

I Still Want More Series

Lesson 9: MORE is Worth the Sacrifice!

A Bible Study Lesson of
The Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Written by Iwiltha Carr



June 26, 2024

Introduction: Jesus used parables to help his listeners understand deeper truths about His ministry and about God. Parables use everyday ideas that the listeners would understand. Some common parable objects related to farming, kings and servants, masters and slaves, trees, and fruit, etc. The following lesson presents one of Jesus' parables that most of the people in the region could easily understand. Herding flocks of sheep was common, therefore when Jesus began to use terms such as the door/gate, shepherd, sheep following, etc. they would have a clear picture of the meaning.

The deeper meaning of parables is where we are all challenged in our thinking and in how we follow The Lord. Students will come to understand that the parable for the current lesson identifies the character of Jesus as well as the purpose of presence with mankind. Further, this lesson will identify to us how Jesus stands head and shoulders above anyone else as He fulfills his role as our savior. Enjoy!

Lesson's Scripture: John 10:1-18

Historical background

The context of the teaching Jesus did through this parable primarily related to an issue raised because of the healing of a blind man by Jesus (John 9). A group of leaders called Pharisees were present and denied the authenticity of Jesus as the son of God. A simplified understanding of these leaders identifies that they were leaders within the Jewish religious community. The healing occurred during the period between the Feast of the Tabernacles and Feast of the Dedication sometime between late September and early October. After the healing, the Jewish religious leaders were in conflict with Jesus over His healing on the Sabbath. Jesus, in turn, was in conflict with the religious over their lack of concern for the sheep (God's people). The parable of chapter 10 is sandwiched between the healing of chapter 9 and the claim by religious leaders that Jesus was a demon or demonically possessed (John 10: 19).

The issue at hand related to Jesus' authority to do what he was doing as the Messiah. The crucial question of the healing was raised when the former blind man asks the Jewish leaders, "I have already told you how I was healed, do you want to hear it again because you want to become a disciple of Jesus?" (John 9: 27). As the discourse continued regarding Jesus, the parable was then shared as a critique on what it means to fully care for people as a true shepherd versus one who is a hired hand.

I. The Shepherd and the sheep--John 10:1-6

10 ¹Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Jesus begins with a parable about a shepherd who enters the sheepfold through a gate, contrasting him with thieves who climb in another way. The shepherd's sheep hear his voice, know him, and follow him. The Pharisees do not understand the parable. Jesus is telling us something about himself. He's teaching us how to recognize Him and follow only Him. Jesus' entrance means that He and only He is the lawful, capable, and authoritative shepherd of the sheep. Jesus came openly, selflessly, and lovingly in order to purchase his sheep, care for his sheep, and lead His sheep into meaningful God-glorifying life. Jesus came to this earth



according to God's plan in order to make us his own. You know the Shepherd by His entrance; He must come according to God's plan.

In contrast, others come in a manner that takes from the sheep. Their method of entry is of such that the sheep are put at risk. Further, their message (voice) is not one to be listened to because it will not provide for the sheep that which is safe. Jesus is explicitly condemning the Pharisees and any other persons whose message about God is not one that builds up the sheep but rather pulls the sheep away to danger. Consider the times we live in and think about the messages that are "kind of Christian" but are not centered on God's word. While they may sound good, the danger is that those voices will pull people away from the true gospel. Jesus says, we should be able to discern those voices from His and should not follow them!

- What responsibilities does Jesus have as the shepherd of the sheep?
- How do we learn to recognize the voice of Jesus

II. Jesus the Gate for the sheep--John 10:7-10

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.



The point Jesus is making here is clear: he is not one of many doors; he is the one and only door of the sheep. He is the only entryway into the sheepfold. He is the exclusive protector of the sheep. Jesus is the means to green pastures and He is the means of safety. (Psalm 23)

In ancient cultures, the shepherd would sometimes lay their bodies across the entrance to the sheepfold to prevent harm from entering or sheep from leaving. Jesus compares himself to the religious leaders of his time, whom He calls “thieves and bandits” to whom the sheep did not listen. Their religious behavior would not lead a person to salvation.

The point that Jesus was making was that He and only He can provide salvation. He is the door for all mankind to get back into relationship with God. He is the one way! This would have been in stark contrast to the teachings of the day which centered on people acting good to get into relationship with God. They were depending on their works to provide righteousness. Salvation, however, is not a behavioral contract. It is a grace covenant with the Lord through Jesus. Ephesians 2: 8-9 is clear.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Notice the contrasting provisions of the thief and of the shepherd. The thief arrives with an intent to destroy the sheep. Jesus offers abundant life and those who have faith in Him receive what is much better than what could have been imagined

*Jesus is not one of many doors to God.
He is the only door!*

now and for eternity. The promise is not for a life of ease but for a life where we are guided by the Good Shepherd who knows how to lead us beside still waters, ensure that we lie down in green pastures, protect us in the

valley of the shadow of death, use His rod and staff to comfort us, and even to make sure that goodness and mercy follow us like sheep dogs to keep us on the path of safety (see Psalm 23). Jesus plus nothing more provides this type of life. Others may promise, but only Jesus can provide in this manner.

- What other options have you heard of that will give you eternal life and salvation from sin?
- How do you refute these other “doorways”?
- If you are struggling for an answer, what does it mean you (we) need to do?

III. The Hired Hand--John 10: 11-13

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, but who are these hired hands? Earlier in this passage, we see that Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees who had created a set of rules by which they hoped to keep all of God’s law and obtain God’s favor. Many of them were hypocrites. They were happy to hold positions of authority but did not exhibit care for people. They would regularly look down on people who were not of their class and would not help those whose struggle might cause them to become ceremonially unclean. This was part of the problem they had with Jesus healing the blind man. Their thought was how could he heal someone on the Sabbath? Jesus in turn challenges them and in effect says, “How could you not do good on the Sabbath?”

The condemnation that Jesus makes of them infuriates his listeners because their understanding about God’s plan of salvation was misplaced. The Pharisees and even many today equate a relationship with The Lord to be based on outward appearances and ceremony rather than an inward change based on a relationship with the Lord.

Jesus explained to them that a Good Shepherd understands what is required of him and will go to the nth degree to ensure the safety of the sheep. That means doing the best for the sheep at all times. Hired hands will only go so far because their actions are based on the pay they receive.

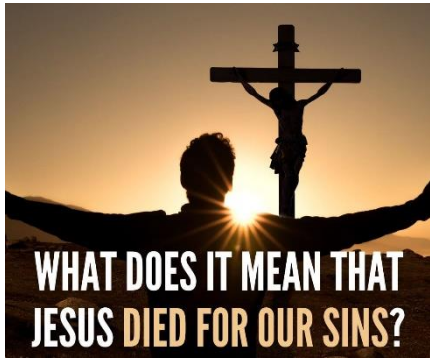
When Jesus makes the statement about sacrifice, He was implying His own sacrifice to be made for all of mankind. He cares so deeply about people that He will not abandon us, even when the enemy attacks. Instead, he will set himself between the enemy and the flock. This level of care is shown when Jesus willingly sacrifices himself on the cross. He laid down His life as a sacrifice to take away our sins. There is no greater love than this. Whenever we begin to doubt God's love, we need only look to the cross, and Jesus will remind us once again of His amazing love.

- How is the cross Jesus' ultimate expression of love towards you?
- What do you see and feel when you look toward the Cross?
- When have you acted like a hired hand?

IV. The authority to lay it down: John 10: 14-18

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. ¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. ¹⁷ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

One of Jesus' most powerful revelations is about how He would die. Jesus died with power and authority. His life wasn't taken from him; He laid it down willingly to die for our sins. The joy that we can have as a result of this is amazing. We have a savior who is so powerful that He, unlike any other, can and will offer Himself as a sacrifice and then determine when enough dying has occurred.



The crucifixion seemed to signal defeat for Jesus. It was actually a defeat for the evil one. Jesus alluded that His sacrifice would reconcile humanity to God. By laying down His life to save the lost sheep, Jesus would override The Law of Moses and all of the behavioral laws that were never meant to save us. Thus, salvation becomes available to all “sheep” whether we are sheep of the original flock; the Jews, or whether we are “sheep” of the adopted flock; non-Jews. All can be saved! As the obedient son of God, Jesus willingly follows the command of God to die for our sins so that we have a chance for eternal life! That’s what a Good Shepherd does for the flock. He does MORE than any other would or could, simply because He loves you and me.

- How does this lesson help you to understand the sacrifice Jesus made for you?
- How will you sacrifice to promote God’s plan for you and others?

Conclusion: John 10 provides a rich, comforting portrait of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the gate, providing guidance, protection, and eternal life. His teachings elicit varied reactions, underscoring the theme of belief versus unbelief. The chapter is a profound reminder of the Jesus’ sacrificial love He offers to everyone who chooses to accept Him. It inspires us to listen to His voice and follow Him faithfully in our life journey.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for being our Good shepherd and for keeping the flock safe and secure. You have not abandoned us but saved us, even at the cost of your own life. We take our joy in your leadership. Let us rest secure in your care.