

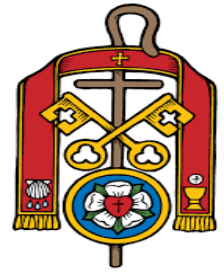
The Good Shepherd

GOSPEL OF JOHN SUMMER SERIES

Psalm 23 Ezekiel 34:1-6, 11-16a, 30 John 10:1-18

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You are probably familiar with *Psalm 23*, and perhaps it is one of your favorites Psalms: *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”* It’s a well-known Psalm of King David that brings great comfort to God’s People. In fact, you probably have most of it memorized because you have heard it so many times! *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”*

In the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus teach us about this, and He says that He Himself is the Good Shepherd!

“I AM the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
John 10:11

In this verse Jesus is using the Divine Name for Himself. In the Old Testament, God revealed to Moses that His Name is **I AM WHO I AM**; and it is shortened in the Old Testament to **I AM**. Jesus identifies Himself as the **I AM**; He is the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Israelites, the God of the Exodus, the God who loves, saves, and defends His People! **I AM** is the loftiest name for God in the Bible --- and Jesus teaches us that He is **I AM**¹!

In this passage, Jesus helps us understand **who He is** and **what He does** for us as the great **I AM**. He is using the image of a **Shepherd** who

¹ **I AM** comes from Old Testament Hebrew יהוה and is called the tetragrammaton meaning "four letters", commonly transliterated into the letters YHWH, and pronounced “Yahweh” (or “Jehovah”). With His usage of **I AM**, Jesus is teaching that He is the True God, equal to the Father, equal to the Holy Spirit.

watches over his flock. It is a metaphor that reaches deep into the Old Testament. Jesus stresses several things with the *Good Shepherd* image. The first and foremost is that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The sheep belong to Him, He loves them, and He cares about them. He would do whatever it takes to rescue his sheep -- even give his life for them.

his sheep have strayed and they are lost. Sin has separated the flock from the *Shepherd*; **sin is seen as scattering the flock**. Your sin separates you from God; you are lost; you are in great danger! Without the *Shepherd*, you will die in your sin. That is how Jesus teaches us to understand ourselves in this word picture.

It reminds you of the danger of sin, the seriousness of guilt, and the reality of death and dying. **It calls you to repent and to turn away from your sin.** It calls you to trust that Jesus is the *Good Shepherd* who loves you and has saved you.

The *Good Shepherd* lays down His life for the sheep. The *Good Shepherd* laid down His life in crucifixion for you. He took your place under sin; He died so that you can live. The *Shepherd* exchanges His life for your life.

Ironically, the *Good Shepherd* is also the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. In His death on the cross, the *Good Shepherd* gave His life for us. In His death on the cross, the **Lamb of God** takes away the sin of the world!

Jesus is the
the great I AM, the *Good Shepherd*, and the *Lamb of God*,
who laid down His life for you.

Now, through the Gospel, you hear His voice as He calls you by name into His Flock. The "Flock of God" is the Holy Christian Church. The voice of the *Shepherd*, that is the Word of Jesus, calls you to faith and into the Church. For most of us that happened in Waters of Baptism; for others it happened later in life. Either way, you heard the "*voice of the Shepherd*" and came to faith. You now belong to the *Good Shepherd*, your sins are forgiven, you have an eternal life, you are under the *Shepherd's* care. You identify as a member of the Holy

Christian Church; the Flock of God! No wonder we love Psalm 23: *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”!*

In John chapter 10, when Jesus teaches us about the *Good Shepherd* laying down His life for the sheep, He also warns us about false shepherds who lie and deceive. These are *wolves in shepherd’s clothing*. Notice the harsh language Jesus uses:

Jesus said, Truly, Truly, I say unto you, 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**. John 10:1

All who ever came before Me were **thieves** and **robbers** . . . the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; John 10:8,10

These false shepherds are **false pastors and teachers** in the Christian Church. These are pastors and teachers who prey in the Flock of God under the name “Christian”. The way they do it is that

- + they use the Bible but they do not teach about Christ.
- + they attached new meanings to biblical words
- + they are slick and polished and give the appearance of success
- + They have a lot of “*bible talk*” and “*god talk*”, but they do not teach the truth of Law of God that convicts us of sin nor do they proclaim the Gospel of Christ that forgives our sins.

There are many false pastors and teachers teaching all kinds of **false doctrines and corrupt teachings**. Remember in this image, they look like the *shepherd*, but they are not. This all happens inside the “Christian Church”, not out in the world somewhere! Not all pastors and teachers are equal. Jesus describes the false ones using some harsh terms:

- ⇒ They are *thieves and robbers*: they *steal* sheep from Christ.
- ⇒ They are *strangers*; their voice; their word is *not the same* as the Good Shepherd’s Word and promises
- ⇒ They are *wolves*: they *destroy* the sheep of Christ for their own sake
- ⇒ They *kill* and they *destroy* faith; and people really do lose their faith and eternal salvation because of false pastors and teachers.

This is a strong warning for us! **Have nothing whatsoever to do with them!**

You must be very careful who you listen to and who you let influence you when it comes to things of the Christian faith. The false pastors and teachers abound teaching all kinds a false doctrines. *It is one of the reasons why it's so important for you to be biblically literate and doctrinally sound.* Only the true word of God will protect you; only the true word of God can expose their lies and deception. *You must be biblically literate and doctrinally sound!* Don't be misled by false pastors and teachers! Do not be influenced by a false shepherd! There are thieves and robbers and strangers and wolves in what is considered the "Christian Church" that will steal, kill, and destroy your spiritual life!

Jesus warns us to "**run away**" from false shepherds. (John 10:5)! Make sure that you **run away** from false doctrines and corrupt teachings! Make sure you are ever striving to be more and more *biblically literate and doctrinally sound!!*

Finally one of the thing about the *Good Shepherd*. Let's take a look at Psalm 23 from a Christological point of view; as Jesus teaches it to us in John 10.

Psalm 23

1 **Jesus** is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 **Jesus** restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for **Jesus** is with me; His rod and His staff they comfort me

5 **Jesus** preparast a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: He anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Jesus is the *Good Shepherd*, and that means teaches that He is the *Shepherd* of Psalm 23!

Today, may you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd in Holy Scripture and trust that he laid down his life for you so that you can be a part of His Flock. *Amen!*