

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
— John 10:11 —

Jesus' discourse on His identity as our Good Shepherd reveals much about how He views His own. Thoughtful meditation will leave us with significant gratitude for His undeserved love and His faithful, abiding care.

First, we must recognize our own propensities and vulnerabilities as sheep...

Sheep are wandering creatures – they tend to meander astray. Isaiah 53:6 tells us that all we like sheep have gone astray and turned every one to his own way.

Sheep are all but blind. 2 Corinthians 4:4 reminds us that in our natural state we are subjects of the devil and therefore blinded in our minds and understanding of spiritual truth.

Sheep are weak and defenseless. Romans 5:6 substantiates our spiritual frailty – else Christ would not have had to die for us.

Considering this prone state of spiritual stupor, is it not marvelous, then, what our Savior has to say about His flock?

Every one of us is but one among so very many under His care, yet He lovingly watches over each of us – personally. He sees us as individuals, and calls us each by our name (John 10:3).

We are His property in a very special way. All people belong to someone – the devil or Christ. We are not our own. We are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). We are His, and He is ours (John 10:3-4).

Our Good Shepherd knows our tendencies – our feebleness, our waywardness. He knows we need led. He could drive us. He could herd us. Instead, He leads us (John 10:4).

His voice is critical to our welfare. He knows we need to hear Him, so He speaks to us frequently that we may learn to recognize Him and Him alone (John 10:4-5).

And He knows us. Each of us. Our bleating is music to His ears. Our prayers are His delight. He can differentiate with ease your call versus mine versus the millions of others of the flock (John 10:14). But each sigh, each groan, each shout is met with His utmost interest, and receives His undivided attention.

We are His precious lambs. We are valuable to Him. Why? Only He can answer such a profound question. But the fact is, He laid down His life for us, saving us from our rapacious enemy and vouchsafing our eternal welfare (John 10:11).

All praise to our Good Shepherd. Because He is Who He is, we shall never want (Psalm 23:1).

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