

“I AM” Seven Times

Session-4: I Am The Good Shepherd

Notes

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Introduction

John 10:10-15

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. **11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12** The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. **13** The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. **14** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

Analysis of the fourth “I Am” statement:

- ✓ Identity (characteristic): “I am the good shepherd...”
- ✓ Our respond: None
- ✓ What are the results: None

The author first introduces the idea of the need for Christ to be the shepherd by quoting a verse from Chapter 53 of Isaiah. However, the twelve verses of the chapter are more about an unambiguous Old Testament prophesy that the Christ would suffer and die for our sins in our stead. An important prophesy about the salvation for sinners, through the Son of God. However, it was disregarded because his low condition and his appearance in the world were not agreeable to the ideas the Jews had formed of the Messiah. It was expected that he should come in pomp and ceremony to free the Jews from the tyranny of the Romans. But being born and made sin for us, he underwent the sentence for sin for us and by his sufferings he purchased for us the Spirit and grace of God.

Isaiah 53:6-9

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. **8** By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. **9** They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

The author believes that in today’s environment most people do not know or understand what a shepherd does and the shepherd’s relationship to the sheep he tends. So he first examines the four basic characteristics of that relationship as stated by Jesus:

1. Intimate Knowledge

According to the author, we first need to examine what Jesus says before he states, “I am the good shepherd...” to better understand about the intimacy between the shepherd and the sheep. In the beginning of the chapter Jesus says the following:

John 10:1-5

1 "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

Notice that the shepherd enters through the "gate" once the "gatekeeper" opens the gate. Is the gatekeeper God, as Christ is the shepherd who enters through the gate with his sheep? But note that, as the author states, that the sheep know his voice when he calls them by name and leads them. As Jesus says in verses 14 and 15 that "I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."

And to further emphasize this relationship, the author points to verse 5 where Jesus says that his sheep will run from strangers because they do not know them by their voice (Words).

While many think a relationship with God is not intimate, according to the author, he contends the contrary. God wants to have an intimate, "reciprocal" relationship with us. God may know everything about us, but for a relationship to be intimate it would have to be reciprocal, which entails us also knowing as much about God as we possibly can. In the same way we would want to know as much about our own loving father on earth. After all, God is our Heavenly Father.

And the author also points out that Jesus does not limit that intimate relationship to a specific class or ethnic group. Because in John 10:16 Jesus says:

John 10:16

16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

2. Leadership

The second basic quality of a shepherd the author describes is one of leadership. If we reexamine verses 3 and 4 we find that after entering the gate, Jesus goes ahead of them or leads and the sheep follow because they know his voice. He leads them along the proper and safe path where they will not encounter evil forces. And the shepherd is always with them to ensure their safety as they walk the path he leads them or when they graze in the pasture for sustenance.

The author states that at times the shepherd may sometimes lead them through dangerous and frightening places, but because he is always with the sheep and they trust him, they follow. And though the sheep might question the path the shepherd leads them, the shepherd always has their best interest first in his mind; there is a purpose and underlying reason for walking that path. Remember, in his leadership role, the shepherd also has a goal and that is to provide the necessities for their welfare and prosperity such nourishment and water.

3. Abundant Life

The author's third quality of the shepherd is to ensure that the sheep are nourished and healthy. The author quotes John 10:10 when Jesus says: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Additionally he uses Psalm 23 which states "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures..." to show that the shepherd works for abundant life and prosperity for the sheep.

To further emphasize this point he quotes **Ezekiel 34:15-16** which says:

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. **16** 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, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

The shepherd's concern is always for his sheep to be healthy and prosperous. And God's plan for us is just that, abundance and prosperity for his people; however, at times we will have to endure some hardship.

4. Rescue and Protection

The last major element of the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is the rescue and protection from enemies. And as Jesus said in:

John 10:14

"I lay down my life for the sheep."

The author points out that in chapter 10 of John, Jesus says this about the shepherd four different times. And he uses Psalm 23:4 and Ezekiel 34:12 to further support his claim about the quality of protection in the shepherd and sheep relationship.

Again he uses verses from John 10:12-13 to expand on the intimacy of the relationship by telling us that the sheep will not be with strangers or thieves or robbers for they don't know them or their voice. He also points out that in contrast to the shepherd, someone who is hired to tend the sheep only works for the wages and does not really care about the sheep.

The author declares that Jesus is the opposite in that he will protect us because we belong to him. In fact Jesus faced death on the cross to protect us, to wash away our sins. The author views the protection of Jesus, the shepherd, has two different aspects:

- ✓ The first that the shepherd lays down his life to rescue and protect sheep that have strayed from the flock.
- ✓ The second is the sacrifice to protect the sheep that obediently remain in the flock.

He points out the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross not only saves the lost sinner, but also keeps the saved, obedient sinner.

Our Response

The author points out that Jesus, in this “I Am”, does not tell us how to respond nor does he identify the results or benefits of the any action. The author proposes that perhaps the response is not stated but implied in that we should know Jesus by the four qualities of the shepherd and sheep relationship. He proposes these actions:

- ✓ **Know Him by reciprocating His intimacy**
- ✓ **Know Him by following His leadership**
- ✓ **Know Him by trusting completely in His provision**
- ✓ **Know Him by trusting totally in His protection**

In coming to His call we move from a point of spiritual involvement to the point where we give all of our attention to Him.