

I am the Good Shepherd

John 10:1-18

Your Sheepiness

When Jesus uses this image of sheep and shepherd, he's drawing on two things. Firstly, in the Old Testament, God is the shepherd and his people are the flock. To be one of Jesus' flock is to be a member of God's covenant people.

But it's not just that we're special, it's also that we're stupid! Sheep are the dumbest of animals. They're oblivious to danger until it's too late. Like sheep we are stray from the straight path or the good pasture. Like them we are easily led, and our hearts are easily worried.

The problem is we can think we are the only ones who are like that. Then we feel like frauds, waiting to be found out. And if people knew what we are really like, we think they would reject us. But Jesus says he knows his sheep – he sees what we are really like, and he doesn't reject us.

Your Vulnerability

We are vulnerable to false teachers – religious or not – who try to sell us a vision of abundant life. But unless they are pointing us to Jesus, they are robbing us of what is truly life. But we're also vulnerable to the 'wolf' – to the devil – who gets his teeth into us through pride and anxiety. That's why we all need a shepherd.

Your Shepherd

The hired hand runs when trouble comes – because the sheep aren't valuable to him – but the good shepherd stands, because the sheep are of value to him. So as well as this passage telling us how sheep-like and sinful we are, it also tells us how valuable we are. And the Shepherd lays his life down for the sheep: the Shepherd becomes a lamb – the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The One You're to Follow

When we know Christ is our good Shepherd, we will follow him. That will show itself in 4 ways:

1. **Your identity.** He calls you by name. He names you – your identity is based on Christ. You can be secure in him.
2. **Your mission.** In the Bible, a person's name often conveyed their God-given task. We can worry about what God's will for our life is. But to understand that, we have to understand what story we are in. It ends with all glory being given to the Lamb. We are to live for his glory.
3. **Those who are different.** Jesus has other sheep to bring. Following Jesus means we will take opportunities to point others to the Shepherd. And when they come, we will welcome them.
4. **Your obedience.** To follow Jesus is to obey him – in every area of our lives, and in every time of our lives – even the hard times.