

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 11.20.2022

Happy Sheep – John 10:1-11

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

The Bible provides us with many different pictures of what God is like. He is our King. He is our Father. He is our provider and protector. But of all the various images and metaphors that get used to describe God, there is none more beautiful or beloved than that of the Shepherd. The imagery of God as a Shepherd is something that gets woven throughout the pages of scripture. Who could forget the beautiful and memorable way David begins the twenty-third Psalm: ‘The LORD is my Shepherd...’ Many of Israel’s greatest heroes were shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all shepherds. So were Moses and David. God also referred to the religious leaders of the nation as shepherds. They were the ones responsible for ‘shepherding’ the nation of Israel. That’s what a pastor is. The word pastor is Latin for shepherd. Sadly, the ‘shepherds’ in Jesus’ day failed to properly represent the LORD and became derelict in their duty and Jesus called them out for it. This is something that God had to do repeatedly throughout Israel’s history. Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you from this week’s sermon?
2. What do you know about being a shepherd? How much do you know about the care of sheep? How do you suppose raising sheep differed in the first century from now?
3. What were the responsibilities of a first-century shepherd? In what ways does this example help us to relate to Jesus’ ministry to us? What might be a similar analogy from our culture?

Sheep were a major part of the “economy” in first-century Palestine, especially for the shepherds. Sheep provided them with food, clothing, and money. Needless to say, sheep were valuable and had to be well-guarded and cared for. Shepherds in the first century stayed with their sheep. They led them out to the pasture in the day, watched over them, and then led them back to safety at night. Shepherds could call their sheep, and they would come running like a well-trained dog. Shepherds knew everything about the sheep they cared for. Jesus says here that He is a good shepherd. He cares for us and protects us, and we are valuable to Him. This illustration helps us to understand how devoted Jesus is to the care of His people.

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER JOHN 10:1-4

1. What is the purpose of the sheep pen? If we, as believers, are in the sheep pen, what does that represent for us?
2. Who would the modern “thieves and robbers” be who enter “some other way”? How can they be identified?
3. Who is the doorkeeper in this illustration? Who might the doorkeepers in the church be?

The sheep pen is a place of safety. It was a fenced area, usually by the house, where the sheep could stay at night. Sometimes, they even used caves. The reason that they brought the sheep in at night is because predators like wolves or wild dogs or lions, tend to hunt at night. The sheep pen provided protection for them so that predators couldn’t scatter them and eat them.

It is hard to say exactly what Jesus meant by the “sheep pen” other than to say it is a place of protection. If we are Christ’s, then He keeps us safe from robbers and thieves and predators who would seek to do us harm. In Psalm 23, David likens the Lord to a shepherd and says of him, “Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4). The rod and staff could be weapons used to drive off predators who sought to harm the sheep. Jesus is telling us that He will care for us like a good

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shepherd. He will watch over our souls, and He will keep those who would spiritually harm us at bay.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 10:5-6

1. Why wouldn't the sheep follow the voice of a stranger? Have you ever had a pet that would only come when you or a family member called him?
2. What is Jesus saying about the nature of discipleship when He says, "They will never follow a stranger"? Where can we learn to recognize the voice of Jesus?
3. Why do you think the people failed to understand this illustration?

If thieves and robbers weren't enough, the sheep were also in danger of those who would lead them astray. Jesus says that His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him. Shepherds were not like cowboys. Instead of driving the flock from behind, shepherds went out first and the sheep followed their shepherd as he called them. Because the shepherd is with the flock every day, they know his voice and call, and they will only respond to him. We learn to hear the voice of Jesus over the voice of the world by studying Scripture. In the Bible, we hear the voice of the Lord, and the more we study and read it, the easier it is for us to discern how Jesus would have us act in situations in life, and the easier it will be for us to judge right from wrong.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 10:7-11

1. What does Jesus mean when He says He is the door of the sheep? Who are the thieves and robbers?
2. Who is the thief that "comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy"?
3. How does Jesus provide a more abundant life? How has Jesus made your life more abundant?

Jesus is the door to salvation because "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it" (Acts 4:12). Anyone or any religion that claims to get people into heaven except by Jesus Christ is simply a robber and a thief. There are false teachers in the world who make a living by taking advantage of the flock of Jesus. They preach for their own profit, and they deceive people by making promises in God's Name that God Himself never made. Jesus is not like that. Jesus came for the benefit of His people, not to rob them of their possessions. Jesus came to give us life, not to steal it from us. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Instead of taking advantage of the sheep, Jesus lays down His own life for their benefit. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Jesus did not come to take advantage of us; He came to care for us. Our heavenly Father loves us, and He takes pleasure in giving us the kingdom. We can be confident in our lives and in our salvation because Jesus, the Good Shepherd, watches over us and protects us.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The only prerequisite for hearing the voice of the Shepherd is that you are a sheep. Jesus said, 'My sheep know My voice.' My wife and I started dating and even got married before caller ID were invented. Back then, when you answered the phone you had no idea who was on the other line. But because I knew her voice, all she had to say was, 'Hey' and I immediately knew it was her. That's how familiar God wants you to become with the sound of His voice. You were born with all the equipment necessary for communicating with God. You don't have to be a super-Christian or a pastor to hear from God, you just have to be listening.

What questions or topics give you the greatest sense of hesitation when sharing your experience with Jesus? How does the limited ability of the man born blind to answer questions about Jesus impact you?

1. How does it affect you to know that Jesus watches out for you every moment?
2. Have you spent enough time in God's Word to recognize the voice of Jesus from the voice of the world? What are some ways we could learn to hear Christ more effectively?
3. If we realize that Satan, the great thief, has come to "steal and to kill and to destroy," how might that move

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us to pray for our families and friends in our time before the Lord?

PRAYER - Offer a time for group members to pray aloud. Thank the Lord for being our shepherd. Thank Him for opening our ears and eyes to hear and see the good things in His Word. Ask the Lord to deliver us and our friends from those who would harm the flock of Christ. Close by asking the Father to show others that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” {Matthew 9:36}