

The Shepherd and His Sheep

Sunday, December 12th, 1989

John 10:14-18

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

I'm going to speak today, from the Tenth Chapter of John. If you would like to follow in your Bible, turn to John Chapter 10. Our subject is: “The Shepherd and His Sheep.” While you are turning to the scripture I want to make two or three comments about this message and about this subject that I am dealing with today.

First of all, these are the words of Christ. These are the words of the Master in John Chapter 10. When these words of Christ were spoken to the religious people of that particular day, it caused great anger and division. When our Lord spoke these words, the people who heard Him got very angry with Him.

Let me read this to you in John 10:19 and 20, *“There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?”* That was the response to this message that our Lord preached in John 10. That was the response; they got angry; there was a great division among the people because of these sayings. Some of them even accused Him of being demon-possessed. They accused the Lord of Glory as being demon-possessed and crazy. They asked people, *“Why do you listen to Him?”* That was the response to the message when He preached.

I might add, today, this message that I am going to bring in a few moments and these words of Christ our Lord are in direct conflict with most of today's organized religion. I know that before I begin. These words, literally, contradict what most people preach today and what most people believe today. When I bring this message; it is a message that caused division then and it is a message that causes division today.

These are the words of the Master. These are the words of the Son of God and they are plain words; they are clear words and easy to be understood. Now, you listen to me; I'm going to start with John 10:14 and let's just read these words that our Lord preached. This was the message that He preached that caused so much division. There was so

much division. These men got angry. These were religious people and religious leaders. They got angry because of what He said. They even accused Him of being demon-possessed and being crazy. They kept asking, *“Why do you listen to Him?”*

Listen to the word, first of all, in John 14, He said; *“I am the good Shepherd.”* Now, whatever type or symbol our Lord chose to reveal Himself and His work; He is always the only one. He didn't say, “I am a Shepherd, one of many shepherds.” He said, *“I am the Shepherd, the good Shepherd.”* Every time He used a type or a symbol or a picture, He always identified Himself as being the only one. He said, *“I am the door; by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and go in and out in find pasture.”* Christ is the only Door. He is the Door, the only one.

Then, He said; *“I am the bread of life.”* There is no other bread. He said, *“Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. You eat of that bread that Moses gave you and die. I am the living bread.”* He said, *“I am the way, the truth and I am the life.”* There is no other way. All truth is in Christ. *“I am the way, the truth and the life and no man cometh to the Father but by Me.”*

He begins this message in this way, He begins this part of the message with *“I am the good Shepherd”* and the only one. He has no rival. He has no equal. He has no competitor. The Bible calls Him the *“Chief Shepherd.”* The Word of God calls Him the *“Great Shepherd.”* There is no other seed of woman. The seed of woman is promised, all the way back in Genesis 3, right after the fall in the garden, at the beginning of this creation as we know it. He is the only seed of woman.

He is the only priest like Melchizedek. He is the only prophet like Moses. He's the only King like David. He said, *“I am the good Shepherd.”* My friends, if He is not your Shepherd, then you have no Shepherd. *“He is the good Shepherd.”* The scripture says, *“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ the Lord. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”* Do you see what He is saying? He is saying, *“I am the good Shepherd.”*

All right, let's go to the next line: He said, *“I know My sheep.”* The word, *“know”* has many meanings. To know them, means He owns them, He loves them, He possesses them and they belong to Him. He is acquainted with them and He knows them by name. He said, *“I know my sheep.”* He owns them and they are His sheep. He calls them, *“My church, My disciples, My sheep, and My jewels.”* He says, *“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”*

You see; the Father gave them to Him. In verse 29, it says; *“My Father which gave them Me, is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”* In His great Priestly Prayer, in John 17, He says six times that God gave Him these people. He owns them and they are His. He says, *“They are My sheep; I know My sheep.”* He knows them by name. In fact, in John 10:3, He says, *“He calls them by name.”*

He certainly called Abraham by name. He told Abraham, *“Get thee out of thy father’s house.”* He said, *“Zacchaeus come down”*, and *“Matthew follow Me.”* He said to Saul, *“Saul, Saul why persecutest Thou Me?”*

He knows them. *“I am the good Shepherd; I know My sheep. They are My sheep and they belong to Me. My Father gave them to Me.”* He has always known His sheep. He said to Jeremiah, *“Before I formed thee in the belly, before you came out of your mother’s womb; I sanctified you;” I ordained you and I knew you.* In Galatians 1:15, Paul said; *“God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me.”* Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, said; *“We are bound to give thanks to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation.”* How long has He known His sheep? The answer is, from the beginning. *“From the beginning He hath chosen you unto salvation.”*

You may say, “Well, He knows everybody.” He knows about them. He knows their birth. But, He said in Matthew 7:23 to those at the judgment who boasted of their works in His name; *“I never knew you.”* They said, *“We have preached in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works in your name.”* But He says, *“I never knew you.”* Here in John 10 He said, *“I am the good Shepherd; I know My sheep.”* He owns them. He calls them by name. The scripture says, *“My Father gave them to Me.”* He has always known them and He always will know them.

Look at the next line: *“And am known of mine”* (My sheep know Me). In John 17, again, referring to that High Priestly Prayer, He said; *“Thou hast given Me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”* He said, *“I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.”*

They know the Father, the only true and living God and they know Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. In First John 5:20, John wrote this; *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”*

Paul said that also, *"I know whom I have believed;"* I know Him. Job said the same thing, *"I know my Redeemer liveth."* How do they know Him? They know Him as the one true and living God. They know Him as Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the God-man. They know Him as the Surety of the everlasting covenant in which they take great comfort and delight. They know Him as their Prophet, Priest, and King. They know Him as their only Mediator and they know Him as their Lord. *"My sheep know Me"* He said.

The Lord says in verse 15: *"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."* How well does Christ know His sheep? You listen carefully; this is a mystery. Paul called it a mystery. This is the mystery of Christ and His church. How well does Christ know His sheep? How intimately is He related to them? He tells us, He says; *"I know My sheep; My sheep know Me as the Father knows Me and I know the Father."* That is how intimately that they are related. He knows and loves His sheep as the Father knows and loves Him.

He prayed again, in John 17: He said, *"Those that Thou hast given Me; I pray that they may be one, Father, as Thou art in Me and I in Thee,"* believers are inseparably joined to Christ. Do you know how close the sheep are to Christ? He's the Head and believers are His body. Now, you figure that one out! That is how closely related His sheep are to Him. They are part of Him and are in Him. He is the Head and they are the body

"He is the vine and we are the branches." You know; when you look at a tree, you don't say, *"Well, there's the tree trunk and there's the branches."* No, you just say, *"There is a tree."* The vine and the branches are one. When you see a person, you don't say; *"Well, there goes a head and there goes a body."* No, you say; *"There goes a person."* They are one.

That is what He is saying here; *"I know My sheep; I'm known of them, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; I lay down My life for the sheep."* Oh, that is a mystery but it is true. They are one. He didn't quit, now listen; *"And I lay down My life for the sheep. I'm the good Shepherd; I know My sheep and they know Me. As the Father knows Me and as I know the Father; I lay down My life for the sheep."*

Listen a moment; Jesus Christ came into the world. There is no doubt about that. The Bible says, *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made. And, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory."* John said, *"We saw Him; we touched Him and we heard Him."* He came into the world

and there is no doubt about that. *“Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* He is the *“Son of man,”* no doubt about it.

Jesus Christ lived on this earth, a perfect life without sin; there is no doubt about it. Jesus Christ died on a cross. There is no doubt about that. That is true (and He rose again). Jesus Christ laid down His life.

The question is, “For whom did Jesus Christ lay down His life? For whom did He come into this world? For whom did He obey the law? For whom did He arise from the grave and ascend to heaven? And, whom does He live and intercede for? For whom did He suffer? For whom does He pray?”

Let’s let Him tell us. He says, *“I’m the good Shepherd,”* the only one. *“I know My sheep and they know Me. As My Father knoweth Me, even so, I know the sheep and I lay down My life for My sheep.”*

Let’s go back to John 17:9, He said; *“I pray not for the world; I pray for those whom Thou hast given Me. They are thine and all mine are Thine.”* Isaiah 53 says, *“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.”* Who is He talking about? He is talking about the sheep of Christ.

If you will look down at John 10:24, some of these religious fellows gathered around Christ. He had been talking about these sheep. He was saying, *“I’m the good Shepherd; I know My sheep and they know Me. As My Father knoweth Me, I knoweth the Father. I know the sheep and I lay down My life for the sheep and they will never perish. I give them eternal life.”*

These fellows began to ask Him this in verse 24, *“If you be the Christ, tell us plainly (if you are the Messiah, and if you are the Son of David) tell us plainly.”* He said in verse 25 and 26: *“I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. His works declare who He is. The Lord said in Matthew, “Every plant that My Father hath not planted shall not be rooted up.”*

This is why they did not believe. The Lord said, *“You believe not because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all. No man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.”* That is when they took up stones to stone Him.

So, if you ask me for whom did Jesus Christ die? I will tell you that He died for His sheep, whoever they are or wherever they are. If you ask me for whom did Jesus Christ die? I would say that he died for the same people for whom He prayed. He said, *“I pray for them which Thou hast given Me. I pray not for the world. I pray for them which Thou hast given Me. I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

The death of the Son of God is no offer; it is a gift. The death of the Son of God is not an attempt to redeem; it is an effectual redemption; He cannot fail. The death of the Son of God is no failure. *“He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”*

The death of the Son of God is no down payment; it is a full payment:

Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owe,
Sin has left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.

Are you with me? You might say, “That’s kind of contrary to what I have always heard.” That’s what I said when I started this message. He preached this message and there was a division. They said, “You’re crazy; you have a devil!” They said, “Why are you folks listening to Him?” This is what He said, *“I’m the good Shepherd; I know My sheep. The sheep know Me and I know the sheep. As the Father knows Me and I know the Father, even so, I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

Watch His next comment in verse 16: He then looked at these few disciples, these 12 men, standing about Him and He said this; *“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold.”* He said, *“Other sheep I have.”* He didn’t say, “Other sheep that I might have if they will let Me.” He didn’t say, “If I could have them if enough people will be soul-winners and talk them into making a profession.” He said, *“Other sheep I have.”* He is saying, “I know these sheep and other sheep I have. This is not all that I have. I don’t have a few handfuls here and a few Jews there.”

Our Lord has a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation and tongue under heaven, as the sands of the seashore, as the stars of the sky, multitude which no man can number. Watch what He says, *“Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also, I must bring.”*

He is the Surety of an everlasting covenant. He must bring them. He must bring them to Himself. He must bring them to the Father and He must bring them to glory. He must bring them, every one of them. He must bring them, *“The Son of Man must be lifted up.”*

Then, He said this; *“They shall hear My voice.”* This is so positive. *“They shall hear My voice. Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them, I must also bring and they shall hear My voice.”* Well, will He speak to them from heaven? No! Will He speak to them in a dream or a vision? No! Well, how will He speak to them?

He speaks to them by His Word, through His preachers, just like the Ethiopian Eunuch. He heard a preacher. He was one of God’s sheep. God sent Phillip to him to preach the gospel to him. He heard that gospel and came to Christ. Cornelius was one of the sheep; God sent Peter to him and he heard the gospel. He came to Christ. Lydia was one of the sheep. God sent Paul to her. Even the Philippian jailor heard the gospel.

You see; In Romans Chapter 10 it says this, *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But, how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And, how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent?”* The sheep will hear the voice of their Shepherd

You see; *“God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them which believe.”* In Romans 1:16, Paul says; *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”* James 1:18 says, *“Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth.”* In our text it says, *“My sheep hear My voice.”* That is how they hear His voice; it is through His Word.

It is not a matter of selling something. We are not insurance salesman. We are not trying to close a deal. We are proclaiming the gospel. We are preaching the truth. We are preaching the good news, the glad tidings of redemption through Jesus Christ.

He said, *“My sheep will hear My voice; I’m the good Shepherd. I know My sheep. As the Father knows Me and I know the Father, so I know the sheep. I lay down My life for the sheep. Other sheep I have; they are mine, My Father gave them to Me. Them I must bring and they shall hear My voice.”* There are no ifs, ands, perhaps or buts about it. *“They shall hear My voice and they shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”* That is so clear.

In verse 17: *“Therefore, doth My Father love Me.”* The Father loves the Son. You know; all men today need to hear the truth about God’s love. We have heard enough error on this subject. I don’t know how preachers can point their fingers at a television camera and at the people listening and say, “Smile; God loves you.”

How do you know God loves them? You say, “Well, God loves every body.” That is not what the Bible says. The Bible says that God hated Esau. *“Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated.”* The Bible says, *“He hates the workers of iniquity.”* The Bible says that He is *“Angry with the wicked every day.”* The Bible says, *“He that believeth not on the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

The flood, in the days of Noah, was that an expression of love or judgment? The burning of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, was that an expression of love? Did God love those people? I’d be much obliged if He didn’t love me. He poured out His wrath on them.

I will tell you where the love of God is; *“The Father loves the Son.”* He loves every one in the Son. *“He that believeth on the Son hath life; he that believeth not on the Son of God shall not see life; the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

The love of God was in that Ark. Everybody outside the Ark was under the judgment and wrath of God. God’s love was upon the Ark. We need to hear the truth about God’s love. God’s love is in Christ. His love is indescribable:

Oh, love of God,
How rich, how pure
How measureless, how strong,
It shall forevermore endure
The saints and angel’s song.

His love is everlasting. He said, *“I have drawn you with an everlasting love.”* It is unchanging; *“I am the Lord; I change not. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.”* God’s love is in Christ. *“Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.”* That is where God’s love is. *“He that loveth Me, Him will My Father love.”* I’m telling you the truth. *“The Father loves the Son and hath given all things into His hand.”* That is where the love of God is. It is just like in the days of the flood. God’s love is upon the Ark and Christ is that Ark. Outside of Christ there is no love.

He said, *“I lay down My life that I might take it again,”* in verse 18. *“No man takes My life; I lay it down. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”*

My friends; our Lord is not a beggar. He is a King! Our Lord is not a weak, impotent, failing, frustrated, defeated “super-star.” Our Lord is a Sovereign, conquering, victorious, omnipotent Lord and Saviour.

Our Lord has a people. They are called His sheep. Oh, by His grace may I be one of those sheep. For, He said; *“I’m the good Shepherd; I know My sheep. I lay down My life for My sheep and they will never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father gave them to Me. No man can pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”*