
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe

"The Shepherd - The Good One!"

John 10: 11-21

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

"Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are."
- Dorothy Thrupp

"Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about him. The conclusion I dread is not "So there's no God after all," but "So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer." - C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

"I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice." - Ezekiel 34:15-16

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?

How does this self-portrait from Jesus intersect with you today? Is there anything fresh? Does it resonate with or confuse you at all? Is it too "churchy" to speak to you today?

What is/was the effect of reading a familiar passage like Psalm 23 and removing all mention of the Good shepherd? Paul Miller summarizes what it's like to live with the Shepherd taken out: "We are left obsessing over our wants in the valley of the shadow of death, paralyzed by fear in the presence of our enemies . . . With the Good Shepherd gone, we are alone in a world of evil." Where have you experienced anything like what Miller describes?

How do you like being portrayed as a sheep? Is it offensive at all? Just mildly laughable? Do you really think you need a Shepherd?

What is necessary and beautiful about Jesus laying down his life for his sheep?

How does Jesus laying down his life for his sheep distinguish him from a "hired hand"?

What do you make of Jesus having an utterly realistic knowledge of who you and I are yet being willing to substitute himself for us anyway?