

The Good Shepherd

John 10:1-18

MPS: Jesus gives abundant life to all who believe in Him.

OBJ: Every person should believe in Jesus and follow Him because of three distinctions.

INTRO

Jesus gives abundant life to all who believe in Him.

READ John 10:1-6

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Jesus tells a simple parable to reveal His true followers, and what life in His kingdom is like. He describes two people who enter the sheepfold, the thief and the shepherd. The one who gets in by ways other than the door is a thief. The shepherd enters by the door because it is opened for him and he is welcomed. He calls his sheep, they know his voice and follow him. He leads out and goes before them, and they follow him because they know his voice. The sheep do not follow a stranger because they do not know him. There is no relationship. They don't recognize him and they fear what they don't know, so they flee because they do not trust his voice. **Sheep respond differently to the shepherd they know versus the thief who gets in based on a relationship of trust.**

APPL I want to begin with an application to focus our mind on what we need to hear today. **Who are you following? Do you know who or what leads you?**

Who you follow is critical because it determines where you go and what happens to you. The thief only comes to rob from you, no matter how exhilarating the ride may begin. **The good shepherd always leads to life defined by abundance.**

The one you follow reveals the one you trust. You can talk about what you know and believe all you want, but the one you keep at a safe distance, avoid or run from is the one you do not trust. When you find yourself not obeying Jesus there is a reason, you don't believe so that you trust Him. And, you don't trust Him because you don't really know Him. **A limited and decreasing knowledge of Jesus always produces a weak and wilted faith in Jesus.**

Everything else we discuss today will further unpack and explain this. But there is only one issue for you to discern today; **"Who are you following with your life?"** A more accurate way to ask this question for discernment is; **"Who are you following IN your life?"** Judas followed Jesus "With" his life during his entire earthly ministry, but he never followed Jesus "IN" his life. Be careful lest you allow your close proximity to "church" and familiarity with the "christian life" to justify in your mind that you are following Jesus, when you know you are not living in obedience to Him.

When you follow the thief you always get what he gives, or rather, you always lose what he robs from you. When you follow Jesus you always receive what He freely gives, life abundant. Today I pray that each of us will ask Holy Spirit to search us and show us "who" we are following not only with our life, but in our life.

TRANS John says that Jesus used this figure of speech to teach them, but they did not understand what he was saying. So, Jesus explains what he is saying. Let's try this a second time. Jesus explains what it means to enjoy the life that only He gives.



OBJ: Three distinctions reveal why you should believe and follow Jesus.

READ John 10:7-10

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

TRANS First, you need to understand the **purpose** of those who enter the sheepfold.

1. Jesus gives true life that produces increasing joy, peace and love. .7-10

When Jesus begins to explain he states that He is the door. He sets a stark contrast between himself and all others who make claims about life. Jesus created us. He knows one thing better than any other, everyone is searching for God. Every person wants more for life than what they can provide or attain, because it never provides enough to make us stop searching. [Jesus is the only One who gives true life.](#)

When we believe in Jesus we receive His life the provides for all our needs, and satisfies all our desires. He may not always meet our needs or satisfy our desires the way we think He should or ask Him. But He always provides according to the purpose of His glory and will, the source of all life. The thief only comes to harm us, every time and in every way. [The life we receive in Jesus is good for us as He is good to us.](#)

There is only one door. There are many thieves. Anything and everything that does not enter by the door is a thief. [The purpose of Jesus is to give true life that produces increasing joy, peace and love.](#)

"Sheep" is a reference to Christ-followers. They know who they are following because they recognize His voice. They don't follow the one who's voice they do not know. The distinctive qualifier here is to look at the one you are following to understand where they lead. The point here is this: [are you following the one who enters by the door, or sneaks in another way? Who you follow in your life determines the purpose you pursue with and for your life.](#)

Following includes the whole of life, your practices, patterns, preferences and philosophies (how you think about) in life. Think about each of these areas in your life.

- [Are the hours of your day life-giving to you? Or, do you always feel like they are being stolen from you, like there never enough? Do you end the day with more gratitude to the Lord for each one?](#)
 - [Do you feel this same way about the days, weeks and seasons of life?](#)
- [Are your dollars in the bank, the treasure of your life, a means of increasing joy or compounding stress? Are there always too few at the end of the month, which leaves you always looking for more? OR, Do you ever sense a growing contentment that doesn't force you to focus on \\$s, but enable you to enjoy what you have, where you are at and how life is going for you?](#)
- [Is your marriage / parenting / home life a source of joy and satisfaction? Or, do you constantly war with what your spouse / kids do wrong, how they could do better? Do you feel overwhelmed by the unending length of your task list, the weight of your responsibility and the nagging sense that you do not measure up?](#)
- [Is your job a drain or a joy? Do you find fulfillment for the purpose for which it serves in your life? OR, do you simply endure it, put up with it, belittle your boss and co-workers?](#)

The extent to which these are true of you reveal the extent to which you seek after meaning IN these things. You are listening to a thief, and you need to understand the purpose that the thief has for your life. None of these things have power to give life, to provide lasting meaning or satisfaction. But ALL of them represent countless thieves that want to steal from you, to kill any life that is in you, and to destroy you. You will never know true life in any of them until you listen to and follow the only One that can bring you into true life through all of them, the One who can bring good, increasing joy, sustaining peace, and refreshing life to you through each one. [Jesus is the only door to life in all of life. Until you walk IN Jesus, you'll](#)



keep walking out with every thief that whispers another little lie in your ear.

When “abundant” doesn’t describe the reality of your life, then know this; you are listening to and following the thief above the good Shepherd. If you’re not walking with Jesus in the way you’re living, then you are walking with the thief. And they never lead to the same place. With every voice you hear you must ask, “do I recognize who this is?” When you identify who is speaking, you can know their purpose for speaking to you. [Jesus always gives life with abundance.](#)

Everything that’s NOT of Jesus is a thief. Every time you put Jesus on hold, choose a different way, have to ‘side step’ what He says, or believe something counter to His word, you are listening to a thief that will destroy you. Instead of more promise that never produces, Jesus provides far more than we could imagine from His promises. Jesus is God who is worthy of all our worship and adoration. When you look to other things, they always disappoint. [Jesus gives true life that produces increasing joy, peace and love.](#)

READ John 10:11-13

¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²He 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. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

TRANS Second, you need to know the **power** of the one you follow.

2. [Jesus always remains and is threatened by nothing.](#) .11-13

What Jesus provides is not like, but altogether different from the thief. The thief is big on promises, and even provides a good time for a season. But that wave always comes crashing down. When danger or hardship arrives, the thief flees. [The thief always leads you into harm’s way, then leaves you exposed and vulnerable where he deceived you to follow.](#)

Jesus will never leave you. He has already conquered life’s greatest threat. He has no reason to run from anything that threatens us. Hebrews reminds us of Jesus’ staying power against the thief’s lies and deceit when it says, “*Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you.’*” (Heb 13:5) [Jesus doesn’t need to run away. He has no rival.](#)

When you hear a voice speak ask yourself this; “[will this voice still be with me when danger and heartache threaten?](#)”

ILLUS Lane as a shepherd in a Christmas production. All was fine with the lamb, until he was struck with IBSD (irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhea). I was done with being a shepherd at that moment. (I did still go into the pastorate, however.)

Anyone can act like a shepherd when the sun is shining. The good shepherd always remains. He lays down his life to protect and provide when danger arises, when enemies attack, when heartache strikes, when disappointment sets in. [Have you learned the power of Jesus’ abiding presence in life?](#) There is no greater reality of Jesus as the good shepherd than the power of His presence at all, any and every moment of life. [Jesus gives His best when life is at its worst.](#)

Anyone can make you think everything is good when everything is good. But Jesus calms us when nothing goes right. He gives peace when everything falls apart, and joy when only sorrow seems to surround. Jesus doesn’t always change what is going on around us, but he does promise that He will make it all good for us. Because Jesus died and rose again by his authority, there is nothing that threatens to defeat him. [Jesus holds all authority and power over life and death; the hardest and scariest things about life are the very things that He came MOST to deal with. Jesus always remains and is threatened by nothing; he has no rival.](#)

READ John 10:14-18



14I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16And 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. 17For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18No 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.”

TRANS Third, you need to know the **plan** for the one you follow.

3. Jesus leads into intimate relationship with God. .14-18

Jesus continues by helping us understand more about what it means to follow Him. Following Jesus is built not on a hollow promise, but in an intimate relationship. [Jesus died to save people so He can lead them into an intimate relationship with the Father, just as He knows the Father.](#)

Jesus' relationship with the Father was one of intimacy and unity with the Father. Let's look at these two aspects of the relationship Jesus leads us to have with the Father. **First**, intimacy in relationship is produced by trust. Intimacy with God is not about living deeply inside your emotions or your thoughts, but trusting completely in God. Jesus' most intimate moment with the Father occurred in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed, *“nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”* (Matt 26:39) Jesus trusted the Father completely, even when He desired something different, and enjoyed intimacy as a result of His trust in the Father's will. [Intimacy is only built on trust. Where there is no trust, there can be no intimacy. Where intimacy is absent, trust is lacking.](#)

This is a key insight for us. When we know something about God but don't sense a closeness to Him, it is always because we've yet to trust Him. We're holding knowledge, but withholding or denying our trust in response to that knowledge. As a result, we do not experience greater intimacy with God because we have not trusted Him to obey. Lesser intimacy causes us to experience weaker joy and peace, and ultimately to question God's ability or love. [When we trust Jesus completely we will always experience intimacy that brings abundant love, peace and joy.](#)

Second, unity in relationship means serving God's mission. When we live in unity with God, we are one with Him. Jesus enjoyed unity with the Father because he faithfully served His mission. The Father is always on mission. When we live in unity with Jesus, we live in unity WITH Him by walking in obedience to His mission.

Jesus moves to this reality in verse 16. He has a mission to complete in this world. Jesus addresses the immediate situation by aiming at the greater reality of redemptive history. Gentiles will be brought into God's sovereign, redemptive plan. When Jesus saves, he breaks down every dividing wall; racism, ethnicity, gender & social status. He doesn't remove their unique glory-bearing. He destroys the exaltation that we set up among people based on them. God hates the “-isms” we create to bolster our own kingdoms; racism, sexism, and the like. [Jesus saves to bring people from every nation, tribe and tongue before His throne to worship Him.](#)

When Christians live in unity with Jesus, they engage His mission to serve His Kingdom. Christians are held by this conviction, that Jesus *“died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”* (2 Cor 5:14b-15) Until you live your whole life to serve King Jesus, His kingdom will always feel less than the world's promises. You will never know the joy and blessing of Jesus' Kingdom rule until you trust Him to experience it. [Christians live their whole life to serve God's Kingdom mission of redeeming and reconciling people to Himself through Jesus Christ.](#)

Christians must understand this: unity and intimacy are always linked. But people fail to follow Jesus because there's an absence of relational knowledge / intimacy. When there is no relational intimacy from personal experience, a person will not risk personal vulnerability to follow Jesus. People also fail to follow Jesus because the demand of obedience, sacrifice, exceeds the depth of intimacy. We will never follow in obedience beyond our ability to trust from relational intimacy. When God grows us in relationship with him, it's never a pattern or cycle of returning continually to past victories, but leading



forward in new battles where He wants to give victory. You only experience increasing intimacy with Jesus when you walk in unity through obedience to His mission as He leads. [Intimacy and unity in relationship with Jesus means completely trusting Him to serve God's mission.](#)

APPL Ask yourself, Christian. **Are you walking in intimacy and unity with Jesus, trusting Him to live as He commands and leads, or are you telling Him what, how and when you want things to happen? Are you living in unity with Him, serving His Kingdom mission, or expecting Him to serve your personal Kingdom?** Jesus doesn't make what you have or want "abundant".

Jesus gives abundant life to all who believe in Him.

Hymn: Savior Like a shepherd Lead Us

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

We are Thine, Thou dost befriend us, be the Guardian of our way; Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear, O hear us when we pray. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear, O hear us when we pray.

Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be; Thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse and pow'r to free. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! We will early turn to Thee. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! We will early turn to Thee.

Early let us seek Thy favor, early let us do Thy will; Blessed Lord and only Savior, with Thy love our bosoms fill. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.

CLOSE Jesus makes life abundant because He provides it all from beginning to everlasting!

You can't know His power without engaging in His plan. You'll never experience His full power IN your life until you accept His purpose FOR your life.

Obey His plan, to serve Him with your life. Trust His power to obey with your life, no matter what threatens you. Serve His purpose as the supreme joy and aim in your life, stop flirting with thieves and experience God's transforming power and will for your life.

Will you trust Jesus and the life He gives? Or, will you keep following the thief who comes to rob, steal, kill and destroy you?

