

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 10 –

We are starting a new chapter this morning.

This is truly, truly an awesome chapter –

I invite you as we spend the next few weeks in this chapter - to continue to read it and meditate on the words that Jesus speaks.

Over the past two weeks, we have been looking at one of the very familiar signs that Jesus did.

And that sign that I am referring to is – Jesus healing of the blind man.

And one of the things we saw was that upon receiving sight – the man that used to be blind was interrogated by the religious rulers –

And the result of the interrogation was that they were upset that Jesus violated one of their laws (that He made mud with His spit / that He worked / that He healed on the Sabbath) that they kicked the man that was born blind out of the synagogue / he was prevented from having fellowship with the Jews by the religious rulers.

And Jesus seeing that – reaches out to the man

Vs 35 – says that when Jesus heard that they had cast him out; He found him – Jesus went looking for him – just like a little lamb.

And after Jesus found him, Jesus revealed to the man who He is – and the man believed and worshipped Him.

Church, this is what happens when we can see Jesus clearly - this is what happens when we are cured from our spiritual blindness. We worship Jesus, we follow Jesus

A radical healing lead to a radical relationship

God wants to do that and He is doing this in each and every one of our lives.

The man having been rejected is now accepted

Sound familiar? That is you and me.

He was blind – now he sees

He was lost – now he is found

He was saved from judgment

Not saved from illness, not saved from poverty, not saved from the difficulties of life

He was saved eternally

And this is very important church –

Because this is what chapter 10 is all about?

It is about the Shepherd and the Sheep

He is the Shepherd and we are His sheep – and Jesus will provide for us the type of relationship that we are to have with Him

Let's pray...

Read 10:1-10

Now, I am pretty sure as I read the text –

Many of us were confused at what Jesus was speaking in regards to sheep and shepherds and doors.

And the reason is that most of us – other than taking our kids to a petting zoo.

We probably have never seen one, or touched one, or smelled one.

However, that was not the case back then - what Jesus will talk about will be things that were common knowledge for people in Jesus' day

The Jews knew crops and they knew sheep

The author of the book of Job tells us that Job had 14,000 sheep (42)

In 1 Kings, Solomon offered 120,000 of his sheep as a sacrifice to God at the dedication of the temple.

David and Moses – the two great leaders of the Jews - were shepherds

The prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Zachariah all drew analogies from sheep and shepherds.

So talking to a Jew about sheep and shepherds was a way that they could easily relate.

And because we can't relate –

I am going to try to provide a picture of what is going on –

The first thing I want to discuss is the shepherd.

We always picture a shepherd with a long stick with a crook at the end.

However, the shepherds during this time – had other weapons that they carried with them in a pouch.

They would carry a sling – think of David and Goliath

They would use the sling to repel predators but, they would also use it to deter wandering sheep.

They would carry a rod – they would use this in close combat situations – against predators.

However, the rod was also used as a tool of correction against the sheep.

If a sheep was prone to wander off – to go astray, the shepherd, in order to protect the sheep, would go to sheep and strike one of the legs of the sheep – breaking it.

You might say, “Well, what kind of a shepherd is that?”

That is a good shepherd – this was an act of love.

Here is why

The breaking of the leg was not a means of punishment but of correction -

The shepherd would then carry that sheep on his shoulders until the sheep leg was strong enough to walk on – this would sometimes take months.

That time of bonding – that time of being close to the shepherd, that time of getting to know the shepherd and depending of the shepherd - would lead the sheep not to wander off anymore.

You see, God disciplines us – but the moment He disciplines us, He places us on His shoulders, so that we might draw closer to our Lord.

That we may experience His strength and His comfort and therefore, we will no longer wander off.

[Heb 12:6-7 NKJV] 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens (He breaks the leg), And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God

deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

Another thing that shepherds carried was oil.

And the reason for the oil is that sometimes that the sheep would wander into briars and get cut – so to keep the insects away – they would use the oil.

Another reason for the oil was that some of the sheep were prone to butt heads with the other sheep (just like church)

So the shepherd would anoint their heads and horns – so if they did decide to butt heads with one another, they would slip off from one another and not connect.

So that is why RJ is going to go around with oil later today.

Regarding the sheep –

There is a reason that the scriptures uses sheep and not lions or bears to refer to God's flock.

And the reason is that sheep are inordinately foolish creatures.

They are dumb animals.

Sheep left to themselves, would quickly get themselves in trouble or would starve to death.

They need a shepherd, they need someone to guide them, they need someone to protect them, they need someone to correct them.

[Jhn 10:1-10 NKJV] 1 "**Most assuredly**, I say to you, he who does not enter the **sheepfold** by **the door**, but climbs up some other way, the same is a **thief and a robber.**

Here in verse one – Jesus is making sure that we understand that He is about to make a very important statement –

Most assuredly – amen, amen

He is saying – that we should pay attention.

Sheep are either grazing in open pasture – or they are secured in their pen, their sheepfold.

Now, the sheepfolds had one opening – this was the door

There was no physical door or gate to the sheepfold – it was the shepherd that would lay down in the opening

This is important because Jesus is going to say in a few verses that He is the door.

Now, why is Jesus making this statement –

In context, we have to look at our studies over the last couple of weeks.

What did the religious rulers do the blind man

What did the religious rulers do the woman that was caught in adultery

What did the religious rulers do when Jesus told them that He was greater than Abraham – that He was the Great I Am

Jesus is rebuking the religious rulers.

He is calling them thief and robbers

Now, in the English – we might say, well isn't thief and robber the same thing?

A thief does what a robber does and vice versa right?

But in the Greek, thief and robber are different.

Thief will take what belongs to you but a robber is the one who will physically cause harm to you as they take what belongs to you.

A robber is someone who is going to abuse the sheep – someone who is going to hurt the sheep.

And that is why Jesus uses both words –

Turn to Ezekiel 34

[Eze 34:1-3 NKJV] 1 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus

says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, [but] you do not feed the flock.

This is exactly the picture that Jesus is painting.

And as Jesus is rebuking them – the religious rulers should have made the connection between the words of Ezekiel and the announcement that Jesus was making.

The religious rulers – they had placed a heavy burden upon the sheepfold

It was law, law and traditions – no grace

They did that to the woman caught in adultery and the man who was healed from his blindness.

The religious rulers were put in a position to shepherd the sheep – to point people to God - to lead people in spiritual matters - yet they were the thief and the robbers.

Jesus is saying here,

“You are stealing form the very people that you were called to protect. And instead of protecting the people, you are abusing the people.”

2 "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

If Jesus tells us that He is the “door” (vs. 7), then a legitimate shepherd is one who comes to the sheep through Jesus.

A legitimate shepherd is not one who is climbing walls, not one who is after his own well-being and not one who is abusing the sheep.

3. "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

As the shepherds were taking their sheep from field to fields, it was uncommon for there to be communal sheepfolds – where multiple shepherds would put their sheep in there when they were not grazing.

When it was time for the shepherd to move on, he would show up to the door and make a unique noise that was known to His sheep or He would call out their name, and sure enough, the sheep move toward that familiar voice and gather round the legs of their shepherd.

When he moves to new pasture, he goes before the flock and leads them out.

He doesn't drive them; He doesn't push the sheep, He leads them.

He goes first – the sheep follow.

[Psa 23:2-4 NKJV] 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You [are] with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The sheep follow Him because they trust Him.

The Good Shepherd had proven Himself to be trustworthy.

5 "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

If another person tries to call them, the sheep won't follow.

Even if the fraud uses the right names for the sheep – his voice is strange & they will run from him.

Church,

What Jesus says here is clear – those who belong to Him will follow Him; those who follow Him won't go after false-shepherds.

There are a lot of voices out there in the world today.

- We must listen for the voice of our Shepherd
- We must learn not to follow the clever voice

- We must learn not to follow the funny voice or the smooth voice
- We must not be seduced by the appealing voice or give heed to the loudest voice.
- We don't go by emotion – or because the false shepherd tells us what we want to hear.

So how do we discern the Father voice?

We learn to discern His voice by being a student of His word – God never contradicts Himself.

We learn to discern His voice by spending time in prayer and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us.

6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep."

As Jesus provided the illustration of the sheep and the shepherd – notice that they did not understand –

Why didn't they understand?

Because they were not His sheep.

They heard the words – they certainly knew about sheep and the role of the shepherd, but because they lacked faith in who Jesus is, they were deaf to the meaning.

I had you make a note of the word “again” –

Because Jesus didn't say, “man you sheep are really dumb – how could you miss this illustration that I perfectly picked out for you – I am done with you guys”

He came to them again and explained it to them.

And the reason I point this out is because there are times in our lives where we have resisted something that the Lord has told us – we read our devotional or listen to a sermon on Sunday and the Lord will point out something in our life, then we get in our car and we will hear someone talk about the same thing on the radio.

Church,

The Lord is faithful to keep coming to us time and time again, dealing with you and me concerning those issues that need to be addressed in our lives.

I also had you make a note where Jesus said, I am the door of the sheep – notice it doesn't say, a door or one of many doors – He is the door.

He is the only entryway into the sheepfold.

He is the exclusive protector of the sheep.

8 "All who [ever] came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

What Jesus is doing here is presenting a stark contrast between Himself and the intruders previously spoken about.

Where the thieves and robbers avoid entering through the gate because their intention is to do harm, Jesus is claiming to be the door of the sheep.

Which means that, unlike those who came before Him (specifically, the religious rulers), Jesus' goal is to protect and provide for his sheep.

He is the only one who provides eternal security and safety for those whose faith resides in Him.

Make a note -

Anyone who is proclaiming another gospel than what Jesus is preaching – they fall into the category of thieves and robbers.

9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Although there is one entryway, this is one entryway that is available to all people.

Who is invited to enter?

Anyone.... and anyone means anyone.

It doesn't matter who you are or what you've done, this invitation is available to anyone.

Anyone can come and enjoy salvation that can only be found in Jesus.

Jesus here is claiming to be the only exclusive means by which someone can be saved.

It is exclusive in that there is no other hope for one to be saved.

Yet, what we see here is that the exclusive message of the gospel is available to anyone who comes in belief.

We saw the same gospel proclaimed in the life of the blind man – his entire life he heard people talk about whether it was his sin or his parent's sin that caused him to be born blind, come and believe, you will be saved and you will go in and out and find pasture.

We saw the gospel message proclaimed in the life of the Samaritan woman – she had a checkered past, come and believe, you will be saved and you will go in and out and find pasture.

We saw the same message proclaimed to a devout, law abiding Pharisee in Nicodemus - come and believe, you will be saved and you will go in and out and find pasture.

Jesus is our only hope for salvation, and He is our only hope for finding pasture.

10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

But Jesus came (meaning the purpose of his coming) was to give his sheep abundant life.

The Shepherd came to Lead, to feed and to Protect

In Christ, there is peace that surpasses all understanding, joy in the midst of hopelessness, love and patience and kindness in the midst of hostility.

This is a free gift we cannot ever earn and it is an abundance that far exceeds anything this life has to offer – it is an abundance only found in Jesus and it is an abundance that cannot be diminished by anything this life throws at us.

So here is the question that we must ask ourselves this morning?

What type of sheep are we?

Plump sheep with thick healthy coats, bright eyes

Or

Are we

Scrawny, emaciated, flea-bitten, scraggly sheep with gaping wounds from wolf bites

Our condition doesn't reflect on the quality of His care – rather it reveals where we've been hanging out, who we've been following.

If we want an abundant life – we stay close to the Good Shepherd

We listen to His voice and we follow Him

We eat what He sets before us in His word, in our daily devotional time and prayer time and as we are led by the Spirit.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

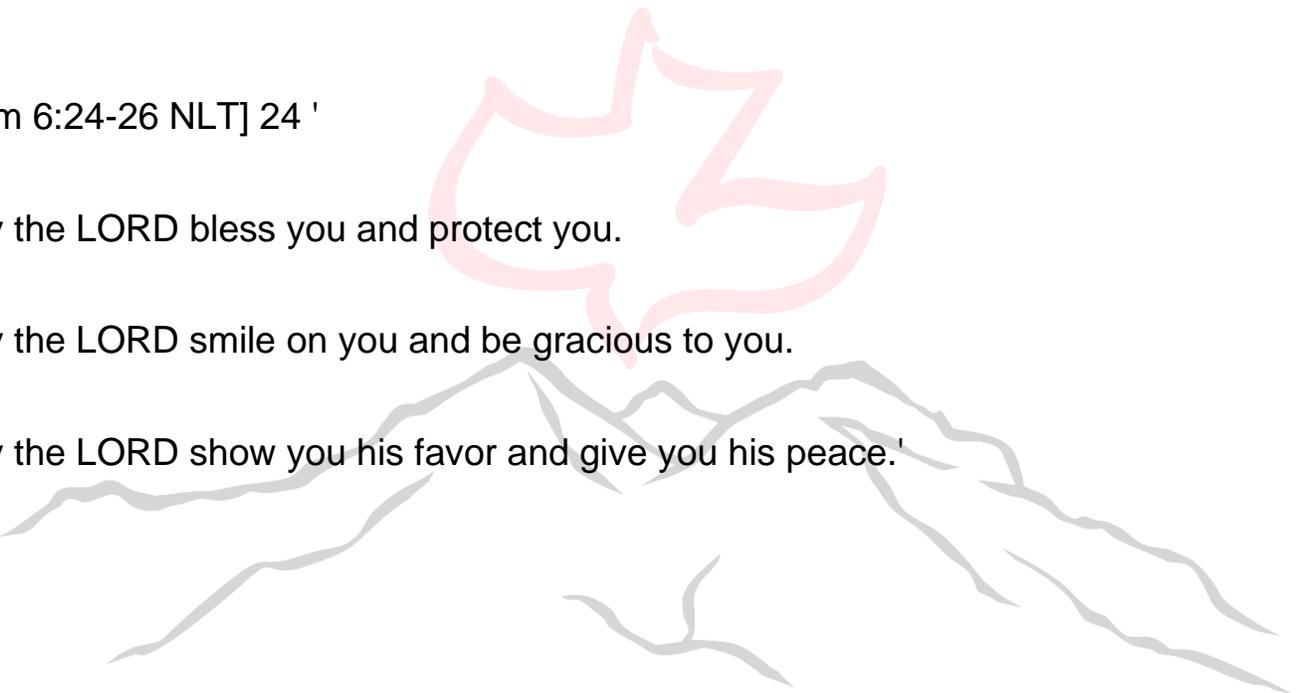
I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.!



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