

The Good Shepherd

No. 162

Introduction.

- I. The land of Palestine, in which Jesus lived, has been called “the land of shepherds.”
 - A. The country had thousands of flocks grazing upon its pasture lands. The Jewish people were then quite familiar with sheep and the work of a shepherd.
 - B. Jesus, realizing this fact, said to His disciples in John the 10th chapter (Jn. 10:11-18, 27.-29).

11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. 12 "He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. 13 "He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd. 17 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

JOH 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- II. In the Bible Jesus is called by many names and titles. (Isa. 9:6).
 - A. He is called “the Son of man, the Son of God, Immanuel, the Christ, the Savior, the Lord of lords, the King of kings.
 - B. Here in our text Jesus calls Himself **the Good Shepherd**. All through this beautiful chapter Jesus likens Himself to a good shepherd and those who love and trust Him are called His sheep.

III. Let's consider the things we learn in this chapter about the Good Shepherd and His sheep.

- I. **Laid Down His Life** - The Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep. (Jn. 10:11, 15).
 - A. Those were not vain, empty words.
 1. Not too long after Jesus uttered these words He carried a cross to Calvary's hill and was nailed to the cross. He did not die as an enemy of Caesar. (Matt. 22:21; 27:23). He did not die because of His sins. (1

Pet. 2:22)

2. He died for our sins. (Isa. 53:5,6; Jn. 1:29; Gal. 1:4).

B. **In the pioneer days of the West** a lone man was attacked by a bear. A vigorous fight followed and the man drove a long knife into the bear's heart. He killed the bear, but the man was so badly wounded that he knew that he could not live. He wrote a note and left it by his side. When they found his body, they read the note which said, "The bear killed me, but I also killed him." In the same way our sins killed Jesus (nailed Him to a cross), but He also killed our enemy. He destroyed the power of sin and death. Hell can never touch us as long as we trust in Jesus.

C. Jesus said in **verse 18** that no man was able to take His life away from Him - that He was laying it down of Himself.

1. **How true that was!** As He was led to the cross, He could have called down all the angels of heaven to rescue Him. But He went to death of His own accord. **And why did He do it?** What force drove Him on? It certainly was not our worthiness, for we are all wretched sinners. He went to the cross because He loved us so much. He loved us more than life itself. He gave His life that we might be saved from hell and have life with God.

2. What a great love Jesus had for us! (Jn. 15:13).

II. **Knows His Sheep** - The Good Shepherd knows His sheep. (Jn. 10:14).

A. Isn't this a wonderful truth? Jesus has millions of sheep, but He knows everyone of them and knows everything about them.

B. Some years ago **a man went to an iron foundry** to visit a friend. When he went to the office to ask about the man, he was told they did not know their employees by name, but only by number. He had been there for years, but he was just a number on the books.

C. Thank, God we are more than that to Christ! We are the sheep of His fold and He knows all about us! He knows our trials and temptations. He knows our strengths and weaknesses. He know our needs from day to day.

III. **Cares For His Sheep** - The Good Shepherd cares for His sheep.

A. **Jesus here speaks of the hireling.** Jesus said that a hireling, who worked only for wages, did not care for the sheep. He would flee when he saw the wolf coming, but not the Good Shepherd. (Jn. 10:12, 13).

B. **Jesus cares for His sheep.**

1. He manifested this by dying for them and also by His daily care for His sheep.

2. Jesus gives us daily strength, daily comfort, daily protection, daily forgiveness, daily peace.

3. He is always with us and will never leave or forsake us. (Matt. 28:20).

IV. **Calls His Sheep** - The Good Shepherd calls His sheep. (Jn. 10:27).

- A. **A traveler in Palestine** tells about stopping one day at a watering place. He saw three shepherds come down to the water with their flocks, a total of about one hundred sheep in all. Soon all three flocks intermingled. An outsider could not tell to which shepherd the sheep belonged. But soon one shepherd walked away a little distance and gave a call. His flock of sheep separated themselves from the others and followed him. They followed the voice of their shepherd, but they would not follow the voice of the stranger.
- B. It is this way with a real Christian. He knows the difference between the call of the Lord and the call of the world. He turns his back upon the world and follows Christ and lives close to the Savior.
- C. We might stress that we must not have selective hearing. We must hear all that the Good Shepherd says to us.
 - 1. It means we **beckon to the call of Jesus**. (Matt. 11:28; 16:24-26; 10:37, 38).
 - 2. It means we listen to His **words of comfort and cheer and warning**. (Jn. 11:25; 16:33; 14:1; Matt. 25:30).
 - 3. It means we **ignore the false shepherds of the world**. The world is filled with false shepherds who deceive and exploit us.
 - a. We must listen only to Jesus and His under shepherds who speak His words.
 - b. It means we must **obey only Jesus**. (Lk. 6:46; Jn. 15:14).

V. **Keeps His Sheep** - The Good Shepherd keeps His sheep.

A. Jesus said. (Jn. 10:27-29).

JOH 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

JOH 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

JOH 10:29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- 1. This is one of the greatest truths in the Bible.
 - 2. Jesus teaches that He will give His sheep eternal life and nothing can snatch them out of His hand or out of the Father's hand.
 - 3. This passage should be of **immense comfort to the child of God**. He is secure, He is safe in Jesus.
- B. This passage has, however, often been misused to teach that a child of God cannot fall from grace and be lost.
- 1. It is argued that the child of God is eternally secure because there is no force stronger than God and Christ, thus one cannot be plucked out of their hands and be lost.
 - 2. Advocates of this doctrine have overlooked the fact that **this promise is conditional**. It is made to those who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow Him. If we refuse to listen the voice of the Good Shepherd and desire to go the way of the world, the Good Shepherd will not hold us against our will.

3. As long as we listen to the voice of Jesus and walk in light and depend on His grace we are eternally secure. (Jude 21; 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 Jn. 1:7).

Conclusion.

- I. We have learned that we have a Savior-Shepherd who died for us, who knows all about us, who cares for us, who calls us and who will save us eternally. This should make our hearts rejoice and give us even greater determination and zest to live for Him.
- II. **Over in Scotland a girl wandered away from home** and into a life of sin and shame. One night she decided to commit suicide, but then she decided that before killing herself she would go once more and look upon the home where she was born and where she had spent her youth. It was the middle of the night when she reached her home. She lifted the latch on the gate and walked up the path that led to the house. When she came to the door, she was surprised to find it open. She feared that some harm might have come to her aged mother, so she cried out, "Mother, I found the door open." The mother got up and came to the door and said, "Maggie, it has been many a long day since you went away. But the prayer in my heart always has been that the Lord would send you home. I said to myself, 'Whether she come by day or night, I want her to find the door open and know she is welcome.'" And that night the girl was clasped in her mother's arms and forgiveness and new life was hers.
 - A. There is another door that is always open - the door of God. There is another whose arms are always outstretched - the arms of Jesus.
 - B. Come to the Good Shepherd and let Him give you abundant life here and in eternity. Come as we sing His invitation.

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