

sermon study guide

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Sermon Title: The Good Shepherd Series Part 2 - His Provision

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. If you were to choose an animal that best describes you, what would it be? (E.g. hard-working beaver, bold lion, timid sheep, other?)
2. Over these past few weeks, what has been put on hold or disrupted that you miss most? How are you adapting and being creative? How are you connecting with others?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read *John 10:7-18*

3. These verses talk about the thief, the hired hand, and the Good Shepherd. Compare and contrast the motives and actions of the thief and the hired hand with that of the Good Shepherd.
4. Read *John 10:10*. In the midst of these difficult times and in the months to come, what does living 'life to the full' look like for sheep following the Good Shepherd?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. In John 10 (verses 7 and 9) Jesus describes himself as the only gate for salvation. Read *Acts 4:12*. How would you express this verse in your own words to someone not familiar with the Bible?
6. A pastor from Chicago once said, "The flavor of a tea bag comes out best when you put it in hot water." What do you hope the Christian response will be in these times? What 'flavor' will seep out of you?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

What are you most concerned about during these challenging times? How might the Good Shepherd address these fears? Share with someone in your life and pray together about these concerns.

THE WORD (NIV)

John 10:10-18

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Matthew 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

sermon study summary

The Good Shepherd Series | His Provision

Pastor Ashwin

John 10:10-18

In this time of COVID-19, our lives have been disrupted and turned upside down in ways we could not have imagined mere weeks ago. Trusting in the goodness of Christ, Our Shepherd, is the path to maintaining the right perspective as we cope.

Throughout scripture, God likens us to sheep. Sheep are not resilient. Their survival depends on the Shepherd because they cannot nourish or protect themselves. Matthew 9:36 makes it clear that Jesus had a strong sense of compassion for those without a Shepherd. The same applies for people today who are panic-stricken, helpless and confused during this crisis: Jesus' heart continues to be flooded with compassion for those who struggle to navigate life without a Shepherd.

John 10:10 clearly states the contrasting objectives between the Shepherd and thief. Taken in the context of the Bible, the thief is a metaphor for Satan who comes to bring destruction. Jesus, the Shepherd, offers life and He is the only door or entry point to this life (John 10:9). The life Jesus offers is not one of bare existence but one that is abundantly full or superior and surpassing the common. This life of contentment and deep abiding satisfaction is not just for eternity, but for life here on earth. No circumstance, including a coronavirus pandemic, can negate the promises of God. Although a storm is raging on the outside, the depth of peace found through the Good Shepherd, is a witness to the world.

In caring for the sheep, a Good Shepherd willingly puts his life on the line to guard from dangers (John 10:11). Unlike the hired hand who flees at the first sight of trouble, a reliable Shepherd will never forsake His sheep but rather will lay down his life for the sheep. Christian Apologist Abdu Murray states this aptly, "The greatest possible ethic is love and the greatest possible way to express that ethic is through self sacrifice." Christ's death is the best example of this as He sacrificed His life for us when we were still sinners or enemies of God. God uses the cross, which is a cruel instrument of torture and transforms it into an instrument of life, as He demonstrates His utmost love for us.

The root word in Latin for corona means crown. Under extreme magnification the virus actually looks like a thorny crown. The thorny crown that Roman soldiers mockingly placed on Jesus was symbolic of the pain, insults and shame He was willing to endure on our behalf. Christianity worships a God who suffers. Our obsession should not be with the thorny crown virus, but with our Saviour who wore a thorny crown to give abundant life.

The Good Shepherd not only voluntarily gave His life but He shows His authority in taking His life back (John 10:17-18). People can lay down their life for others, but a person does not have the authority to come back to life. Jesus has conquered death and thus there is no reason to fear humanity's worst enemy of death. Jesus the Good Shepherd is a comfort when walking through the valley of the shadow of death. He is reliable, trustworthy and has authority and sovereign power. During this time when life's plans have gone awry, get to know the Good Shepherd.