

We open John 10, with Jesus presumably arguing with the pharisees who had just ex-communicated a man for the grand crime of being able to see, and telling people about it.

It seems that this is a continuation of the conversation Jesus was having with the Pharisees, and he is explaining to them their blindness.

As we go through this, I have divided the text into 3 sections.

Vs 1- 13 Jesus our Shepherd and leader and trainer

Vs 14-21 Jesus our Shepherd, the author and perfecter

Vs 22-40 Jesus our Shepherd, Lord and God.

Lets get started. -- Opening Prayer --

Joh 10:1 "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.

Joh 10:2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Joh 10:3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Joh 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

Joh 10:5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Joh 10:6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Joh 10:7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

Joh 10:8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

Shepherding was a native activity for the nation of Israel. King David was a Shepherd as was Abraham, and Joseph. This terminology may be a bit foreign for us modern city dwellers, but it was not only all around the Jewish people, it was also deeply intertwined with their history.

The sheepfold was a fenced in area that the shepherd would use to pen in his sheep during the night. Often near the cities, there were community pens that the shepherd could put their sheep into overnight, while they went into town. One of the shepherds would get watch duty and would block the entrance of the pen. Out in the country the shepherd would set up his own pen, using brambles and brush to pen in his own sheep. He would block the entrance himself. The Gatekeeper here was usually the gate himself. He

would lay across the entrance, so the sheep would have to step on him to get out.

Thievery was not uncommon in these days. Often somebody would try to hop the wall and steal sheep. Usually they would slaughter the lamb in the pen and through it's lifeless body to a partner outside the pen. A living sheep was difficult and unstealthy to steal because they didn't cooperate with people that it was not accustomed to.

Jesus was not a thief or a robber. He came by the door that was set up by prophecy: born of a virgin in Bethlehem of the line of David, and John the Baptist acted as the gatekeeper, opening the door for him.

It is interesting to me to note John 10:6 **"This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them."** Jesus tried one approach, but it didn't work, so he shifted to a different metaphor. Did Jesus make a mistake? I don't think so. I think that one of the reasons that Jesus's teachings can be confusing is because he spoke directly to the hearts that were present. Often it seems like the person verbally asks one question and Jesus answers a different question. I believe he could see the question behind the question, and would often cut the misunderstanding off at the trunk, rather than pruning the branches. In this case, one metaphor may have worked for one set of people, and the second one may have worked for a different section of the audience. I remember Grant teaching this passage of scripture a few weeks ago, so we can see that Jesus did indeed use it to speak to an audience, even if it was 2000 years later..

Joh 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

Joh 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I see the sheep pen as an analogy for the law. Jesus leads us out of a life of Bondage to sin. Paul says the law is a curse. Do we want to live our whole life in the pen of the law? or do we want to live a life of abundance?

The law as a system of do's and don'ts. You can go here, can't go there. Do this, don't do that. None of us have it in our heart to live our lives within the rules. We all fall short, and wander into the brambles.

There are many thieves in the world today. They are trying to get us to escape the pen by a different method than the door. They may be deceiving us simply because they want to sell us something. In our world of make-it-

yourself theology, they may want us to do something so that they can do likewise with a clear conscience. Some may want us to become a servant to them, or become indebted to them. Some may just want to see the show as we struggle.

Jesus gives us a much different life. He leads us out of the pen. He leads us to green pastures. He leads us into a life of adventure.

Psa 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psa 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

Psa 23:3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Psa 23:4 Even 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.

Psa 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

It is not a life of freedom, when we wander, he corrects us. In fact, often the shepherd would use the staff to break the leg of chronically wandering sheep. He would carry the sheep on his shoulders until it healed, and then the bond between the sheep and it's master would be strong, it would no longer wander from him. As followers of Jesus, we are still his sheep. Contrary to what our culture tells us, the best life is not found in freedom, it is found in being a servant to the greatest master in the universe.

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:12 He 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.

Joh 10:13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

There are a lot of false saviours that we can invest in. We can hope that the Government takes care of our problems, or our families, We can think that a new job, a better degree, a spouse or a new spouse will save us from our troubles. All of these are like the hired hands. They may be a comfort while times are good, but in many cases, they do not hold up when real trouble sinks in.

Our Lord, Jesus, protects us. There are wolves out there that are inevitably going to devour us. Sin, Death, Judgement. He defeats them all, at the expense of his own life. Our Sin now belongs to him, and he has taken the just punishment for us. He has removed death's sting, by giving Resurrection.

AUTHOR AND PERFECTOR

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

Joh 10:15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Joh 10:16 And 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.

Joh 10:17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

Joh 10:18 No 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."

I would like to quickly highlight Verse 16 "**And 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.**" Jesus is letting the Jews know that he has sheep that will be from other nations. I think this is important for us to recognize as well however. A lot of Jesus's followers will be a lot different than us. Some will be from other nations, some will be from other economic conditions, some will have spent the bulk of their lives in prison. Some will have spent the majority of their lives being total hooligans and enemies of everything we stand for. We should treat all people with kindness and respect as image bearers of God. Who is in and out of the flock is not for us to judge.

As we look at the rest of this section, we see Jesus lived by faith. He knew what God was calling him to do. He knew that God had given him the authority to die and rise again. He lived a life that showed that he believed in the authority that God had given him.

Hebrews 12:2 calls Jesus is the Author and perfecter of our faith. Just as he Trusted the father, and lived the life that God called him to, we should trust Jesus and live the life Jesus calls us to. As Jesus was assured that there would be life beyond the cross, we should be assured that there will be life beyond the grave.

I am stung by this application. Do I live a life that shows I believe in the promised resurrection? Jesus said: "I know my own, and my own know me, just as the father knows me and I know the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep."

When I turn on the television I hear the Lie "You deserve" all of the time. 14 minutes an hour, we are told of new and different things that "We deserve" (commercial messages). Our culture looks at us as insane if we don't pursue what "we deserve".

If we pursue it we will get what we deserve. It isn't pretty. God offers us grace, and is willing to give us something much better than we deserve.

Which voice am I tuned into? My Shepherd? or the thief? Do I really believe that I need a Shepard? Am I willing to lay down the "American Dream"? Am I willing to tell the truth in a culture that loves lies? Am I willing to buck the "social contract" and to fight for my marriage even during the unpleasant times, when it is not "Good for me?" Am I just a hired hand to my friends and family? or am I a good shepherd to the flock that God has trusted me with?

Jesus, Please draw me close to you. Let me hear your voice. Let me know you as you know your father. Let me model your faith to my friends, my family, and to the dying world.

While Jesus did lay his life down for us, we should always remember that he picked it up again, and still protects and intercedes for us. We still have a Shepherd.

Joh 10:19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

Joh 10:20 Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?"

Joh 10:21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

This division remains today. It has never really gone away, and will not until the day of judgement, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

JESUS as God

Joh 10:22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,

Joh 10:23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of

Solomon.

This appears to be transition to a new time. The feast of dedication is nowadays referred to as Hanukkah. This is a celebration of the re-dedication of the temple after the Maccabees revolt in 167-164 BC. Antiochus Epiphanies, a very evil ruler had conquered the area, and prohibited the practice of Judaism, He had defiled God's temple by placing an Idol of Zeus in it, and slaughtering a Pig on the altar. Epiphanies was a horrendous and atrocious man. I don't think I will get into how horrific he was, because I don't want to give people nightmares. Sometimes our world seems evil and unjust, but we should be thankful that there is the moderating Christian worldview, that tends to act as a conscience.

Under the leadership of Judas Maccabees, the Jews revolted against the Seleucid empire and cleansed the temple. The Jews won back their religious freedom, but their political Independence was short lived. At the Time of Jesus, it is likely that They were looking for a messiah that was the new Judas Maccabees, who could win political freedom from Rome. It should be noted that In John 2, we learned Jesus had cleansed the temple, just as Judas Maccabees had. Jesus claimed to be the light, Judas Maccabees had restored the light of the menorah to the temple. Something was clicking. The celebration at hand was not one commanded by God in the law of Moses. But Jesus was there anyway. (Regulative Principal, Perhaps for discussion afterwards)

Joh 10:24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Joh 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me,

Joh 10:26 but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock.

Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

If you worry about whether you are part of the flock, be thankful that you worry. The unelected generally don't spend a lot of time worrying about weather Jesus loves them. Chances are that if you worry, you are part of his flock. Listen for your Shepherd's calling, as you are now, and obey him.

This should serve as a great encouragement as we carry out the great commission. Many people will not seem to understand our message. We should not feel alarmed at this. Some will never get it. Satan will tempt us to change the message to make it more palatable, but we should never do

so. The Truth is the Truth, and those who are going to get it will get it, and those who will not will not.

God did not take us out of this world. He left us here to be an example and an ambassador.

1Pe 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,
1Pe 3:15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,
1Pe 3:16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

I pray that I am able to boldly trust and obey him. If I do, those who see and hear his message through me, and are part of his Flock will respond. Some never will, but if I have been obedient, I do not need to worry. They didn't respond to Christ in the flesh either.

Joh 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
Joh 10:29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
Joh 10:30 I and the Father are one."

Out of this we get the assurance of our salvation. If we have submitted ourselves as slaves to righteousness, God will discipline us and protect us, and nothing is powerful enough to wrestle him from his hands.

Joh 10:31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.

Solomons Colonnade was a large covered patio area. There were not a lot of Rocks on the patios around the Temple mount. This was most likely a pre-meditated outrage. When we look at this in the context of the feast of dedication, it strikes me that The persecuted, when free, will become persecutors. Just as Satan worked through Antiochus Epiphanies to torture the Jews who were living out their faith, he worked through the pharisees to persecute the fulfillment of the faith. Unless we stay submitted to our shepherd, we can trust Satan will work through us as well. If we remain in him, no one is able to snatch us from God's hand.

Joh 10:32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone

me?"

Joh 10:33 The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Joh 10:34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?"

Joh 10:35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came-- and Scripture cannot be broken--

Joh 10:36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

This is probably the trickiest passage of the evening. Especially challenging is verse 34, where Jesus is quoting Psalm 82:6. Mormons will use this to say that we can be God. Jehovah's witnesses will use this to show that Jesus is only a lower case god, and to downplay the divinity of Christ.

So what is Jesus saying here?

Nowadays, a preacher would say please open your bible to Psalm 82, and we could all pull out the book in front of us and flip some pages and read it. In Jesus day, the books were not numbered like they are now - and there generally were not books at all.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law did not carry a bible with them like you and I do. In fact, they couldn't even check one out from the library. They had to go to the library, and be considered worthy enough to have time with the scrolls, then they would memorize all of the scriptures.

So when Jesus quotes a verse, especially to the pharisees, it can be an abbreviation for an entire argument. When he is dying on the cross, says "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It means not only what he emerged from his lips, but also the rest of Psalm 22 that was being fulfilled in that very moment.

I see Jesus's response here as a similar argument. If we read Psalm 82:

Psa 82:1 A Psalm of Asaph. God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

Psa 82:2 "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

Psa 82:3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

Psa 82:4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Psa 82:5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Psa 82:6 I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;

Psa 82:7 nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince."

Psa 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!

We are all little g gods over something. Certainly over our own life, back in those days, certainly over our wives and our children. Some over the clans and the tribes, some over the temple. Some of us have employees. We have been given by God a certain amount of authority. And we will be judged based on how we exercise the authority that God has entrusted us with. The word "god" little g, is used to describe judges, because they have the power and authority to take life. The people who Jesus was speaking to had stones in their hands where planning to be 'gods'.

So I see Jesus as saying with this quote, you behave like gods, but are totally partial and unjust. I behave like God, and dispense the works that only God could dispense, doing it with compassion and mercy. Who is it that deserves to be stoned here?

Joh 10:37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;

Joh 10:38 but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

Joh 10:39 Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

Once again we see that the unjust rulers have no power over Jesus that was not given to them by God. Also note that The Jewish leaders had no confusion over who Jesus claimed to be. Jesus is God.

Joh 10:40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained.

Joh 10:41 And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true."

Joh 10:42 And many believed in him there.

Even Jesus retreated to friendly territory occasionally to be encouraged and re-energized. Do you have a place like this? Do you have a circle of friends who you can trust? Do you retreat to a place of prayer?

Lets do so now.

-- Closing prayer.