

The Gospel of John Pt. 16

John 10:1-21

Big Idea

Jesus presents Himself as the one who knows the people and cares for them to the point of giving His life.

Exposition – John 10:1-21

As is often the case in transitions between chapters in John's gospel, there isn't much of a thematic transition between chapter 9 and chapter 10. After healing the man born blind there was a debate about the veracity of the miracle on the part of the Pharisees. So, Jesus turns to a familiar parable to distinguish Himself as the Good Shepherd apart from the bad shepherds that had led the nation of Israel to a poor spiritual condition. Jesus spends the entire chapter using the metaphor of sheep ranching to describe the many differences between He, as the Good Shepherd, and Satan, as the thief.

1. The Thief (V1)

- A. Sheep were kept in a pen, or fold. In most sheep folds of this location and time period, the sheep would be guided into an area enclosed by rocky outcroppings whose only opening was somewhat narrow. The sheep would be hemmed in on all sides then the shepherd himself would lie across the narrow opening. Anyone who entered or exited would have to go through the shepherd himself.
- B. Jesus asserts that anyone who entered by another way would be a thief. It seems that Jesus is using the imagery first given in Ezekiel 34. For other New Testament uses of the shepherd/sheep analogy, see Matt 9:36; Mark 6:34; 14:27; Luke 15:1-7

2. The Shepherd (V2-6)

- A. Conversely, the Good Shepherd would logically enter through the door that was designed into the fold itself.
- B. The doorkeeper – MacArthur says, "The doorkeeper was a hired undershepherd who recognized the true shepherd of the flock, opened the gate for Him, assisted the shepherd in caring for the flock, and especially guarded them at night."
- C. Not only do the sheep recognize their shepherds voice, but he has a unique name for them. Jesus uses this wording to show that His sheep are differentiated from the other sheep of the fold of Israel. He calls His sheep into His own messianic fold.
- D. (V4-5) Jesus intentionally shows that the sheep literally follow the shepherd, as opposed to cattle that are driven. Sheep are led, cattle is driven. This is a great picture of biblical spiritual leadership – it is always done by example not by coercion. Sheep will flee from strangers.
- E. Interestingly, John uses the phrase, "figure of speech" to describe what Jesus has been saying. It seems that John was showing us that Jesus was being cryptic (as was often the case with His teaching of parables).

3. Jesus is the Door (V7-10)

- A. Jesus gives the third of seven "I AM" statements here.
- B. Previously Jesus made the analogy of Himself as the Shepherd and here He is the Gate. Though they are different metaphors, there is a strong relationship between the two. He is THE door that leads to the proper pasture. Everyone else is a thief and the sheep wouldn't follow them.

- C. In V10 Jesus pits Himself in juxtaposition with “the thief”. The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. Whereas the Good Shepherd has come that they may have life. Remarkably, according to the structure, all of this is determined by how one enters the fold and the sound of their voice.

4. Jesus is the Good Shepherd (V11-18)

- A. (V11-13) – Jesus gives the fourth of seven “I AM” statements here, “I am the good shepherd.” A good shepherd is willing to lay down his life for his sheep, but a hireling is not, he will flee in order to preserve his own life. What did Jesus actually do? He laid down His life for the sake of His sheep. According to the parable, the difference between the two is ownership. The hireling has no investment and is therefore not concerned about the sheep. This is likely an allusion to spiritual leaders who do their work in good times, but do not show sacrificial care during tough times.
- B. (V14-15) – Jesus compares His relationship with the sheep to His relationship with the Father. He says He knows His sheep and they know Him. There are two basic, but strong truths here: Jesus knows His sheep. He knows them. He knows how they are made and He knows their condition. Second, by God’s design, Jesus’ sheep know their Master. There is an assurance as to which fold they belong.
- C. (V16) – “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold” – this can only be referring to the Gentiles to whom the gospel would eventually extend to. And, when it does they would be united to the very same fold of sheep as the Jews (Eph. 2:11f).
- D. (V17-18) – Jesus lays out His soteriological work concisely.
1. His willingness to lay down His life has gained Him beautiful union with the Father.
 2. He is our voluntary substitution
 3. He is sovereign in His death and also in His life
 4. He acted under the assignment from the Father

