

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 29)
John 10:11-21 CSB
“I AM The Good Shepherd ”**

Introduction

“But you,” He asked them, “who do you say that I AM?”

Matthew 16:15

So far in *John's Gospel*, we have seen three separate “I AM” statements of The LORD Jesus: *I AM The Bread of Life* (**John 6:35**), *I AM The Light of The World* (**John 8:12**), and *I AM The Door* (**John 10:1-10**). Today we see the fourth, and to many, the most comforting of the seven I AM's of Jesus; *I AM The Good Shepherd*.

As we have previously discussed, each I AM statement of Christ is a declaration that He is in fact God, incarnate. Or as John so eloquently stated in **Chapter One**:

In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with God and The Word WAS God. **John 1:1 (emphasis added)**

And then He followed up by saying:

The Word became flesh and dealt among us.

John 1:14

As we have also previously discussed, and will do so again, the Gospel of John was **“written so that you may believe that Jesus is The Messiah, The Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name.”** (**John 20:31**). Therefore, every I AM statement that Jesus makes in this book is so that you will see Him for Who He is and place your complete faith in Him. He has promised that those who do so will be delivered from the wrath of God.

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16**

So, keeping this essential truth in mind, let us look at the fourth I AM of Jesus: **“I AM The Good Shepherd”**. This statement was given after the blind man whom Jesus healed had been excommunicated by the Pharisees. Jesus returned to get the man and lead him away from the empty religion of the Pharisees, showing him the way to salvation. In essence, he led this man out of the dark and confining “sheepfold” of empty religion and into the abundant pastures of eternal life.

The Pharisees were furious at Jesus for His claims of deity, but rather than backing down, Jesus doubled down. No matter how much they didn't wish to hear it, they could not stop God from being God! In the **Tenth Chapter of John**, Jesus not only reveals His identity with two separate I AM statements, but later in the discourse, plainly refers to Himself as “The Son of God” (**vs. 36**). Make no mistake. The Pharisees knew exactly Who Jesus claimed to be, and they hated Him for it.

Today we will examine one of the most wonderful truths regarding the character of The LORD Jesus Christ. He is The Good Shepherd. I can think of nothing more comforting for the believer than this. Jesus plainly describes for us the relationship that He has with those who will place their faith in Him. He **knows** His sheep, He **calls** His sheep, and He **laid down His life** to save His sheep. There is no greater love! Please allow me to explain.

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep (vs. 11-14)

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. This happens because he is a hired hand and doesn’t care about the sheep. I Am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me...” John 10:11-14

If there is a more beautiful passage of Scripture, I am not aware of it. Let’s put this in context shall we? Jesus healed a blind man, and the religious zealots of Jerusalem excommunicated the poor man, simply because he refused to speak ill against the One Who had healed him! Let that sink in for a moment. Jesus gave him his sight, and the religious people despised him for it! And what did Jesus do as a result? He came looking for the poor man and accepted him. He gave the man spiritual sight, as well as, physical. He saved this poor man, when no one else wanted anything to do with him!

That is exactly what Jesus does. He seeks out the outcasts and nobodies of this world and offers them life. He calls them by name and offers salvation to any who would believe.

...“He call His Own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has bought all His own outside, He goes ahead of them. The sheep follow Him because they know His voice.” John 10:3b-4

Just as Jesus came back for this one outcast beggar that the Pharisees had rejected, He will do the same for any who will hear His voice. Simply put, if anyone will trust in The Word of God and place their faith in The Good Shepherd, they will be led out of the fold of condemnation and into the flock of everlasting life. This is the message of the gospel.

The thing that strikes me as most profound about this passage is simply this: Jesus knows His sheep (by name), and He is willing to die for them. Why does this matter? When Jesus says that He “knows” His sheep, and they “know Him,” he is speaking of intimate knowledge. In other words, the Good Shepherd knows you better than you know yourself. He knows your name. In Biblical terms, a person’s name reveals that person’s character. Just think about that, Jesus knows everything about your inner self. Every flaw of your character is revealed to Him. You may be able to fool many people in regards to your “inner self”, but you cannot fool Him. He has always seen you for who you are. And yet, in spite of all that, he was willing to die for you! Is it any wonder He is called “The Good Shepherd”?

The actual rendering of The Greek text would read, “I AM The Shepherd, the Good One”. So what is He saying here exactly? Of course, we know what the I AM portion means. We have discussed this before. Jesus is claiming His Own deity. We also are aware that “shepherds” in *The Bible* are synonymous with those who have been chosen to lead God’s people. So we can deduce from this that Jesus is God, and therefore, the rightful leader of His Own chosen people. But what about “The Good One” portion of this statement?

To claim that He is “The Good One” is yet another rightful claim to His deity. For God alone is good. The rest of us are just as wretched as the poor blind beggar in this story. In the **Tenth Chapter of Mark’s Gospel**, a rich young ruler drops to his knees at the feet of Jesus seeking salvation. His exchange with Jesus is telling.

“As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked Him. “No one is good except God alone?” Mark 10:17-18

Why did Jesus answer him like that? The answer is simple. Before the young man could inherit eternal life, he must first understand Who Christ truly is! This was just another way to ask this man, **“Who do you say that I AM?”** If only God is good, and Jesus is truly good, then Jesus must be God. To come to realize this truth is the only way to salvation. Jesus is the only way (door) to salvation.

So let the truth of The Good Shepherd penetrate your heart today. We are all like sheep gone astray (**Isaiah 53:6**). We are all wretched, lost, and blind. The Good Shepherd knows us by name. He knows our faults and our tendencies to wander, and yet in His goodness, He came looking for us. He seeks us out and calls us by name. He died to save us. **For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.** He doesn't give us what we deserve, but rather, He chooses to save us, calling us out of the darkened sheepfold of sin and into His glorious flock. How good our Shepherd truly is!

The Shepherd Calls His Sheep (vs. 15-16)

...just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, One Shepherd.

John 10:15-16

One of the hardest truths that I have had to learn as a Pastor is this: it is The Good Shepherd Who puts together His own flock. For years I have watched as people walked away from the Church and wondered what I had done wrong. Why was I not able to hold them within the flock? Then after years, I realized my own sinful arrogance. I have absolutely nothing to do with who is in the flock! Jesus knows His Own sheep, and He alone can call them in. My job is simply to serve and feed HIS flock. I am most definitely not in charge of His sheep. It is He who puts the flock together, and no one else has that ability or authority. In a healthy flock (church), the sheep don't follow the preacher. They follow the Good Shepherd!

In this passage, Jesus speaks of the first "sheepfold", which is the nation of Israel. The Good Shepherd came to this fold, and from it, He called out the sheep who would hear His voice (His Word) and obey. And in **verse 16**, He speaks of yet another sheepfold from which He would call more sheep into His flock. This second sheepfold is made up of those sheep that are not of the house of Israel. In other words, He is speaking of Gentiles, like many of us believers in the church today. God didn't send His Son only to the nation of Israel. He sent Him to "whosoever" would believe. I am so grateful that these words included a stray sheep like me! How about you?

Jesus knows His Father intimately. For they are One. And just as They are One, He knows His sheep intimately as well. We are one with Him as He is One with the Father. He died for us so that we can be intimately connected with God forever. Just listen to what He prayed, the night before He went to the cross.

"I pray not only for these (His disciples), but also for those who believe in Me through their word (us!). May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe You have sent Me."

John 17:20-21 (with added clarification)

It is very important that we see the distinction between the two words "fold" or "sheep pen", and "flock" in **John 10:15-16**. The KJV (King James Version) makes no distinction and uses the word "fold" for both words. This is a very poor translation, for Christ used two different words to describe the truth He is communicating. He calls His chosen sheep by name, from the fold, into the flock. The fold is whatever circumstance that the sheep were in before they were called out of it. Whether it be the self-righteous religious system of the Jews of Israel, to the utter paganism from which He called us Gentiles. The important truth is: we were called from the confines of the fold into the the flock. The flock of Christ is the Church, and sheep from all different folds have been chosen by Him. He called us each one by name to be in one flock with one Shepherd. What a glorious truth this is! We are all made one in Christ, our Good Shepherd!

The Shepherd Laid Down His Life To Save His Sheep (vs. 17-21)

This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.” Again the Jews were divided because of these words. Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and he’s crazy. Why do you listen to him?” Others were saying, “These aren’t the words of someone who is demon-possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” **John 10:17-21**

The wondrous story of the cross never grows old to the Believer. Jesus laid down His life to save His sheep. He took our punishment upon Himself and paid the penalty for our transgressions. This is how good our Shepherd is to us! Contrast His love for the sheep with that of the Pharisees and you can plainly see why God The Father, loves The Son. No one ever cared for the lost sheep like Jesus. Listen to the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the Son of God.

***He was despised and rejected by men,
A Man of suffering Who knew what sickness was.
He was like someone people turned away from;
He was despised, and we didn’t value Him.***

***Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses,
And He carried our pains;
But we in turn regarded Him stricken,
Struck down by God, and afflicted.***

***But He was pierced because of our rebellion,
Crushed because of our iniquities;
Punishment for our peace was on Him,
And we are healed by His wounds.***

***We all went astray like sheep;
We all have turned to our own way;
And the Lord has punished Him
For the iniquity of us all.***

***He was oppressed and afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
And like a sheep silent before her shearers,
He did not open his mouth.***

***He was taken away because of oppression and judgment,
And who considered His fate?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
He was struck because of my people’s rebellion.***

***He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
But He was with a rich man at His death,
Because He had done no violence
And had not spoken deceitfully.***

***Yet the Lord was pleased to crush Him severely.
When you make Him a guilt offering,
He will see His seed, He will prolong His days,
And by His hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished.***

***After His anguish,
He will see light and be satisfied.
By His knowledge,
My righteous servant will justify many,
And He will carry their iniquities.***

Isaiah 53:3-11

As we read this famous *Old Testament* prophecy concerning The Messiah, we see that He would suffer and die for the sins of His flock, although He Himself had committed no sin. And yet, after He was crucified, He would rise from the dead: "After His anguish, He will see light and be satisfied" (**vs. 11**). This was exactly what Jesus was telling the Pharisees, when He said that He would lay down His life for the sheep and then take it up again (**John 10:17**). This would serve as proof that The Father truly loves The Son. For how else could He conquer death and rise to life again? This would prove beyond all doubt that Jesus was exactly Who He claimed to be. *He is The Great I AM made flesh.*

As religious scholars, the Pharisees knew the prophecies of Isaiah better than anyone. And yet, after all that Jesus had said and done, they still argued amongst themselves as to His identity. Some claimed that He was a madman possessed by demons, but others began to see a glimpse of the light and asked the question:

...“These aren’t the words of someone who is demon-possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” **John 10:21b**

It was a legitimate argument. For it seems that even some of the Pharisees had begun to wrestle with the identity of Jesus. Even they were finding themselves facing the precarious and life determining question that all mankind must answer: But as for you, **Who do YOU say that I AM?** Many that day had been blinded to the truth, but others were beginning to see the light. Jesus is asking this same question of all of us today. No one can answer it for you. **But you must decide for yourself.** John's gospel was written so that you may believe and answer this question correctly.

“You are the Christ, The Son of The living God.”

Matthew 16:16

He is The Good Shepherd, Who knows His sheep, Who has called them into one flock, and He is able to do this for He died and rose again to save them.

And let all those of God's one flock say...TRUTH!!!