

THE LORD JESUS, OUR SHEPHERD
John 10:11-16

Intro: We come tonight to another time when we are to observe the Lord's Supper together. These are always times of blessing, times which we should all look forward to.

They are to be times of heart-searching, times when we seek by God's grace to make things right between each other that may not be right. But they are also times when our thoughts are to be directed in a special way toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are very clear as to the ways we are to think about the Lord. The Lord has taken for Himself a number of titles which are designed for our encouragement and blessing.

How shall we remember Him tonight?

Let me suggest one of His titles which seems to have been a favorite of His because He frequently had His servants speak of it in the Scriptures, and He Himself spoke of it extensively in John 10. It is this: the Lord Jesus is our Shepherd.

Here he is called "the good shepherd." In Heb. 13 He is called "that great shepherd of the sheep." In 1 Pet. 5 He is called "the chief shepherd. Also in 1 Pet. 2:25 Peter called Him "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

A Psalm which we all love is the 23rd where David said in those words which we all know so well, "The Lord is my shepherd."

So it is a title which means much to the Lord, and it is a title which has been a means of comfort to the people of God throughout history. And it should bring real comfort to us tonight. Let us see what we can learn about it, or what we can remember from what we have learned before. And as we come to the Lord's Table, let us keep these great truths in mind.

Perhaps I should also mention that the Lord has called His servants, pastors, or shepherds, because they carry on His work and are to display the same concern which He shows for His people.

Twice in John 10 the Lord Jesus said that He was

I. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

That would be a proud thing for me to say, or for any other man to say, but not so for the Lord. You see, the Lord has given these titles to comfort and encourage us. We carry in our hearts a nature suspicion of God, and the Lord was seeking to relieve that.

What does it mean that He is "good"?

For those of you who know Greek, this is the word .
 It expressed the Greek idea of beauty, which was different from our idea. Beauty to the Greeks meant harmony, the balance and completeness of all of the parts in anything. In a person, such as our Lord, it meant that you would find every trait in Him that a person ought to have, but nothing was out of proportion. You know how we will say about a person, "He is a fine person, but he does have a quick temper that you have to watch out for." Or, "She is a good person, but she is very sensitive." Or, we will say, "He has a lot of good traits, but he has a hard time staying on the job." The Greeks would never speak like that and use the word, "good."

So, when the Lord spoke of Himself as "good," He meant that you would not be disappointed with Him. The more you know about Him, the more you would want to be like Him, and the more you would wish that everybody was like He is. Everything is in Him in the right proportion; nothing is out of place, neither more nor less than it should be.

How thankful we should be about that! And, as you study His attributes, you will be more and more convinced of that. Look at His love, His righteousness, His wisdom, His power, and on and on.

That statement stand over all that is said about our Lord in this chapter.

As evidence of His goodness we note that there are other things that He said, things which we need to remember, and can remember as we come to the Lord's Table.

II. THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S LOVE.

Perhaps everything in the chapter comes under this, too. But let me mention one thing in particular: "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Shepherds protected their sheep often at the risk of their own lives--from wolves, or seeking them in dangerous places where they had strayed. But no greater love exists than this. Cf. John 15:13, "Greater love . . ."

Now if you way has been a little rough this week, or possibly for many weeks, remember this. The Lord loved you enough to lay down His life for you. He was not only willing to do so, but He did! And He would do it again if it were necessary. The Father was involved in this, too. Cf. Rom. 8:31, 32.

If you are discouraged tonight (and I get discouraged, too),

remember how much He loves you, and you will be encouraged again.

But notice another thing:

III: THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S KNOWLEDGE.

Now there are many things that we could say about the knowledge which the Lord Jesus possesses. We say that He is omniscient--and He is! But we need to break that down a little bit once in a while to draw comfort from this great truth.

In what way can the omniscience of Jesus be an encouragement to us tonight?

Listen to what He said: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep" (v. 14).

Turn back to verse 3, and read what the Lord said there: "He calleth his own sheep by name." He knows my name, and He knows yours. He knows where we live, and, if He needed to, He could call us on the telephone--and He does not need our church directory either.

He knows our weaknesses. He knows our trials. He knows our needs. To say that He knows our names means that He knows all about us. Did not the Lord say that about our heavenly Father, that He knows the things that we have need of even before we tell Him? See Matt. 6:8.

The Lord knows that you are here tonight. And the Lord knows those who are not here tonight. Oh, how wonderful it is to know that our Lord knows us and He knows all about us and He knows just exactly what we need. And His knowledge is never imperfect.

Let me mention two more things.

IV. THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S VOICE.

The Lord Jesus said that we know His voice. See John 10:4. See v. 27 also: "My sheep hear my voice."

Do you ever wonder what the voice of the Lord Jesus sounded like? Well, what we need to learn from this is that He does speak to us, and when He speaks we will know that He is the One Who is speaking to us. You understand that, don't you?

Most often He speaks through His Word. Sometimes He speaks to us through the circumstances of our lives, and this is usually when we are not reading His Word. But we know when

He is speaking, and aren't we glad that He is concerned enough to speak to us? How gracious His words are! How encouraging and helpful! The Lord has a mouth and He speaks.

But there is one other point, and then we will observe the Lord's Supper.

It has to do with the Lord's hand.

V. THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S HAND.

Do you wonder if the Lord is ever sorry that He has chosen you to be one of His sheep? If you have, then worry no more! Read John 10:28-30.

The Lord knew what He was getting when He chose you, and when He chose me. He certainly did! He knew we would fail Him. He knew there would be times when we would wish that we did not know Him. He knew all about that. But He still pledges to us one wonderful thing: no one will ever be able to get us away from Him.

And, if we need encouragement beyond that, the Father has His hand over our GOOD SHEPHERD'S hand, and He will not let us go either. It is hard to understand such love, is it not?

A mother will not normally give up her child. A doctor will do everything to save his patient. A father will have pity on a prodigal son. As Richard Sibbes, one of the Puritans once said, "And shall there be more mercy in the stream than in the spring?" (The Bruised Reed, p. 45).

Concl: How is it with you tonight? Have you been discouraged? Has this been a hard week? Are you facing some difficult problem at work, or anyplace else? Have you physical difficulties been getting you down?

What better place to cast them on the Lord than at the Lord's Table! That is why we are here, to remember Him! Remember Him tonight as your "good Shepherd." While the bread and the cup are being passed, quoted Psalm 23 to yourself. Remember it is still true, and true for you. The more you look at your Saviour, the more you remember Him as He is revealed for you in the Word, the greater will be your peace and joy, and the stronger your faith will be that everything is going to be all right.