

100. The Gospel of John—10:16-21

“The Good Shepherd” Pt.6

(3/1/20)

We are currently studying John’s gospel here at Calvary on Sunday mornings.

This morning, we find ourselves in chapter 10, where Jesus referred to Himself as the “*Good Shepherd*”.

And what was it that made Jesus such a good shepherd (besides being God incarnate)—that He was willing to die (and did eventually die) to save the sheep—“**The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**” (v.11)

This statement by Jesus set the stage for His comparison of Himself as ‘**the Good Shepherd**’ in contradistinction to the bad shepherds of Israel (chief priests, scribes and Pharisees).

The Lord called them ‘**hirelings**’ in verses 12 and 13—because they really didn’t care about the ‘sheep’ (God’s people) but were only in it for the power, prestige and money they got from the *job*.

John 10:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² **But a hireling, *he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.***

¹³ **The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.**

A good shepherd put the needs (and lives) of the sheep before his own—it was his ‘selfless’ love for the sheep that made him a *good* shepherd.

You see, only a man who loved the sheep would be willing to put his life on the line to protect them from predators and thieves—which were a constant danger back then.

The *hireling*, on the other hand, was nothing more than a paid employee who didn't own the sheep (and therefore had no real love for them)—when thieves or predators showed up, he would often choose his life over the sheep's and run away leaving the sheep on their own—defenseless and vulnerable.

John 10:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

As we pointed out last time, when Jesus talks about *knowing* His sheep and them *knowing* Him; and then He pivots to the Father and says the same thing in verse 15—He uses the Greek word *ginosko* which means to know by *experience* (not the kind of 'head knowledge' that comes from studying and practicing religion like the scribes, Pharisees and chief priests but who didn't have a relationship with God).

This speaks of the very intimate relationship that exists between Himself and those that belong to Him (those who are saved and connected to Him by the Holy Spirit)—the kind of relationship He has enjoyed with the Father (and Holy Spirit) from all eternity.

And so, when the Lord talks about this special relationship that He has with the Jews as God's chosen, covenant people (those Jews who had received Him as their Savior and '*Shepherd*')—He then says in verse 16:

John 10:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

The "**other sheep**" (not aliens from another planet) is a reference to Gentiles that will be saved; "**which are not of this 'fold'...**"—a reference to Israel (God's covenant people).

This wasn't a *shocking* truth; it wasn't a *new revelation*—it was a reminder of what God had promised throughout the Jewish Scriptures (our Old Testament).

Genesis 12:3 (NKJV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Isaiah 42:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "I, the LORD, have called You [Messiah Jesus] in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant [the new covenant] to the people, as a light to the Gentiles,

Isaiah 49:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You [Messiah] should be My Servant...I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation ['Jesus' (Y'shua)—'the Lord has become salvation] to the ends of the earth.' "

And so, the fact that God had said in the Old Testament that Gentiles would at some point benefit from the Jewish Messiah and somehow be *blessed* thru Him—wasn't a new revelation (Gen.12:3).

The fact that God intended to save Gentiles was further confirmed to the Jewish people when God directed them to provide an area in the Temple precinct where Gentiles seeking to know the God of Israel and possibly proselytize (convert) to Judaism could come and ask questions of the priests—a place that was named **“The Court of the Gentiles.”**

Let me stop here and give you some background with regard to the Temple.

In the New Testament there are two words which are translated *temple*.

The Temple proper was called the *naos* and was a building that contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (into which only the High Priest could enter, and then only on the great Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur).

It sat on the top of Mt. Moriah which is still called the *Temple Mount* to this day.

The Temple proper was surrounded by 35 to 40 acres called the *Temple precincts*—the Greek word for the whole area is the word “*hieron*.”

The area of the Temple precincts closest to the Temple proper consisted of a series of successive and ascending courtyards that led up to the Temple Mount.

If we start on top of the Temple mount and move downward—the uppermost court, the one that the Temple building actually sat upon, was called the **Court of the Priests**.

It was called the *Court of the Priests* because only the Jewish priests could enter into this area where they would offer sacrifices to God on the brazen altar and wash in one of the lavens (wash basins) before entering into the Holy Place of the Temple to burn incense to God on the golden altar of incense which stood in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

From that uppermost court, you’d walk several steps down until you came to the next court—the **Court of the Israelites**.

It was in this court that the Jewish men (and only Jewish men) could assemble for the Temple services.

From the *Court of the Israelites* you’d descend several more steps until you came to the **Court of the Women**.

Into this court any Jew could enter—but it was called the *Court of the Women* because this was as far as a Jewish woman could go.

From the *Court of the Women* you descended five steps to a level area on which there was erected a five-foot stone barricade that went around the entire temple enclosure.

Then from that level area there were fourteen more steps that descended to ground level—to the **Court of the Gentiles** also known as the **Outer Court**.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, that five-foot stone wall that separated *the Court of the Women* from *the Court of the Gentiles* had signs all around it at various intervals stating that no foreigner (Gentile) was permitted to go any farther.

Those signs read, *“No Gentile may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.”*

That wall was a visible reminder of the separation that existed between Jews (God’s covenant people) and Gentiles.

The Jews, as the covenant people of God, were closest to Him (starting with the priests then the men and finally the Jewish women!).

The Gentiles were outside the covenants of God and were seen as *‘far away’* from Him (His presence was in the Temple on top of Mt. Moriah) and *‘below’* the Jews (the Court of the Gentiles being on the lowest level).

But in the mind of God even though the Gentiles were outside the covenant relationship that He had with the Jews and therefore were “far away”—it didn’t mean that He didn’t love the Gentiles or that He didn’t want to bring them close to Him and make them a part of His covenant people as well.

Remember, God had told His covenant people Israel that they were to be a *light* to the Gentiles (Isa.42:6 and 49:6) and that it was His desire to bless every nation through the coming Messiah. (Gen.12:3)

And to demonstrate this God placed the **Court of the Gentiles** in the Temple for the very purpose of winning Gentiles to Himself.

It was the place where Gentiles could come and learn more about the God of Israel in order to convert to the Jewish faith (Judaism) and thereby bring them “near” to God—which found its ultimate fulfillment in the New Covenant!

Paul stated this clearly in the book of Ephesians—

Ephesians 2:13-19 (NLT2)

¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. ¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. ¹⁹ So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.

So when Jesus said in John 10:16, “**And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd**”—you understand what He was saying—He was talking about His Church!

John 10:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ **Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.**

¹⁸ **No one takes 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 command I have received from My Father."**

As we talked about last week, no man on earth—not Pilate or the Roman government took Jesus’ life from Him—He obeyed the command of His Father, submitted to the process and laid it down freely for fallen humanity (1John 2:2).

Some say that Jesus was *caught off guard* by His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and His ensuing crucifixion—but Scripture doesn’t bear that out.

We know His crucifixion didn't take Him by surprise because—He told His disciples 4 times in the gospels that He would be crucified (Luke 13:33; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 17:22; Mark 8:31)

In fact, this is the 4th time in John chapter 10 that He predicted He was going to die (v.11, 14, 17 and 18).

Now skeptics jump on that and say, *“So what!? It doesn't take a prophet to predict you're going to be killed when you keep shooting your mouth off about being a king! That's insurrection! The kind of crime the Roman Government executed people for all the time!”*

They're right. Anyone can say things in a given situation that can get them killed—but how many could say that they had the power to raise themselves from the dead afterwards?

And not only that—but promise, as Jesus did, to raise everyone from the dead who has ever died!!?

John 5:25-29 (NKJV)

²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself...²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 14:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "... Because I live, you will live also. [Also, John 6:39-40, 44]

Warren Wiersbe—

“His voluntary death was followed by His victorious resurrection. From the human point of view, it appeared that Jesus was executed; but from the divine point of view, He laid down His life willingly. When Jesus cried on the cross, ‘It is finished!’ He then voluntarily yielded up His spirit to the Father (John 19:30). Three days later, He voluntarily took up His life again and arose from the dead. The Father gave Him this authority in love.

Sometimes the Scriptures teach that it was the Father who raised the Son (Acts 2:32; Rom. 6:4; Heb. 13:20). Here, the Son stated that He had authority to take up His life again. Both are true, for the Father and the Son worked together in perfect harmony (John 5:17, 19). In a previous

sermon, Jesus had hinted that He had power to raise Himself from the dead (John 5:26). Of course, this was a claim that the Jews would protest; because it was tantamount to saying, 'I am God!'"

As you can imagine the crowd that was present that day fell into 2 categories—2 main schools of thought as to their feelings about Jesus:

John 10:19-21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. ²⁰ And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" ²¹ Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Jesus was a radical and you're either *for* him or *against* him!

One pastor and author put it well—

"The issue is still the same today as it was then. Either the Lord Jesus Christ was a mad man, or He is the Savior of the world. Either He has a demon, or He is the Son of God. There has always been that division..."

The so-called liberal theologians are the most inconsistent and illogical in their views about Jesus Christ. They call Him a good teacher and a great moral example—but then go on to call Him a fraud and a mad man. He is either a fraud or He is the Son of God. Jesus Christ puts you on the horns of a dilemma, my friend. Either He is a mad man, or He is your God and your Savior?"

John 10:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Now we must be careful here—does the devil (and his demons) have supernatural power?

Can he work miracles? Can his servants (false prophets and false messiahs) work miracles?

Matthew 24:24-25 (NLT2)

²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time.

Of course, the greatest false prophet and false christ that will ever walk the face of the earth will be—the Antichrist.

As Jesus has the power to raise Himself from the dead—the devil is going to deceive the world into thinking their world leader (Antichrist) has the power to raise himself from the dead.

You see, the Bible teaches that someone is going to try to assassinate the Antichrist.

Revelation 13:3 (NKJV)

³ And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

And so the Antichrist is going to appear to be dead.

I personally don't believe he is really dead because I don't believe the devil has the power to raise the dead.

However, it isn't going to matter because Satan will present such a convincing counterfeit death and resurrection that the whole world will believe it was genuine.

And in fact it will be such a powerful testimony to the world of this man's godlike attributes and power—the fact that he 'raised himself from the dead'—that it's mentioned three times in Revelation 13 and becomes the thing that the world identifies him with—"*those who dwell on the earth will worship the beast—whose deadly wound was healed.*" (Rev.13:12)

Revelation 13:4 (NKJV)

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Comment)

One of the reasons the world worships the Antichrist as their messiah and savior is because he has the power to perform miracles—

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

These satanic “**lying wonders ... with all the deception of wickedness**” will be extremely persuasive “**for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved**” (v.10).

Those who reject the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will eagerly accept the damning false gospel preached by the false prophet and Antichrist—a gospel seemingly verified by spectacular supernatural signs.

So, “**can a demon (or the devil) open the eyes of the blind?**” (John 10:21)—I believe the answer is ‘yes’.

So how can we (the elect) keep from being deceived by the devil’s lies (right now, not in the Tribulation Period) when they are coupled with supernatural power?

Matthew 24:24-25 (NKJV)

²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. [Prophecy]

God has told us what’s coming and warned us to be vigilant by studying prophecy and keeping watch for Satan’s deceptions—and ultimately for the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 (NLT2)

¹ “Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, ² and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, ‘Come, let us worship other gods’—gods you have not known before—³ do not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul. ⁴ Serve only the LORD your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him [to His Word].”