

John 10 – Jesus the Good Shepherd

¹“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

⁶Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. ⁷Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹²But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

¹³The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

¹⁶And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd. ¹⁷“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

¹⁸No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” ¹⁹Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.

²⁰And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?” ²¹Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” ²²Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.

²³And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. ²⁴Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

²⁵Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

²⁹My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand. ³⁰I and My Father are one.” ³¹Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

³²Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” ³³The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'?" ³⁵ If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

³⁶ do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" ³⁷ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

³⁸ but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." ³⁹ Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

⁴⁰ And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ⁴¹ Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." ⁴² And many believed in Him there.

Introduction

In John chapter 9 Jesus has been teaching us what it means for Him to be the light of the world. It means that Jesus gives "spiritual sight" to those people who are being rescued.

With this work of giving light to those in darkness comes a judgment to those who oppose the light of Jesus teaching. The judgment is, that those people remain "spiritually blind".

However in chapter 9 we learnt that spiritually blind people can receive light and that people can be saved. The story of the physically blind man is an illustration of the fact that Jesus can and will give "spiritual light" to those who come to Him.

Chapter 10 finishes off a section in John's Gospel by Jesus telling us that He is the "Good Shepherd" who can and will save His sheep.

There is a contrast between chapter 9 and chapter 10. In chapter 9 the Temple leaders behave as bad shepherds of God's people. By contrast Jesus introduces Himself as the "Good Shepherd".

There are lots of references to Sheep and Shepherds throughout the Old Testament. However the closest parallel with this chapter can be found in Ezekiel chapter 34. Let us now look up this chapter and read some of the prophecy that Ezekiel proclaims.

Read v. 1-16 in New Living Translation

Then this message came to me from the LORD: ² "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep?

³ You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. ⁴ You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty.

⁵ So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal. ⁶ They have wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them.

⁷ "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. And though you were my shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve.

⁹ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. ¹⁰ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, and I will stop them from feeding themselves.

I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the sheep will no longer be their prey. ¹¹ “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep.

¹² I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.

¹³ I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live.

¹⁴ Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills. ¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD.

¹⁶ I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes— feed them justice!

Up to chapter 34 Ezekiel has been preaching judgment upon God’s people. However in chapter 34 God promises a “Good Shepherd” who will rescue His true sheep.

The chapter promises two things.

Firstly – Judgment upon God’s irresponsible shepherds.

Secondly - God promises to rescue the sheep who have been lost and scattered amongst the nations.

When God has done this He will provide a Shepherd, from the family of David, to look after His flock.

With this Old Testament background in mind we now come to the text in John chapter 10.

John Chapter 10: v. 1-18.

In this section Jesus presents us with a parable in v. 1- 5. The people didn’t understand the parable so in v. 7- 18 Jesus sought to explain the parable to them.

Let us read again v. 1-6 and identify the points of the parable.

¹“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴ And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Jesus uses three main metaphors. A metaphor is a word that is used to try and explain a meaning. It is often something that is similar.

Our first metaphor is a “Door” – v. 7-10

In some translations it uses the word gate.

We all understand what a door or a gate is. It is always the entrance to something.

In my home in Ikoma I live in a house with a front and back door. If I came home one day and I saw you climbing through an open window of my home, I would suspect that you had come to steal one of my wife’s lovely English Cakes.

There is a right way and a wrong way of obtaining one of Wendy’s cakes. The wrong way is to climb in through a window and steal them.

The right way a few weeks ago was to come to our weeding party and help us clear all the weeds in the garden. It was an invitation to all who come to the Wednesday Bible study. The people who came to do the weeding were rewarded and received the cakes.

It is the same with coming to Jesus for Salvation. There is a right way and a wrong way.

The irresponsible Shepherds were offering people the wrong way to God, through rules and regulations, but Jesus had come to offer the correct way to Salvation.

Jesus is the only correct way to Salvation.

Jesus is the only way that we can get to God. He is the only entrance that we can go through. All other ways are the wrong ways. Jesus describes people who look for alternative ways to obtain Salvation as thieves and robbers.

In v. 10 we are told that Jesus opens the door to abundant life. This life is a “New Life”, it is not your old life made better, it’s a “New Life”. It is a life that God will give you. It is supernatural, because it is not of this life. It is preparation for the life to come. Paul says in Ephesians chapter 1 v. 13-14 that this New Life that God gives us when we trust in Jesus is like a deposit which guarantees our future Salvation.

Quote Ephesians 1: v. 13-14 in the New Living Translation.

¹³ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.

¹⁴ The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

It is not a life of rules, but a life of “relationship”. It is a personal relationship with God through Jesus. It is an abundant life.

There are lots of religions in Japan and lots of cults. They offer many things to you, but they cannot offer abundant life with God, through Jesus Christ.

They are irresponsible Shepherds, Jesus is the only “TRUE SHEPHERD”

Jesus doesn’t force you to come to Him, He lovingly invites you to come.

But you must come through the door and Jesus is that door that you must enter through.

In Revelation chapter 3 v. 20 Jesus says “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and dine with him and he with Me.”

Perhaps Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart today. Will you open the door of your heart today and let Him in.?

The second Metaphor is the Good Shepherd versus the Hired man – v. 11-13.

In Israel at that time being a Shepherd was a difficult and dangerous job.

It required 100% loyalty to the Sheep. You had to sleep with them at night in order to protect them. It was a lonely and difficult job and sometimes dangerous.

Most Shepherds either owned the sheep or it was part of the family business. However people were employed to be Shepherds who were not part of the family farm. These people were paid to look after the sheep. They didn't have the same sort of care and attention that an owner would have for his sheep.

Jesus says that when a very difficult situation arises, like a wolf coming, they would run away in order to protect themselves. They didn't really care about the sheep.

The key distinction between the two shepherds is "Commitment to the Sheep".

Jesus says that the true Shepherd will never abandon his sheep.

What Jesus is saying here is that the "False" Shepherds don't really care for your souls. They are only interested in themselves. By contrast Jesus is different. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who willingly gave His life for the sheep.

The thing that ultimately authenticates the ministry of Jesus is that He will never abandon His sheep.

Jesus said in the Bible "I will never leave you or forsake you"(Hebrews 13:5, Dt.31:6)

People will let you down and forsake you, religion will let you down and disappoint you, but Jesus will NEVER let you down.

This is very encouraging for Christians, but also encouraging for people who are not yet Christians.

If you are not yet a Christian I expect that you have been let down by people or religion.

When we are let down by people, perhaps a husband or a wife or a close friend, we find it very difficult to trust that person again. We also find it difficult to trust anybody in case they let us down in the future.

However if you put your faith and trust in Jesus, He will never let you down. I can give you that assurance from my heart.

In the past many people have let me down, sadly many of them were Christians, but I can say from my heart that Jesus has never let me down.

He has provided for the needs of my wife and my family for 25 years in very difficult circumstances and Jesus has never let us down. I have the assurance that He never will. Because the Bible tells me so and I trust in the Bible.

Don't just believe me, trust Jesus for yourself. He is the Good Shepherd indeed.

The third Metaphor is the Good Shepherd and His flock. V. 14-18.(v.3)

In this metaphor Jesus is focusing on "relationship". Jesus is saying that He has a personal relationship with His

sheep and that His sheep actually identify His voice among other voices.

The intimacy of this relationship is compared with the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and God. It is a very deep personal relationship.

Sheep over a period of time will only respond to the voice of their Shepherd. They usually will associate his voice with some personal benefit. It might be to provide better food for them by taking them to good pasture. It might be to protect them from a wild animal. Whatever the case the Shepherd calls the sheep for their benefit.

In Philip Keller's book, "A Shepherd looks at the Good Shepherd", he tells a story about a friend who visited his sheep farm. His friend studied his voice and the way in which he controlled his sheep and spoke to them. His friend decided that he would try and copy Philip Keller and move his sheep to another part of the field. He tried very hard but every time he spoke, the sheep just looked at him. Even though he spoke the same words in a similar way the sheep would not respond to him.

However as soon as Philip Keller arrived the sheep responded immediately to his voice.

In the same way it is possible for us to hear the voice of Jesus. Also when Jesus speaks to us it is always for our benefit.

The first time that Jesus will speak to us will be about having a personal relationship with Him.

Jesus tells us that in order to get this personal relationship with God, Jesus willingly laid down His life in order for it to happen. He died on a cross to take the punishment for our sins.

For the creator of this world to willingly lay down His life for me, so that I might have a personal relation with God is truly amazing. Do you find that amazing too? I hope so.

In v. 16 it tells us that Jesus has other sheep who are not of this fold, they will also hear His voice and come to Him. Jesus was speaking to Jewish people at the time. He was probably referring to the Gentile nations, that is us. (Romans 1:16)

Jesus came for the Jews first , but also for the Gentiles. The Gentiles are the other people who are not of this fold.

In v. 17-18 Jesus tells us that His death was a pre-prepared plan. He was so at one with the Father that His obedience to die on a cross was both willingly done and done out of love and obedience to the Father. Jesus also had the understanding that after this great act of love towards His sheep, that He would return to the Father in Heaven.

We know that when Jesus returned to Heaven He was able to send His Holy Spirit to benefit all Christians. (John 16: v. 7)

The Response of the Jews v. 19-21.

In v. 19-21 we are told that there was a division amongst the Jews about who Jesus was and what He said to them.

Some of the Jews though that Jesus had a demon and was mad, but others recognised that a mad man and a demon couldn't open the eyes of a blind person.

Jesus is coming to the end of His public ministry and John is emphasizing that the Jews were still hostile towards Him.

The Jews prove that they are not Jesus sheep. - v. 22-39.

In v. 22 we are told that it was winter and the Jews were celebrating the Feast of Dedication.

This is the only part of the Bible where we are told about this Jewish Festival that is still celebrated in Jewish homes all over the world.

Jewish people today call it "Hannukah".

Over 2100 years ago, the Land of Israel was dominated by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who sought to Hellenize the people of Israel.

Against all odds, a small band of faithful Jews defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of God.

Hoping to light the Temple's menorah, they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks; miraculously, this one-day supply burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.

To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah. At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah lighting: a single flame on the first night, two on the second evening, and so on till the eighth night of Chanukah, when all eight lights are kindled.

This was the festival that was going on when Jesus walked into the Temple in v. 22-23.

In v. 24 the Jews surrounded Jesus and said to Him " How long do you keep us in doubt,? if you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

In answer to their question about His identity, Jesus makes it clear that His miracles which were done in public, speak for Him.

These miracles have one clear message, which Jesus repeats. He says He is one with God the Father - v. 30 & 38.

³⁰ I and *My* Father are one."

³⁸ but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him."

The Jews didn't object to the miracles, they were happy with them, but they did not accept what the miracles imply about Jesus.

Please note that in v.31 and in v. 39 after Jesus declared Himself to be equal with God the Father, they tried to stone Him and seize Him. But Jesus escaped out of the Temple.

The problem with the Jews was that they wanted a Christ of their own making, not a Christ who challenges them about their practices and thinking.

Jesus gives a conclusion to the situation in v. 26. The Jews did not believe because they were not of His sheep.

In v. 27 Jesus knows His sheep and they follow Him.

The Jews proved that they were not His sheep because they didn't follow Him.

Before we leave this chapter and come to our application we must examine v. 28-29.

These are very important verses concerning a believer's eternal security.

Jesus is telling the Jewish people that it is ultimately God who keeps believers safe for all eternity.

The Jesus who saves us is the Jesus who keeps us by the power of Almighty God. There is only one thing that cannot be destroyed in the whole world and that is your Salvation if you put your Faith and Trust in Jesus and the work He did on the cross for your Salvation.

Paul puts it like this in Romans 8 v. 38-39.

³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In v. 40-42 Jesus goes back across the River Jordan.

Finally in v. 40-42 we are left a geographical marker. This informs us that this section of John's Gospel has come to a close.

The reference to John the Baptist takes us back to John 1:7.

⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

This purpose is being fulfilled as people come to believe in Jesus.

The question I need to ask you is "Have you come to believe in Jesus?"

So what was the application to the people of that time as John writes to them and what is the application to us here at OIC.

To Them at that time - Jesus is the Good Shepherd who provides rescue for His people even when they are in the grip of "False Teachers"

Jesus alone is the Good Shepherd, all other religious groups are "False Teachers" Jesus was committed to His sheep to the point of death.

This gives great assurance for the people at that time, especially for the man born blind, who appears to be still around.

Even though the blind man has been rejected by the religious leaders and His family, He has eternal life with Jesus in Heaven. It is an abundant life.

Jesus the Good Shepherd is able to save His sheep, care for His Sheep and make sure that nobody destroys their eternal Salvation.

To us here today - Our application is very similar. We may not be Jewish but we are as v. 16 puts it not of this fold, but Jesus will bring us out and we will hear His voice.

Yes it is possible to hear the voice of Jesus, if you open up your heart to Him.

If we recognise Jesus, listen to His voice and follow Him, He is able to take care of us in every way through the power of God and eventually bring us in to our eternal home in Heaven.

-