

- I. **John 10:11-18** – The Gospel previously read
- II. **Jesus is claiming some big things today.**
 - a. It's always important to put the readings from Scripture into context.
 - i. In the prior chapter, John 9, Jesus healed a man blind from birth.
 - ii. The people were amazed at this healing, but because it was done on a Sabbath Day when no work was allowed, they brought the healed man to the Pharisees (I guess to find out if this miracle was bad?)
 - iii. The Pharisees grilled the man and his parents to find out how he could have been healed by someone who was supposedly sinning by doing work on the Sabbath
 - iv. In the end, the Pharisees got angry and kicked the healed man out.
 - v. Jesus talks to him after all this and tells him the Pharisees are the blind ones because they can't see God's work through Jesus.
 - b. As the Pharisees overheard this conversation, they wondered if Jesus was calling them blind... and yes, yes He was.
 - i. At this point Jesus talks about the sheep, the people who watch them, and all the blessings that He brings in contrast to the Pharisees.
 - c. There are a few important things to keep in mind:
 - i. Sheep pens in ancient times were a safe space that might be shared with other owners and had an entrance that was guarded
 - ii. The shepherds would then lead the sheep out to pasture where they could eat and drink (rather than driving the sheep from behind)
 - iii. The sheep listened for their shepherd's voice, but were not trained to follow another person (that's probably how flocks could gather in the same pen and be led out with their own shepherd)
 - d. In this chapter of John, Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd.
 - i. In the Old Testament, God uses the example of shepherds who are bad (Ezekiel 32:2-4; Jeremiah 23:1-4; Zechariah 11:1ff) as they led the sheep astray and allowed them to be devoured by enemies.
 - ii. God also uses examples of good shepherds, especially King David, who was brought out from tending sheep to slay Goliath.
 1. But even more than a story of bravery and leadership, King David was an example of the future Messiah... and the Jewish people were looking for a Savior to shepherd them.
 - iii. When Jesus says, "I AM the Good Shepherd," it is Jewish language for, "I am the Messiah, God with you."
 1. Only He can give us the peace and security of the sheep pen, along with leading us out into the pasture where we eat and drink abundantly (John 10:9)
 2. Jesus is the only way into the sheepfold, and He is the Good Shepherd who loves and guards the flock.

- e. Of course, it was big claims like these that Jesus ended up on the cross, but He was calling out the Pharisees for their blindness...

III. **We also have a lesson in this reading.**

- a. As sheep in the pen, whose voice do you listen to?
- b. Can you hear when the Good Shepherd is calling, or is it a hired hand... a robber and a thief who could care less about you?
- c. Just listening to any voice out there... is dangerous!
 - i. They are competing for your attention
 - ii. Today we have thousands if not millions of people who are on television, podcasts, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, radio, books, and any other possible way they can communicate to YOU
 - iii. They are calling out to you, and they might even sound good
- d. How do you know which voice to listen to?
 - i. One thing I mentioned in my Bible study last week was that each Christian has a responsibility to know the Word.
 - 1. There were false teachers in Corinth, and Paul was calling the sheep in that church back to Jesus
 - ii. If you don't know what's in the Bible, you are completely dependent on what others tell you is in the Bible.
 - 1. This is why Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism.
 - a. As he traveled around Germany, he noticed that Christians had no idea what was in the Bible, they just did whatever the priests said they should do.
 - b. So he wrote a basic understanding of the faith and Scripture for everyone to know for themselves.
 - c. He also wrote the Bible in the common language of German – again, so everyone could know the Bible
- e. If you are not reading the Word and attending Bible study, regularly attending worship (in-person or otherwise) and receiving the Lord's Supper, the hired hand might find his way into your life.
 - i. And the result?
 - 1. When the wolf comes, the hired hand runs away leaving you hanging – the bad message they have is like sinking sand.
 - 2. Sin, death and devil come calling and the hired hand doesn't really care about you – But Jesus does.

IV. **Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the voice you can trust.**

- a. His love for you is so deep and strong that He died to protect you from the consequences of your sin.
- b. He laid down His life for us all... because He would never run away
 - i. He stood up to satan and all the evil he could throw at Jesus
 - ii. He stood up to the false teachers – the Pharisees and Sadducees and all those who were blind to His work and purpose in the world

- iii. He stood up to death itself as He allowed it to take Him... for three days... but was raised from the dead in the power of God
- c. Let me just say, Jesus is the kind of shepherd I want on my side.
 - i. Just think about how He would courageously step up to save you and protect you from harm and danger.
 - ii. His love – not just His duty – but His LOVE for you and me and all people would drive Him to death... to atone for our sins –
 - 1. You see, He didn't just lay down his life (like millions of people have over the ages) but He became a sacrifice that was enough... enough to save us all from our sins, from death and from satan
 - 2. He actually paid the price and suffered and died so we could live our lives in peace and abundance.
 - 3. That's the kind of Good Shepherd the Bible talks about – that's our Good Shepherd, Jesus.

V. **With that kind of blessing, we can also love others in action.**

- a. I know it might be kind of tempting to sit in the pen (all safe and cozy)
- b. But we also have a calling to care for people, as 1 John says, to love in deeds and lay down our lives for others.
 - i. It's a pretty rare calling that we might do such a thing, but when our salvation is on solid ground with our Savior Jesus... we are just fine whether we live or we die...
- c. I read about a Christian man living in Los Angeles who was the victim of a mass shooting awhile back.
 - i. Shannon Johnson was a 45-year-old who used to be a star athlete and was built like a truck – and yet was considered a gentle giant
 - ii. He and a coworker (21-year-old Denise Peraza) were in a conference room when bullets started flying.
 - iii. As they huddled together under a conference room chair, Shannon put his arm around Denise and tried to comfort her... He said, "I got you"
 - iv. Not long after, he was shot and killed along with 13 others... but Denise lived – shielded by a man who not only talked about loving others, he was willing to lay down his life for them.
- d. As I reflect on the events of that day back in 2015, I can't help but think about that young girl with a big, strong guy protecting her by placing himself in the line of fire.
 - i. As scared as she was, the wolves never got to her.
 - ii. As terrible as the situation was, satan didn't win the day
 - iii. As sad as it was to see a man die, his Christian witness is still with us
- e. Always, no matter what, remember these words: "I got you."
 - i. God says this to you, not just in time of need, but all the time.

- ii. He is your Shepherd and Savior, who will never leave you nor forsake you.
- iii. He says to you, I am the Good Shepherd, I got you, I got you, I got you.¹ Amen.

¹ Source for illustration: *Todd Wilson, "The Gift of the Son: Everlasting Father," sermon on PreachingToday.com*