

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK TWENTY: JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

READING

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. 12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. 14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, 15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. 17 “The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. 18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.” John 10 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this teaching, Jesus calls himself the good shepherd. He is using this title to teach important truths about the nature of God’s relationship with his people. Jesus is the good shepherd and those who belong to him are his sheep. We should notice four important truths from this teaching:

- 1) We belong to Jesus and he takes responsibility for us. In verse 14, he says, “I know my own sheep.” The word “my” indicates ownership. To truly follow Jesus means completely belonging to him. That doesn’t mean we are perfect, but it does mean that we are constantly learning to find our identity in him and not in anyone or anything else.
- 2) We should listen to and know his voice. There are many voices in this world trying to shape your understanding of truth. It is wise for you to be in God’s word and in church to hear biblical teaching so you can recognize the good shepherd’s voice.
- 3) There are other “fake shepherds” that Jesus calls hired hands. The hired hand doesn’t truly care for the good of the sheep. This is true of anything or anyone that you might place your trust in over Jesus. It may seem like it can provide what Jesus provides, but in time you will see that it is not interested in your greatest good. Only the good shepherd knows what you need most and can faithfully provide it.
- 4) The good shepherd sacrifices his life for his sheep. In this we are reminded of the cross where Jesus laid down his life and was wrongfully executed for crimes he did not commit. He did this in our place to remove the curse of death and to bring us the real life.

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever seen or been around a sheep? What did you notice about it?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who is the good shepherd?
- What does the good shepherd do for the sheep?

CHILDREN:

- In this story, what did Jesus call himself?
- Why is it important for us to listen to and know the voice of the good shepherd?
- The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. How did Jesus do this?

TEENAGERS:

- Why is it important for us to listen to and know the voice of the good shepherd?
- What are some examples of “fake shepherd” that you’ve seen? These would be things that people trust in and love instead of Jesus.
- If we belong to Jesus, how does that change the way we make decisions?

ADULTS:

- Are there any “fake shepherds” in your life? How can you turn from those false sources of hope and look to Jesus?
- If we belong to Jesus, how does that change the way we make decisions?
- In what ways should the good shepherd’s sacrifice be a model for you and me?

PRAYER

God, thank you that you sent Jesus to be our good shepherd. Thank you that he knows us, he provides for us and he protects us. Help us to stay near to him and not to wander off chasing after the promise of something better. Thank you that he laid his life down so that we could have real life. Help me to be open to opportunities to tell others about Jesus, the good shepherd. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

In verse 16, Jesus mentions “other sheep...not in this sheepfold.” Jesus is talking about the Gentiles (non-Jewish people). It is important to remember that Jesus came first for the Jewish people, God’s chosen nation (Matt. 15:24). By God’s grace and sovereign plan, the offer of salvation was extended to the Gentiles and Gentiles can now be “grafted in” to “the olive tree” (Romans 11:11-24). Now we can be “one flock with one shepherd.” It’s also worth noting that God’s desire to reach all the nations is not something that began in the New Testament, but that it is present in his original call to Abram (later called Abraham) in Genesis 12.