



The Sacrificial Shepherd:

"For the sake of his flock the shepherd was sacrificed as though he were a sheep...By his passion he made atonement for our evil passions, by his death he cured our death, by his tomb he robbed the tomb, by the nails that pierced his flesh he destroyed the foundations of hell. Death held sway until Christ died. The grave was bitter, our prison was indestructible, until the Shepherd went down and brought his sheep confined there the good news of their release."

—Basil of Selucia

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Around the Word BIBLE STUDY Eastertide, 2016

The I AM sayings of Jesus John 10:11–18

Session 4: "I AM the Good Shepherd"

Most of the pictures we see of Jesus the Good Shepherd portray him like a gushing hall-mark card. Now, in a way, there is a bit of truth in those paintings, but not the whole truth. Our Lord does hold us in deep affection. God loves you as a Father loves his children. God loves you as a husband loves his wife. Jesus loves you as a brother. But the goodness of our Good Shepherd is not found only in his affection.

Jesus is your Good Shepherd because he lays down his life for you. It is Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that makes him good. Jesus gives his life for you, his sheep. Jesus overcomes the wolf by filling the wolf's mouth with his own flesh. Jesus stands between you and the thief and robber. Jesus stole you back from the devil, destroyed the power of death, and killed the robber once and for all. The goodness of your Shepherd is found in his sacrifice for you.

But your Good Shepherd is never done caring for his sheep. So he leads you to the still waters of your Baptism. The Good Shepherd spreads a table for you where his body and blood overflow for you. The Good Shepherd speaks in his Word and his absolution: you are forgiven. You are mine. Jesus is not only the Good Shepherd; he is the best shepherd for you.

Opening: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my | shepherd;*

I | shall not want.

²**He makes me lie down in green | pastures.***

He leads me beside still | waters.

³He re- | stores my soul.*

He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his | name's sake.

⁴**Even though I walk through the valley of
the sha- | dow of death,***

**I will fear no evil, for you are | with
me;**

Your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.*

⁵You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my | enemies;

**You anoint my | head with oil;*
my cup | overflows.**

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall fol- | low
me*

all the days | of my life,

**and I shall dwell in the house | of the
LORD***

for- | ever.

Glorify be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit.

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Read John 10:11–18

v. 11: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Jesus takes this title *The Good Shepherd* right out of the Old Testament. What other well-known biblical figures in the Scriptures were also shepherds? See Genesis 4:2; Genesis 29; Exodus 3:1; 1 Samuel 16:19; Amos 7:14-15.

Why is this significant? In what ways do these shepherds point to the Good Shepherd?

In the Old Testament, God repeatedly uses the language of sheep and shepherd to describe Israel's relationship to him. In his life, death, and resurrection, how does Jesus fulfill the words of the prophets, such as we

hear in Ezekiel 34:1-31 and Isaiah 40:1-11?

What makes Jesus the “good” shepherd? How is his goodness contrasted with the thief, robber, and the hired hand in John 10?

Why does Jesus compare us to sheep? How are we like sheep? Read Isaiah 53:1-7. What is rather shocking, or unexpected about Jesus’ words that he lays down his life for the sheep?

v. 12-13: “He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”

Who is Jesus referring to as “hired hands” in his day? What are some examples of “hired hands” in today’s church? What are the chief differences between Jesus and the hired hand?

Who is the wolf, according to Jesus? What are some examples of the devil’s wolfish ways we see attacking Christ’s flock today?

How are Jesus’ words in v. 12-13 a warning to us, his flock? How are they also a comfort to us, his sheep? Read Psalm 95.

v. 14-15: “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Why does Jesus repeat his declaration, “I AM the Good Shepherd?” Jesus compares his knowing his sheep to the unity of the Father and the Son. What is Jesus saying by declaring this? How is this a comforting reality for us?

According to Jesus’ words, how is he known to the sheep?

v. 16: “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

Who is Jesus speaking with in this context? Who are the

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“other sheep” Jesus has in mind here?

Where do we see this “one flock” gathered together here on earth? Who is the one Shepherd? What other imagery does Jesus use to describe himself as the head of the Church? Read 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 2 and 5.

Read Revelation 7:9-17. What two significant New Testament titles of Jesus are combined here? How does Revelation 7 portray Jesus as the Good Shepherd?



v. 17-18: “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Why does the Father love Jesus, and how does Jesus demonstrate his perfect love for the Father?

In verse 17, Jesus predicts his death and resurrection. Although his crucifixion happened under the authority of the Jewish religious leaders and Pontius Pilate, why is it important that he lay down his life of his own accord?

In his death and resurrection, Jesus holds authority over death and the grave. What does this mean for us? Read Romans 6:1-11.

In what ways does Jesus give his authority over death to bless his church? Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Closing: The King of Love My Shepherd Is (LSB, 709)

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