

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 76

### "I am" sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel (3)

Jesus said to the people, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." ( John 10:11)

#### **Objective :**

To discover that "I am the good shepherd" reveals Jesus' strength both in guarding and caring for his flock.

Brief talk on Jesus as the good shepherd.

#### **Read John 10: 1– 21**

#### **Introduction**

At first sight the image of the good shepherd might conjure up a picture of a gentle Jesus, meek and mild, cuddling a lamb. But this passage quickly changes that idea.

This might be a surprise for modern day readers from the city, but the significance of the shepherd image would not have been lost on Jesus' hearers. Unlike many people today they knew the demands and dangers of the shepherd's life. Jesus would not have needed to tell them about the struggles with wild beasts, the guarding of the entrance, and the many other acts of courage necessary to ensure the flock's safety.

Jesus' hearers knew too that the word "shepherd" was used to describe the nation's leaders. The people of Israel were eagerly awaiting a good leader. They were tired of those who had betrayed the idea of a shepherd by caring for themselves rather than for the welfare of the people. Jesus presented himself as the good shepherd and he wanted the people to know that he was not like the ones who came before him.

**Questions for discussion.**

1. (a) What words would you use to explain “life in all its fullness” (verse 10) to someone who is not a follower of Jesus?

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2. As unfamiliar as the image of a shepherd may be for some today it is one of vigour and strength, and is very important to modern day followers of Jesus Christ. (a) What does it say of the crucified Jesus in terms of his relationship as the shepherd to his sheep and (b) as the gate? (c) How do the sheep respond to the shepherd?

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3. In verses 11-15, (a) How does Jesus identify himself with the good shepherd? (b) How does Jesus’ death relate to his promise in verse 10? (c) What does your understanding of a gate in real life use bring to your understanding of Jesus in this verse?

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4. Who are the “other sheep” he must bring into the fold? (v.16)

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5. (a) Why do his listeners respond as they do? How would you have responded? (vv17-18)

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6. How does knowing Jesus as a good shepherd help you in your walk as a Christian?

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7. The picture of Jesus as the good shepherd implies care, affection and strength. Do you have any experience of the power and gentleness of God?

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## **Conclusion**

The most remarkable way the shepherd provides for us is through his death for his sheep. Normally the death of the shepherd would spell disaster for the flock. The sheep would be open to all sorts of dangers. So, there would have to be a very good reason for the shepherd to lay down his life. It would be daft if you had a shepherd who suddenly turned to the sheep and said: "My dear flock, I really love you. And to show my love I'm going to jump over this cliff." It's meaningless, and the sheep would just look quizzically at each other wondering what is going on!

However, the death of Jesus as our shepherd is a death with real purpose and meaning. He died because we were in serious danger. We were facing God's judgement, his righteous wrath for all we have done wrong! Far more serious than a wolf or a lion, but still requiring the life of the shepherd instead of ours. He took our guilt, our shame, our judgement, because he loves us and wants us to know life and forgiveness in all its fullness. And do you notice that Jesus does it willingly in verse 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." What an amazing shepherd that should go to such incredible lengths for you and me, stupid foolish ungrateful sheep that we are. And how do you respond to such a shepherd? Surely nothing less than total worship and adoration for the one who loves and cares for us so much.

## The Bee Sting

A vacationing family drives along in their car, windows rolled down, enjoying the warm breeze of the sunny day. All of a sudden, a big black bee darts in the window and starts buzzing around inside the car. A little girl, highly allergic to bee stings, cringes in the backseat. If she is stung, she could die within an hour.

"Oh, Daddy," she squeals in terror. "It's a bee! It's going to sting me!" The father pulls the car over to a stop, and reaches back to try to catch the bee. Buzzing around toward him, the bee bumps against the front windshield where the father traps it in his fist.

Holding it in his closed hand, the father waits for the inevitable sting. The bee stings the father's hand and in pain, the father lets go of the bee. The bee is loose in the car again. The little girl again panics, "Daddy, it's going to sting me!" The father gently says, "No honey, he's not going to sting you now. Look at my hand."

The bee's stinger is there in his hand.

Paul exulted in 1 Corinthians 15:55, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" Jesus says to us, "Look at my hands." He has Satan's sting, the sting of death, the sting of sin, the sting of deceit, the sting of feeling worthless. Jesus has all of those stingers in his hands. When you see that nail-scarred hand, realize that, on your behalf, Jesus took all the pain that Satan could throw at Him. He reduced Satan to a big black bee that's lost its stinger—all Satan can do is buzz. That's the victory that Jesus won for you.