

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP  
John 10:11-18, 27-30

Intro: When I was in Seminary 40 years ago I learned from Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer that there are seven figures used in the NT to picture the present work of Christ. Here they are:

- 1) The Last Adam and the new creation.
- 2) The Head and the body.
- 3) The Shepherd and the sheep.
- 4) The Vine and the branches.
- 5) The Chief Cornerstone and the stones of the building.
- 6) The High Priest and the royal priesthood.
- 7) The Bridegroom and the bride.

All of these are wonderful, and all deserve our most careful consideration.

But somehow the one that appeals to me as much as any of the others is the figure of Christ as our Shepherd, and we as the sheep. Shepherd means Pastor, and I like to think of the Lord as my Pastor. Perhaps for pastors we could say that He is the Chief Shepherd, and we are the shepherds under Him. This is what Peter said in 1 Peter 5:1-4.

There are two other passages which speak of the Lord as our Shepherd:

- 1) The good Shepherd--in the passage we are considering tonight.
- 2) The great Shepherd--in Heb. 13:20, 21. (Read.)

Add to that the Psalm which is probably the best-known passage in the Bible, Psalm 23, and you have a lot of food for your soul.

The older I get the more it seems that sheep portray what we as the Lord's people really are, and Shepherd is what the Lord is to us. What blessing, what comfort there is in knowing that the Lord is our Shepherd.

Psalm 23 gives us the best picture of the Lord in this role that we have in the OT. John 10 gives us the most complete revelation in the NT. But in both of these we are confronted with one basic fact: the Lord gives; the sheep receive.

Illus: The Valley of Vision, p. 4, beginning with, "What shall I give thee . . . ?"

That giving by the Lord is brought out very clearly in John 10 and it is in connection with His giving that I want to speak to you tonight. Here are my main points:

I. THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.

- II. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.
  - III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVE HIS LIFE TO THE SHEEP.
- You have all three of these truths in John 10, and I want you to see that they reveal for us the full work of Christ on our behalf.

I. THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP (John 10:11).

Now I have no doubt but that the substitutionary work of our Lord on the Cross is involved here, but I want you to note that there is another great truth connected with that, and perhaps just as prominent as the death of Christ.

Note that in the context of this verse we have the Lord compared with the hireling. Note also how the work of the shepherd is pictured in vv. 2-5, leading up to verse 11.

From all of this I believe that we can say that this statement, "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," means that the Good Shepherd lives for His sheep. All of His energies and purposes are designed for the blessing and benefit of the sheep.

Is this not the truth of Psalm 23?

Cf. also Rom. 8:34. Think also of 1 John 2:1, 2. And we can cite Heb. 9:24,

For Christ is not entered into the holy places  
made with hands,  
which are the figures of the true;  
but into heaven itself,  
now to appear in the presence of God for us.

He not only never leaves us, but He never forgets us. As I have said, this does not exclude His work on the Cross, but it goes beyond that work and includes all that He does for us day by day. We are never out of His thoughts. In all of our afflictions, He is afflicted.

Just as the ancient shepherds were always with their sheep, so the Lord is always with us, working for us, keeping us, feeding us, doing all of the work of a Shepherd continuously.

But let me go on to the second point:

- II. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP (John 10:15).

Here is not only redemption, but particular redemption!

While our Lord was sent to die for the sheep, yet He did it of His own will. He laid it down, and He took it again.

There can be no greater love than this. Cf. John 15:13, 14. This is what we remember tonight, the giving up of His life for us. He died for our sins.

Thus, our greatest need has been met by our good Shepherd.

But notice the third point:

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS LIFE TO THE SHEEP (John 10: 27, 28).

What does it mean to have eternal life? It means that we have the very life of Jesus Christ within us. Cf. 1 John 5:11, 12.

Jesus Christ is our life! He has given us Himself!

And so what does it mean? It means that we will never perish. We cannot perish as long as He lives because it is His life which we have.

Concl: Let us keep these three truths in our minds as we come to the Lord's table tonight:

- 1) The Lord gives His life for us.
- 2) The Lord lays down His life for us.
- 3) The Lord gives His life to us.

What a Shepherd we have!

Let me conclude with this? I have not said much about the word, "good." What does it mean that the Lord is "the good shepherd"?

Trench wrote in his Synonyms of the New Testament this interesting comment:

Kalos, affirmed to be of the same descent as the German 'heil,' as our own "whole" . . . , as we first know it, expresses beauty, and beauty contemplated from a point of view especially dear to the Greek mind, namely as the harmonious completeness, the balance, proportion, and measure of all the parts one with another of that to which this epithet is given (p. 389).

So what does this mean?

It means that the Lord is the Beautiful Shepherd, the Sufficient Shepherd, the One Who is perfect in His character, with everything in perfect balance, just as it ought to be. We learn of Him, and there is nothing that we would change if we could.

It is such a Saviour that we come tonight to remember and to worship once again.