

THIS IS LIFE

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY
THE BOOK OF JOHN

Week 10 – John chapter 10

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

God pictures His care for His people through the image of a shepherd and his sheep. This image illustrates both God's watchful protection and also the vulnerability of God's people and their need for constant care.

In the Old Testament, God Himself is called the *Shepherd of Israel*, but over the course of history, God appointed *human* shepherds—leaders and ruling authorities—who were supposed to represent God by guiding and caring for God's people.

In Ezekiel 34:7-10, God rebuked the leaders of Israel because they had failed to care for their sheep; rather, they plundered the flock of God. In Ezekiel 34:23-24, God said that because of the wickedness of Israel's shepherds, God would set up "*one shepherd*" over the sheep. This shepherd would be a King from the line of David. This shepherd—this Good Shepherd—would be the Christ—the promised Messiah.

In last week's lesson, we saw that the Jewish authorities were hardened in their malicious hostility toward Jesus. These authorities proved themselves to be *false* shepherds when they refused to accept the rightful Shepherd whom God had sent.

1. Read John 10:1-6

Jesus is the true shepherd of God's people

a. What characteristics of the rightful shepherd do you see in John 10:1-6?

b. **Read Psalm 23.** This beloved Psalm affirms David's trust in God as his Shepherd. King David proclaims: "*The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.*" If God is our Shepherd, we can trust Him for our essential needs. As you read Psalm 23, fill out the chart below from the verses of the Psalm.

<i>Our need</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>How the Shepherd provides</i>
Peace and provision	2a	
Rest and refreshment	2b-3a	
Guidance	3b	
Protection	4	
Relationship	5	
Blessing	6	

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- c. *For personal reflection:* Jesus did not picture His people as tigers or as beavers or as Golden Retrievers—but as sheep. What does this image reveal to you about our vulnerability and our needs? What does this image reveal to you about the nature of God's care for us?

In this next section, Jesus gives a sharper focus to the metaphor. Jesus is not only the Shepherd who leads and cares for God's flock; Jesus is also *the gate* into the sheepfold. Jesus is the only "way in" to God's community of safety and provision. Jesus is the true gate—the door to salvation. Jesus is God's only provision for entrance into His Kingdom.

2. Read John 10:7-10

"I AM the Gate for the sheep"

- a. What benefit does Jesus bring for His sheep? (John 10:9) [Note: to "go in and out" is an expression that denotes peace and safety.]
- b. Express in your own words the contrast between the motives of the false shepherds (like the Pharisees) and the motives of the true shepherd. (John 10:10)
- c. *For deeper thought:* Jesus doesn't promise us a trouble-free life, but in John 10:10, He says that He has come that we may have a new quality of life—abundant life—life to the full. Using Psalm 23 as a resource, describe your understanding of what this fullness of life looks like. See also John 17:3.

3. Read John 10:11-21

"I AM the Good Shepherd"

- a. What crucial prophetic statement does Jesus make about Himself that demonstrates the extent of His care for God's flock? (John 10:11, 15, 17)

➤ *For personal private reflection:*

In John 10:14, Jesus says, "I know My sheep and My sheep know Me."

The term "know" refers to a committed relationship, not merely intellectual knowledge.

Think about your life. Do you need to deepen your own commitment to Christ? Do you need to invest more fully in your relationship with Him? Make this a matter of reflection and prayer today.

- b. Jesus anticipates His death. What is Jesus' perspective on His sacrificial death? (John 10:18)

4. Read John 10:22-30

Jesus is the Christ—the promised Messiah

- a. Jesus was in the temple area at a later time, and the Jews asked Him to make a clear claim that He was the Christ. How did Jesus justify His assertion that He had already made that claim? (John 10:25)
- b. On what basis may Jesus' sheep be completely secure for all eternity? (John 10:28-30)

5. Read John 10:31-42

Jesus is God's Son

- a. How did the Jews react to Jesus' answer, and what was the basis for their reaction? (John 10:31-33)
- b. What rationale does Jesus give for them (and for us) to believe in Him? (John 10:37-38)

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Let's review and recap our progress through the Gospel of John.

The first twelve chapters of the book of John are often called *The Book of Signs*. We find in these chapters seven miraculous signs that Jesus accomplished. These signs reveal who Jesus is and what He came to do. In our study this semester, we have read the account of six of these seven signs.

These are the *Seven Signs*:

- Transforming water into wine (John 2:1-11)
- Healing a royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
- Healing a disabled man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15)
- Feeding 5,000 (John 6:1-14)
- Walking on water (John 6:16-21)
- Healing a man born blind (John 9:1-12)
- Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-43)

Another characteristic of the Gospel of John is a set of seven "*I AM*" statements that Jesus used to reveal who He is and what He has come to provide. In our study this semester, we have encountered the first four of these seven "*I AM*" statements.

These are the seven "*I AM*" sayings:

- I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48)
- I AM the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5)
- I AM the Gate for the sheep (John 10:7-11)
- I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-15)
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:23-26)
- I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
- I AM the True Vine (John 15:5)

