

Series: Jesus 7 'I AM' Statements

"I AM the Good Shepherd"

John 10:11 - 21

Big Idea – Jesus Christ is the ideal Shepherd.

"Good" means "intrinsically good, beautiful, fair, ideal, preeminent"

Some of the greatest people named in the Bible were shepherds by occupation: Abel, the patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, then Moses, and David, to name a few.

Jesus is saying here, "I AM greater than David, I AM greater than Moses, I AM greater than Abraham! To call Him "good" is the same as calling Him "God"
Mark 10:18 – Jesus said, no one is good but God

I AM equal with God.

Even today in the Holy Land, you may see shepherds leading flocks and revealing how intimately they know each sheep, its individual traits, and its special needs. Remember that Jewish shepherds did not tend the sheep in order to slaughter them, unless they were used for sacrifice. Shepherds tended them that the sheep might give wool, milk, and lambs.

As we think of how Jesus Christ is the ideal Shepherd note with me that Jesus pointed out four special ministries that He performs as the Good Shepherd.

1. He dies for the sheep (vv. 11-13)

(John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Psalm 23; Luke 15:3-7)

John 10:11-13 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.

5 times in this chapter Jesus said He lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11, 15, 17-18) He did not die as a martyr but willingly laid down His life for the sheep.

Jesus contrasted Himself to the hired hand who watches over the sheep only because he is paid to do so. But when there is danger, the hired hand runs away, while the true shepherd stays and cares for the flock. The key phrase is "they don't belong to him" The Good Shepherd purchases the sheep and they are His because He died for them. They belong to Him, and He cares for them.

By nature, sheep are stupid and prone to get into danger; and they need a shepherd to care for them. Throughout the Bible, God's people are compared to sheep; and the comparison is a good one. Sheep are clean animals, unlike pigs and dogs according to 2 Peter 2:22. They are defenseless and need the care of the shepherd (Psalm 23).

They are, using Wesley's phrase, "prone to wander," and must often be searched for and brought back to the fold (Luke 15:3-7). Sheep are peaceful animals, useful to the shepherd. In these, and other ways, they picture those who have trusted Jesus Christ and are a part of God's flock.

The Pharisees, in contrast to good shepherds, had no loving concern for the blind beggar in chapter 9, so they put him out of the synagogue. Jesus found him and cared for him.

2. He knows His sheep (vv. 14-15)

(John 17:3; 10:3; 20:16; 13:1; Luke 19:5)

John 10:14 "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.

In the Gospel of John, the word "know" means much more than intellectual awareness. It speaks of an intimate relationship between God and His people (see John 17:3). The Eastern shepherd knows his sheep personally and therefore knows best how to minister to them.

1. Lord knows our names (see John 10:3). He knew Simon (John 1:42) and even gave him a new name. He called Zaccheus by name (Luke 19:5); and when He spoke Mary's name in the garden, she recognized her Shepherd (John 20:16). If

you have ever had your identity "lost" in a maze of computer operations, then you can appreciate the comforting fact that the Good Shepherd knows each of His sheep by name.

2. He also knows our natures. While all sheep are alike in their essential nature, each sheep has its own distinctive characteristics; and the loving shepherd recognizes these traits. One sheep may be afraid of high places, another of dark shadows. A faithful shepherd will consider these special needs as he tends the flock.

Have you ever noticed how different the 12 Apostles were from one another?

What was Peter like? Peter was impulsive and outspoken.

Thomas? Thomas was hesitant and doubting.

Andrew? Andrew was a "people person" always bringing somebody to Jesus

Judas? Judas wanted to "use" people in order to get their money for himself. Jesus knew each of the men personally, and He knew exactly how to deal with them.

Because He knows our natures,

3. He also knows our needs. Often, we do not even know our own needs! Psalm 23 is a beautiful poetic description of how the Good Shepherd cares for His sheep. In the pastures, by the waters, and even through the valleys, the sheep don't need to fear, because the shepherd is caring for them and meeting their needs. If you connect Psalm 23:1 and 6, you get the main theme of the poem: "I shall not want... all the days of my life."

As the shepherd cares for the sheep, the sheep get to know their shepherd better. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep and His sheep know Him. They get to know Him better by listening to His voice (the Word) and experiencing His daily care. As the sheep follow the Shepherd, they learn to love and to trust Him. He loves "His own" - John 13:1 says He loved His own who were in the world and He loved them unto the end.

He shows that love in the way He cares for them – in John 13 He washed their feet.

3. The Good Shepherd brings other sheep into the flock (v. 16).

(Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24-27; Ephesians 2:11; Acts 2:14,15; John 3:16)

John 10:16 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.

The "fold" is Judaism (John 10:1), but there is another fold—the Gentiles who are outside the covenants of Israel (Eph. 2:11ff). In our Lord's early ministry, He concentrated on the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24-27).

The people converted at Pentecost were Jews and Jewish proselytes (Acts 2:5, 14), but the church was not to remain a "Jewish flock." Peter took the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11), and Paul carried the message to the Gentiles in the far reaches of the Roman Empire (Acts 13:1ff).

There is but one flock, the people of God who belong to the Good Shepherd. God has His people all over this world (see Acts 18:1-11), and He will call them and gather them together in the Rapture of His church, the next event on God's prophetic timetable.

The missionary message of the Gospel of John is obvious: "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16). Jesus Himself defied custom and witnessed to a Samaritan woman. He refused to defend the exclusivist approach of the Jewish religious leaders. He died for a lost world, and His desire is that His people reach a lost world with the message of eternal life.

Proverbs 11:30 "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that wins souls is wise."

4. The Good Shepherd takes up His life again (vv. 17-21)

(John 19:30; Acts 2:32; John 5:17, 19; 7:43; 9:16; 8:24)

John 10:17 "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."

19 When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him.

20 Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?"

His voluntary death was followed by His victorious resurrection. From the human point of view, it appeared that Jesus was executed; but from the divine point of view, He laid down His life willingly. When Jesus cried on the cross, "It is finished!" He then voluntarily yielded up His spirit to the Father (John 19:30). Three days later, He voluntarily took up His life again and arose from the dead. The Father gave Him this authority in love.

Some Scriptures teach that it was the Father who raised the Son (Acts 2:32; Rom. 6:4; Heb. 13:20). Here, the Son stated that He had authority to take up His life again. Both are true, for the Father and the Son worked together in perfect harmony (John 5:17, 19). In a previous sermon, Jesus had said that He had power to raise Himself from the dead (John 5:26). Of course, this was a claim that the Jews would protest; because it was Him saying "I am God!"

How did the listeners respond to this message? "There was a division therefore again among the Jews" (John 10:19). Note that word "again" (John 7:43; 9:16). The old accusation that Jesus was a demoniac was hurled at Him again (John 7:20; 8:48, 52). People will do almost anything to avoid facing the truth!

Since Jesus Christ is "the Door," we would expect a division, because a door shuts some people in and others out! He is the Good Shepherd, and the shepherd must separate the sheep from the goats. It is impossible to be neutral about Jesus Christ; for, what we believe about Him is a matter of life or death.

John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

As the Good Shepherd, Christ gave His life for His sheep and became the door to God's fold (John 10:7)

As the Great Shepherd He rose from the dead to care for His sheep (Hebrews 13:20-21),

As Chief Shepherd, He will come again for His sheep (1 Peter 5:4)

Will He be coming back for you? For your family & friends?