

enclosures made simply with a door through which the sheep might go in and come out. Numbers 32:16, Judges 5:6, 2 Chronicles 32:28. Sometimes they were made of brush wood piled on top of the wall of the sheepfold to serve as a further safety. In the corner of the fold might often be a rude covered hut which served as a shelter for the shepherd.

Using the figure of the sheepfold so familiar to the eye of those people of that day, Jesus spoke of the door and the entrance that the sheep go in and enter. In this door, and a shepherd would never think of climbing over the wall but rather he would enter by the door of the fold. The sheepfold therefore, for the protection of the flock had a lawful entrance and there was a porter who opened the door for the sheep.

The evidence of a thief and a robber that comes to do mischief to the flock, he enters not by the door but he climbs up some other way. He'll break the wall open, he'll dig under it, and will run all kind of risks to harm the sheep. Now the character that distinguishes the rightful owner who has a property in the sheep and a care of them, he enters in by the door. He has the authority to do this.

The sheep need man's care. And in return for it are of service to man. I Corinthians 9:7.

"THE SIGNIFICANT SHEPHERD"

JOHN 10

INTRODUCTION:

There were three national distinctions of the Jew. From the traditional outlook, there was the Sabbath, the temple, and the ceremonial law. And they frowned upon anyone who opposed this in any way. Now Jesus, according to the religious leaders had broken the Sabbath by healing a blind man in the previous chapter. And these men were jealous. Hence he will tell a parable concerning a sheep fold. And apparently Jesus is trying to determine the spiritual significance of this blind man. And he will talk about the sheep fold. A roofless enclosure into which the flocks were herded at night, in the country. Now if someone climbed up some other way, the thief does not come by the door but jumps over the wall. And the shepherd of the sheep is the one who feeds, protects, and this is contrasted to Ephesians 4:11 where Paul applies the term to ministers of the gospel. Our English word pastor is simply the Latin word for shepherd. He will explain how the sheep goes by a certain name and this door is a legitimate entrance. Now others will come in a false way and try

to steal and destroy the sheep. But the real shepherd will give life to the sheep.

Now the sheep is a well known domestic animal from the very earliest periods, of recorded history, and has contributed much to the growth and development of civilization.

We are told that sheep played an important roll in the life of the ancient Hebrews as well as in the Eastern nations in general.

The use of the sheep has been described in the Bible for it is first mentioned in Genesis 4:2. Animals were used in sacrificial offerings. Both the lamb and the adult animal, though the young lambs, those one year of age or more, were perhaps the most commonly used. You might take note in Exodus 29:38, Leviticus 9:3, Numbers 28:3, 9, 10, and 11. If the lamb were under eight days of age, it was not permitted to be killed. Leviticus 22:27.

Sheep and lambs were also used as food. I Samuel 25:18. In some countries today such as Australia and in Scotland and other nations, lamb is the very essential part of the diet. Clothing was made from the wool. Leviticus 13:47.

Joshua 6:4 tells us some of the ancient trumpets have been made from the horns of rams.

The skin of rams dyed red provided a covering for the

tabernacle. Exodus 25:5.

Occasionally both the lambs and the sheep served as tribute. 2 Kings 3:4.

Now it is not surprising that Jesus would employ a parable about sheepfold. And concerning himself as a good shepherd, for he would use a familiar term. I would like to divide this chapter up into three parts.

- I. The Sheepfold Entrance - Verse 1-4.
- II. The Shepherd's Care - Verse 6-16.
- III. The Enemies of the Shepherd - Verse 19-39.

I. The Sheepfold Entrance - Verse 1-4.

✓ In Verse 1 this parable is borrowed from the custom of the country in the management of their sheep. He uses an illustration to bring forth a divine truth. This is most familiar and most common. And he presses what he was going to say by verily, verily. In other words, amen and amen. That is to say it was accepted in Heaven. And the parable we have takes place as we think of a night in the East. The sheep were frequently driven into the sheepfold. If a shepherd happened to have his flock in a district where they were subject to robbers or wild beasts, the folds were wild

they will not, they misunderstand it. They have no acquaintance with, nor taste, nor desire for such divine things. The Pharisees had great conceit of their own knowledge and could not bear that he should be questioned and yet they had not sense enough to understand the things that Jesus spoke about.

In explaining this parable to them and the particulars of it, we will find Him ready to tell them, if they are willing to understand. And Christ here will distinguish that these robbers would try to enter somewhere else. And he would say that the shepherd is the door. They must enter through him. He, himself, is that door.

Like in Sodom there were men who wearied themselves because they could not find the door. Now the Pharisees had their own shepherds and their own sheepfold.

But in general, Jesus as a door, shut it against the thieves and the robbers. He shut it to make it secure. The great security of the church today is that Christ is at the head of it. And he is the door, and by Christ is the only way of admission. We must walk in his name. By Him God comes into the church and visits, through Him the door, the sheep are admitted into the kingdom. Christ is the door of the shepherd. So that none who come not in by him are to be accounted pastors. Quite often there are those who pretend to be shepherds, but the sheep did not hear them. And this

The ready entrance that the shepherd finds, to him the porter openeth. That is the sheepfold within the outer gates of their houses, there was great safety for their flock. They had to come in the right way as the porter opened or the master of the house gave the keys. The care was taken that provisions he made for his sheep, and the sheep would hear his voice. And when they would hear this familiar thing -- his voice, they would come. I remember once as we were traveling in Montana and Wyoming, we came upon the great herds of sheep and there was a great flock. I expect there were thousands of them. And there was a man sleeping with his horse grazing, and of course he had some dogs with him. And so we stopped to observe, he got on his horse, and called to his sheep and his dogs, and they followed him, on up to the hill to graze. Now this is something that was familiar in the day of Jesus. These sheep listened to his voice and we need to observe the parable here. That good men are compared to sheep. And that the church of God in the world is a sheepfold into which the children of God may be gathered together. And this sheepfold lies many times exposed to thieves and robbers and those who are crafty and those who deceive and those who would destroy. And the great shepherd of the sheep takes wonderful care of the flock and all that belongs to it. God is the great shepherd. He knows those

that are his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there.

And the shepherd who is entrusted to feed the flock of God ought to be careful and faithful to discharge this trust. The minister must serve in the spiritual interest and feed the souls with the word of God faithfully at all times. Now he says the porter openeth, the Holy Spirit is the one who opens the door, and they must know the members of the flock. Those who are truly the sheep of Christ will be very observant of their shepherd. And they will be very cautious and shy of strangers. They follow their shepherd, for they know his voice, they flee from the stranger.

All of this is to say that Jesus spoke of himself as the door of the sheepfold. He used this familiar term that he was the doorway into the kingdom. In our present age we need to point out whether young or old, the doorway of character is offered as a doorway of hope. If the Christian honors the Lord and his Christian profession by his life, as there are false doorways of disobedience. People have tried for generations to get into Heaven some other way. There is in a sense that obedience is necessary, to salvation, when Jesus offers the invitation. The lame man had to get up and walk, the blind man had to open his eyes. There must be repentance

and acceptance on our part. And the door that Jesus talks about leads to safety. And he is trying to get these men to see the pit-falls of not coming through the proper door. This would lead us to see that if the sheep are going to be protected against the wolves and against those who would feed upon them, then they must come in at the proper door.

I would pause here to say, there are doors a plenty today. But only by Jesus if any man enter in, shall he go in and out and be safe.

Christ is the door of happiness, the door of hope, the only door of usefulness for people to get in, and he is the door of the invitation to all men. And he is the one who says come, ye blessed of my Father. And this is the invitation to inherit what he has in store.

II. The Shepherd's Care. Verse 6-16.

First, the shepherd's care is noted in that he is the door. Verse 7, 8, and 9. This means that he becomes the entrance, and I am the door by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.

The Jews were ignorant of the meaning of this discourse. Of course he is giving a figure here, it is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ, that they do not understand it. That they do not because they will not, and because

life for his sheep. And what a tragedy when a man comes and says nobody cares for my soul. In the Psalms we read about that. But we discover that God really cares here. That God cared so much that Jesus was willing to become the sacrifice to lay his life. This is a devoted shepherd who is ready for the flock's sake to give his life. This means that he cares day and night, weeks and months, that he cares everyday for all people. And that we are his sheep and must make a choice. The ancient shepherd guided his sheep and into paths deep like the valley of death but they had assurance. And if ever there was a time that America walks in this valley, it is today. And we need this good shepherd.

I feel today that the good shepherd cares for those little children, teen-agers, young adults, middle-aged people, old folks, rich and poor, the famous and the little known, all of us need others who care something about us. We need more than the care that is necessary in various relationships. Like those of parents and children.

I know some people go to pieces when an emergency comes before them. Others who have deep great concern take things in stride. Christian people are shaken but they know that there are adequate resources because they have this good shepherd who cares and who will give even his life.

Third, the false shepherd. Verse 12 and 13. There are

refers to those who would misguide individuals.

V. 8 In Verse 8, the character is given as robbers, all that went before Him, not in his time as faithful shepherds, they were described as those who would defraud. Because he did not come in by them as a door, nor did he commission them to enter, and they were classified. All rivals with Christ are robbers of his church. However, they pretend to be shepherds and there are many today who are fooling the people in this realm.

Now Christ is the door of the sheep and he will save the flock, and he will make them happy. They must come in by Christ, the door, by faith in him as the great mediator between God and man, they enter into the church of God, by the door of faith. And in the meantime they will find good pasture and the true believer will be at home with Christ. And those who are strangers will be shut out. At nighttime they will be safely in the fold.

Second, the shepherd's care is expressed in the life he offers. Verse 10, 11, 17, and 18. And he says here the good shepherd will give his life. He will give his life. The mischievous design of the thief is certainly that he comes not for any good but to steal and to destroy. To kill the sheep and destroy them spiritually. There are those today who creep in and deceive souls, and murder souls, these steal away

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the scriptures by keeping these things and altering them and claiming them as their own property. Those whom they cannot steal and cannot lead, drive, and carry away from the flock of Christ. They aim by persecution to kill and destroy.

The gracious design of the shepherd is to come and to give life. It is in opposition to the thief who kills and destroys. Christ says I've come among you that you might have life. He has come to put life in the flock, in the church. He came to give life to particular believers. Life is inclusive of all good and stand in opposition to death that is threatened.

That we might have life, we who have committed sin, can be pardoned. We who are sick can be cured. We who are dead can be raised to life again.

And I like what he says -- more abundantly. That life that has been lost and forfeited by sin, if we will have the kind of life that he came to give, it is something more. It is something better than life with advantage. That in Christ we may not only live but live bountifully and live rejoicing, without any fear of death at all.

Now the good shepherd will give his life for his sheep. It is the property of every good shepherd in Verse 11 to hazard and expose his life for his sheep. Jacob did so when he watched his sheep. David killed a lion one day. And as a

shepherd of soul, Paul said he gladly spent and was being spent in the service of Christ. And the great good shepherd comes and says that he will give his life in behalf of his sheep. He declares his purpose for dying for his flock that these sheep which were appointed for the slaughter, he will become their sacrifice. He will make good and stand for that, that in laying down his life, Verse 17, that they might come to an exalted state. What an instance this is of God's love to man and that he loved his son, and he loved Jesus I believe all the more because he was willing to lay down his life for the sheep.

This is a comparison to the Old Testament custom. This is what we term as Christ in his death in a fashion to lay down his life and take it up again. Here is a picture of a shepherd who really cares for his sheep. So devoted does he attend them, that they suffer no want. He provides pasture, rest, water, he fills the pasture with fresh green grass, he feed them by the quiet pools of water. There is always rest and security for them. Does not such a religion meet one of the most common and deepest needs that our people really have today. That others really care I think one of the bitterest experiences in life is to feel that no body cares. This feeling certainly is terrible. It discourages one. But the Bible comes and says that there is hope for us. There is hope for a man now. And the shepherd cared, he layed down his

shepherd, laying down his life. And the relationship of the good shepherd to the sheep can only be that of Father and Son. The sheep are the Jewish Christians. But there is another fold. They are the Gentiles. They must be brought in and become one fold. This is not denominational. The shepherd dies for all, he is shepherd of all, this he does of his own accord for him to sacrifice and to give his life. And now why should they worry for they were children of the king.

Here was a shepherd providing for all their substance. But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in Glory. He would provide all their wants, he was going to provide rest for them. Like the lillies of the fields need not to worry. And if the Christian will trust, the Lord will

Those who attended the state Training Union convention recently and sat through the hour in which W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Church, Dallas, Texas, described his experiences in the South American jungles last summer will not soon forget it.

Blood of Christ

When the mission plane in which he was riding developed a cracked motor block the pilot made an emergency landing of the small pontoon craft in a small stream by the only village in a large area. The plane narrowly missed a native dragging a canoe. Neither the pilot nor the preacher was injured although the plane was badly damaged. The friendly natives made a landing strip for a rescue plane. It arrived but failed to take off on the first attempt. On the second try Criswell said, "It seemed to me that the hands of God lifted it up."

Later he preached in a village where savages had been converted only a few years ago. They were living at the time in constant fear of attack from a neighboring tribe which had moved a half-day's journey away. Rachel Saint, missionary, was working in the village and Criswell preached at a service there in which she translated. Presiding was Kimo, who had helped murder Rachel's brother, Nate, and was now a Christian. Criswell said at first he was terrified, but as he sang "Amazing Grace" all the fear left his heart. He added, "Oh, the miracle of God that can reach down to a primitive stone-age savage, who has bathed his hands in human blood, and lift him up in grace and power."

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the Hirelings. The carelessness of the unfaithful shepherd described here in these verses. He that is a Hireling, that is employed as a servant and is paid for his pains, whose own sheep are not, then it matters little when a wolf comes or some danger. He does not care anything about bearing the truth for them. These evil shepherds are guided by bad principles and bad practices. What makes those that have charge of souls and trying times to betray their trust. And in quiet times, not to mind it.

What makes them false and self seeking. It is because they are Hirelings. And they care not for the sheep.

These Hirelings have their chief God, the goods of this world. They undertook the shepherds office by a trade to live by and to grow rich by the opportunities which they have. It is the love of money which causes them to carry on. We know the laborer is worthy of his hire but here are some that John's saying have no value upon the sheep. They are unconcerned for the souls of others. Business is to be their Lord.

And not helper. They seek their own. Now he lead them. There are bad practice desert his post, he leaves his shee they are subject to destruction.

YOU LOOK VERY much like a minister," said a man who met President Woodrow Wilson in England many years ago. "Have you ever been taken for one?"
"No, but I have been treated like one."
"How is that?"
"I had a job once where I waited six months for my salary."

In the fourth place, he knows his sheep, which reveals the

shepherd's care. Verse 14 and 15. There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and the true believer. Christ knows his sheep, he knows who they are, and he is known of them. He observes them with an eye of favor and they look to him in faith. They know his mind, they know his voice, they know him by experience. And the Lord Jesus knows who he has chosen. And he is sure of them. And they are sure of him. 2 Timothy 1:12. This is a great illustration of the closeness between Christ and the believer. I know my sheep and am known of mine. As a Father to the Son and loved him, and owned him in his suffering when he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, so Christ knows his sheep. And as a Son knew the Father, loved him and obeyed him, even so the believer has this knowledge of Christ and is obedient unto him.

The shepherd calleth this own sheep by name and leadeth them out. In Verse 4. They hear his voice and follow. Now it is said that in the East the shepherd frequently gave particular (names) to each sheep in the flock. Dr. J. McKee Adams, a professor of archeology, at Southern Baptist Seminary used to tell the story of seeing more than one shepherd with his flock at the watering place, and of how the shepherd of a particular flock could call his sheep, and they would without exception hear his voice and turn away to follow him. It is a beautiful analogy.

And of course Christ had in mind the false prophets who had arisen from time to time and were self-appointed Messiahs. They gained a following but the real sheep did not hear their voice. They did not know them. They did not follow them. But they did know the voice of Jesus. In ever increasing numbers and they followed him.

16 In the fifth place, he says that he has others, in Verse 16. Now Jesus has an eye here upon some other sheep. I have more sheep than you see. This would take down the pride of the Jews and those who thought that the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. No, said Christ, I have others whom I set with the lambs of my flock. Now the purpose of this resolves that it was to reveal his grace. For he told them that he would bring them home to God. Bring them into the church, bring them back as lost sheep. And the necessity of this case, he said, I must bring or they must be left to wander endlessly. For like sheep, they will never come back of themselves. But he says, I will bring them.

And of course, he says they will hear his call. They shall hear my voice. They cometh by hearing, and our diligence is to observe the voice, and this is evidence that we are being brought to him. They shall be one fold, one shepherd. Both Jews and Gentiles, is the truth he is pointing out here. He declares the purpose of dying for the flock. That he is the

the opposition, and he is able to secure them with all these insults. He is greater than all the combined forces of Hell, and of the old serpent. And the angel of the Devil will not pluck them out of his hand, the safety of the saint is inferred here. That is, neither will man or the Devil pluck them out of God's hand. They cannot hinder them from Glory. They are designed for this and God has protected them. And he has secured it through the redeemer.

3/ In the fifth place, the enemies of the shepherd plot against him. There is an outrage in Verse 31 and 32. For example, first of all they plot to stone him. They carry great stones around. And they prepare to execute him. He is branded a coward. And they are going to cast stones at him. Now these same people who are crying stone him, stone him, later will be crying crucify him, crucify him. When the call from Heaven comes, and his time has arrived.

In this, they pretended to have zeal for the law, they were against the gospel however. They were the ones that were blasting him, yet they were accusing him of it. It is plain that they were not going to honor God who had sent him into the world on this great mission. And they argue against his work. They will not accept the works of the father or the works of the son.

that enter through Baptist Church in Hong Kong. It is located in the midst of a refugee settlement area where it is estimated that there is a concentration of 1700 people per acre. Fifty feet from the front steps of the church is a block of 50 seven-story apartment buildings, each housing approximately 4,000 people. wonderful isn't it about it.

While many plans are being offered today for salvation, we know that God's plan is simple, wise, and if we understand this as the sheep that goes in under the shepherd's hand, it is the call of the individual by name. And as he gives his life for the sheep, it is a wonderful indication here that we have a great agreement with him. And he has power to lay down his life for us. What a great analogy. Jesus said he had some others that he was going to bring. And this referred to the Gentiles. It was not enough for Christ to lay down his life for one race, or for one chosen nation, or one separate people. He gave his life a ransom for many. And outside the chosen nation were many people standing in need of salvation. The same is true today. For God so loved the world, all races that he gave his only begotten son.

III. Enemies of the Shepherd. Verse 19-39.

19/ How was the shepherd received. First we see that the Jews became his enemy. There was division among them. Because they did not understand this parable. In Verse 19. They were somewhat against him. And it seemed it continued.

to shift to the feast of the dedication in Jerusalem some weeks later. And the Pharisees were eager to reach him. If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly about this.

19-20 In a second place, the charge they made against him we discover in Verse 19, 20. Some spoke ill and some openly confronted him and said he has a Devil. He is possessed with a

demon. And they ridiculed him. And those that hear Christ and mix faith with what they hear, will soon be able to give a good account, of why they hear him. In Verse 21, others stood up in (defense) of him. And they dared to go against the ideas of that day. And they believed him, that he was the Messiah. And they stood for his doctrine.

24 In the third place, he said in Verse 26 that the reason they did not believe is that they were not his sheep. Now they had quarreled about Christ and they had brought this question to him. They struggled between their convictions which told them that he was the Christ and their corrupt idea as to what they expected of him. And they challenged

him on this point and Jesus comes back to answer their questions in Verse 25 and 26, to what he has said. I told you. He had told them that he was the son of God. That he had authority. Why should he then tell them again. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us. Nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind. But to be

thankful for divine revelation, as we have it. He refers them to his works, to the example of his life, and he condemns them for their unbelief. He says you still are what you always were. Because you are not my sheep. Because you do not belong to me. You are not willing to follow me. And you are not part of the fold. You have designed not to follow me. Therefore, you are not one of mine.

27 In the fourth place, he tells the enemies that there is security for his own. In Verse 27 through 29. He describes here the happiest state of those of his sheep, the character of his sheep, they hear his voice, they know him, they follow him. And he tells how he is going to provide for them richly

28 In Verse 28. That he has undertaken for their security and their preservation and their happiness. And they will be saved from everlasting punishment. They shall by no means perish. And this shepherd has a large flock but he says not one of them will perish. They cannot be kept from their everlasting happiness. It is in reserve but he is going to preserve them and he says neither can any man pluck them out of my hand. Here is a contest between the Devil and Christ's sheep. And these enemies will attempt to snatch them away. But he says the saints of God are going to be preserved that the Father is greater than all the folds of this earth. And that he is a friend, he is greater than all the enemies. All

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This plot led them not only to want to stone him but to take him by force. Verse 39. And they came in and were going to take him but Jesus escaped. For his hour was not yet come. He retired. Wherever men persecute Jesus, they drive the gospel out of the city, out of the country, out of the part of the section they came from. But they can't drive him out of the world. For he is ever there with his might and his power. How marvelous that the good shepherd, the significant shepherd, is the one that men cling too down through the ages. A young physician in Los Angeles who had given his life for another boy on a steep mountain climb. This was a brilliant scientist. He had already made a name for himself in the field of medicine. And the amazing and wonderful thing that he left behind was a well worn Bible. And there was a note in that Bible and it was by the 23rd Psalm, saying this is my favorite bit of scripture. It had a message for him. You know how that message starts off. The Lord is my Shepherd

There was a Lt. Com. who was killed. A bomb dropped on his ship and while this happened, he was performing an operation to save the life of a young seaman. Now this Lt. had just written his mother a letter, telling her of his love and of his joy in some scripture. He said the chaplain read a passage today and the words gave heart to us. We were on board the ship in the midst of the war. A mid suffering and

death, and here came courage and unbelievable power to our lives. And what passage of scripture do you think it was. It was the 23rd Psalm. Which starts off, the Lord is my Shepherd. And how marvelous it is that he knows his sheep and he supplies every need they have. This is a very successful part of the Christian life. We are in a struggle. We have duties and burdens to accept. We have battles to face us. We have to stand up to these struggles. And it is comforting to know that we have this shepherd who will never leave us.

This was the same thing that Dr. John McNeil tells about his boyhood days in Scotland. He was leaving the store late at night, crossing a ravine where robbers and dangerous men hid themselves. And he says it was dark. Suddenly he was conscious that someone was walking up a narrow path and he certainly was afraid. And at last he heard a voice, the voice of his Father.

There was a Lt. Col. who was killed. A bomb dropped on his ship and while this happened, he was performing an operation to save the life of a young seaman. How this Lt. Col. had just written his mother a letter, telling her of his love and of his joy in some scripture. He said the captain read a passage today and the words gave heart to us. We were on

board the ship in the midst of the war. A mid-winter day. Dr. McNeil told this P.M. NY 82