

February 23, 2019

**(More Than Just a Nice Guy Series): Depictions of Jesus in the Book of John
“Jesus Is the Best Shepherd, Part 2”, John 10:22-30**

In John 10:1-21, Jesus claims to be “the good shepherd [who] lays down his life for the sheep”, and now in another encounter with the Pharisees at the Temple in Jerusalem (John 10:22-30), Jesus explains more truths about the sheep themselves.

I. Requirements to be Jesus’ sheep: No amount of preaching or proof can make you into a sheep.

The Pharisees do not really ask if Jesus is the Messiah in order to follow Him (Jn.10:24); they deviously are trying to get Him in hot water with the politics of the Romans. Jesus’ Messianic prophesies from the Old Testament (e.g., Ezekiel 15, Isaiah 35), His New Testament miracles and His direct words (e.g. Jn.6:35 and Jn. 8:58), already have revealed his Messianic qualities. The Pharisees do not really want preaching or proof because if Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, they would have to be sheep, and they would never uproot their religious power to become followers.

II. Recognizing Jesus’ sheep: Sheep hear the Shepherd, believe Him, & follow Him.

Jesus’ sheep are identified by their behaviors (Jn.10:26-27):

- A. HEARING/listening to God’s voice - communicating with Jesus in many ways
- B. BELIEVING/trusting in Jesus’ claims about Himself as the Good Shepherd and Messiah
- C. FOLLOWING Jesus in obedience as Lord and Savior, imperfectly but committed to Him

III. Remaining in Jesus’ flock: Once a sheep of Jesus, always a sheep.

Once we become believers and followers of Jesus, our identity shifts permanently as we become beloved children and heirs in God’s eternal family (Rom.8:14-17). The Good Shepherd promises: “I give them eternal life...no one will snatch them out of my hand” (Jn.10:28). You cannot sin your way out of being God’s sheep because good behavior never gave eternal life in the first place. You cannot be pressured out of following Jesus; after the crucifixion some disciples wandered, but all eventually returned with stronger faith because of grace. You will not walk out of following Jesus permanently, because like sheep, it is now in your nature to follow the Shepherd whose will is that He “shall lose none of all those he has given me, but will raise them up at the last day” (Jn.6:39). Some sheep thought to wander might never have belonged, e.g., Judas (Jn.6:70-71).

Meditation: Where are you spiritually today? If you are not a follower of Jesus, ask Him to save you and change your life. If you are fearful of life, troubled about not having all the answers, or worried about losing control, be assured that our Shepherd is good. He calls us by name to turn to Him in trust for His love, guidance, protection, and power daily and forever. And if we falter, He helps and welcomes us back to the flock.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is it that some folks listen to preachers/teachers of God’s word for years, and miss the truths of Christianity for their own lives? How could this possibly happen? Your experience?
2. God always takes the initiative in our salvation. We cannot make ourselves sheep. But we have a part to play in becoming genuine sheep - hearing, believing, following. Discuss which of those parts is hardest for you.

3. Do you experience the truth that God has given you into Jesus' safekeeping, and no-one, nothing can snatch you away? Is this just a mental thought, or do feelings come with it?
4. Isaiah wrote, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa.53:6). How does the picture of a Shepherd and sheep help you to understand the Gospel (Good News) better?