lord and Savior to thank you for the rest of my life by the way I live.

And as you do that then, having accepted him, you seek to follow him. And as you follow him, you then each day go in and out, get protected and find posture. Now, do you do that? Do you have that time? When's the best time for the sheep to feed? The best time for the sheep to feed is four or five in the morning, maybe three thirty in the morning in Israel.

They'll get up early there. They want to go straight at it and get all those best grasses when the dew is on them and they don't even need to drink then. They've got that dew on them, they're fresh.

They love it early in the morning. I'm not going to split a church over this, but I love it to have it early in the morning. How wonderful to have a time with God early in the morning when the juices, when the dew is on the pasture, whatever it is there.

And God in a wonderful way can start to feed you, which is, of course, one of the main tasks of the Good Shepherd. But not only that, but notice he still says, I am the gate. But notice, in closing here, that Christ is not only the Good Shepherd, he is the gate.

Now close your eyes and imagine this pen, right? Here's the pen out in the country. Here's the man coming along the field. He's the Good Shepherd, that's Christ.

Then imagine that there has to be a way into this pen. So there that one lies down and he, in actual fact, is now for you the entranceway into the sheepfold, into the flock of the kingdom of God. So Christ is not only the shepherd, but he's the gate.

Not only that, but where do we go when we go in the gate for protection? We go into the sheep pen, where Christ is the sheep pen, for it's in him we are protected. That's why he says, I will never leave you nor forsake you, because it's in him, as we hide in him. That's when he's the sheep pen.

Not only is the sheep pen when we come in, but when we go out for pasture, he is the pasture. So you see, it's no wonder Griffith Thomas, that great Anglican evangelical of the early part of the last century, spoke about, wrote a book on Christianity as Christ. Whatever it is you long for God, all of it is found in Christ.

Everything in him I find. Let me ask you then this morning, three questions based on these three things. Number one, have you come to the point in your life where you have deliberately, with a sense of acting upon your considered thoughts, with your own will, invited Jesus Christ to be the guide, the shepherd of your life? Have you done that? You do that by coming in repentance, and by telling him you believe that he died instead of you, and you've messed up your life when you want to hand it over to him.

Have you made him your shepherd? Are you allowing him to lead you, feed you? Are you allowing him to protect you, correct you? Are you allowing him to search for you when you stray, to heal you when there's some problems? Are you allowing him to love you, to commune with you? Second question, do you know something about the one flock? Do you know something about all those who belong to that body, that flock? Are your brothers and sisters in Christ? If they truly belong to that, not all of those in this body this morning, not all of those who were even members of this church. I'm pretty positive. Oh yes, others will say, we know they've got to be, they could never become members, but that's how every denomination gradually drifts from perfection, which it never was anyway, to imperfection.

Gradually it drifts back. But are you this morning, do you feel that sense of oneness with all those here and elsewhere who truly belong to Jesus Christ? And thirdly and finally, do you use as a Christian that gate to go for protection, to go out early in the morning to find pasture? Do you feed on him? Do you enjoy the good shepherd? Oh, may the Lord just teach us these lessons, and oh, I can't wait to get into the shepherd's psalm tonight. What a beautiful psalm, and we're going to do that at 6 30 this evening.

So thank you so much. May I call upon the pastor Doug.

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