

10/03/2021 - John 10: 1-21 - "Belonging to God"

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Date: 03 October 2021

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] Welcome. We have been in an expositional teaching series in the Gospel of John, starting from chapter 1, verse 1. I've taken some strategic breaks throughout this series as John is shifting in themes and sort of shifting gears in intensity. And we are in chapter 10 as we go through this series. And look what it says in chapter 10, verse 1 to verse 6.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This is what's known as a parable. It's a figure of speech that Jesus uses. And a story that unpacks with symbolic meaning as you study it and understand it. But often, there is a lack of reception or understanding as a response of the great stories of which Jesus speaks in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And here we see one standing out on its own. And this story and the symbolic meaning that's found within should be good news, especially to the Jewish people.

But there is a tragedy that's taking place. Verse 6, this figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. There was confusion revolving around the good news of what Jesus Christ is trying to communicate to God's, quote, people. And it was understood that them in this passage was the Jewish people. That includes the Pharisees, the scribes, lots of listening ears. And going with last week and what we spoke about last week and what John included within his gospel last week, we saw a lot concerning around the Jews being unable to see Jesus on full display in the healing of the blind man. We labeled that sermon a testimony clear as mud. And today, though, it seems like this story is not revolving around sight, but that which they're hearing. They are unable to hear. And it was these men whose minds were filled with the richness of Old Testament history, of what God has been doing since creation. But when it came to a richly packed Old Testament illusion that Jesus includes right here in this story, all of a sudden they don't understand.

Why? Well, today we're going to discuss the meaning and the content of who Jesus is, who he's making himself out to be in this passage. And within just these five verses of this parable, it can actually be broken up into three separate sections, all regarding different meanings. And so for any note takers, we'll be unpacking those sections of the parable because Jesus continues to explain each section.

[4 : 29] He goes into great length of what he's meaning to make it crystal clear to God's, quote, people. And so verse one through two, we see the topic at hand being the entrance into the sheepfold.

And we're going to see the attribute of worthiness in order to lead. Verse three is the next section that Jesus will unpack. It's the foreshadowing, the sacrificial statement, the attribute of a leader that's qualified to lay down his life, to protect the sheep. And then verse four through five is marking the leadership of that shepherd and that being in provision.

And so Jesus expands upon these three sections in his parable in order to clarify any confusion. But what the central focus seems to be hinging upon in this passage is why is there an intellectual disconnect with the people of God? Towards the end of our time, I pray that we will be able to grasp grasp John's aim and much more specifically, the Holy Spirit's purpose of making this the 10th chapter of John's gospel narrative. Before we do that, let's turn to the Lord in prayer and get into the first section.

Father, may we experience the refreshment of your word and your revelation to us this morning. May we be humbled by your word and challenged today. Jesus, we are in need of your grace and we thank you for the cross. We thank you for the message of the gospel and the hope of the gospel.

May we look upon your words today, Lord, as your audience did then, but let it be clear to us. May we marvel at your time in ministry on this earth in awe. And Holy Spirit, help us. Help us understand you today.

[6 : 39] Holy Spirit, give me the words to speak today that would edify and build up your church here at Steel Valley. And soften our hearts and ready our ears to receive your word.

And we praise in Jesus' name. Amen. So the first section, we're going to be breaking this up. The sermon title being Belonging to God.

The first section is Jesus, the door of leadership. And we see Jesus begins to expound upon the meaning of what he meant in verse 1 through 2 of the parable.

It says, he said, truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs by another way, that man is a thief and a robber, but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. They're confused about it.

But Jesus explains what that meant. Verse 7, so Jesus said to them again, look with me, don't take my word for it. Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

[7 : 57] All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. The meaning is simply this, that those who are approved laborers of God have certain characteristics in how they came to lead.

To make this plain and clear, Jesus moves from a third person singular reference to himself and moves into verse 7 saying, first person singular.

If there's any question of who the door is, what the door is, I am the door, he's saying. In saying this, the approved leader would be only able to enter to lead God's people by Jesus Christ.

An imposter would be that of a thief or a robber. They'd simply jump the fence in order to lead God's sheep. What's the intention of a thief and a robber?

[9 : 21] To steal. Why would they steal? What is within the walls of this sheepfold that is so valuable to a robber and a thief?

God's sheep. And why in the world would this even come into his mind? What's so valuable about sheep?

Because this would divide God's people. And that by entering, jumping the fence, they'd be able to take out their own agendas.

Rather than Christ's. The enemy came to steal, kill, and destroy. And in contrast to Jesus' words in verse 10, the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

However, Jesus came to give life. And not only to give life, but to give life abundantly. And the focused attitude of the abundance of a thief is abundance for himself.

[10 : 26] Where the abundance that Jesus is concerned about is the abundance that he shares with those who follow him as sheep.

And you would think that something like this. This is Old Testament history. This is the revelation, progressive revelation at its finest.

You would think that people of the Jewish nation who are infiltrated with Old Testament scripture. They have all these words upon the page.

You would imagine that they would know that the Old Testament is packed full of not approved workers. Kings that are abusive.

Kings that are neglectful. Kings that use their power to make God's people struggle.

[11 : 24] Like the pharaohs of those days. Kings that use their power to make God's people. Kings that use their power to make God's people. And that's what they're willing to do. His power to make God's people. It's not easy. The prophet says something similar to this. As God speaks through the prophet Ezekiel to the king.

The weak you have not strengthened. The sick you have not healed. The injured you have not bound up. The strayed you have not brought back.

The lost you have not sought. And with force and harshness you have ruled them. as history seems to repeat itself church there's nothing new under the sun and here Jesus is confronting a similar pattern of leadership within God's family the pharisees and the scribes who are in it for themselves with such intellectually astute leaders what is so hard to understand in this passage why are they missing it well let's see if Jesus can get through to them in the next part well Jesus continues to explain his parable and now focusing not upon the approved leaders but begins focusing on the fact that Jesus is the source and provision of provision and protection of the flock of God we see that in the second section where Jesus is the sacrificial shepherd and so Jesus goes into the verse three of his parable Jesus expounds upon what he meant in verse three which read to him the gatekeeper opens the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out they didn't understand so Jesus explains in verse 11 what he meant there I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep 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 the he flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep I am the good shepherd 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 now it's kind of difficult I guess at times in our day and age maybe our location and I don't think anybody in here is a sheep farmer um but or maybe on the north side you might hear these terminologies like a sheepfold shepherd like you got those ones kind of good I mean if you know the bible you should you know know know a little bit about that that's a lot that has to do with God's word um but hired hands like what are all these who are all these people and what's this mean I could imagine if you go on Amazon you could probably buy a cheap sheepfold out there which would look like something like a pen where uh where you would keep sheep in this day and age you'd probably have a fence a borderline with a fence and there'd be one way in there would be one way out so this makes a lot of sense when the person not in charge is hopping the fence um obviously they don't belong within the fold it has to go through the gates and just as Jesus began through Jesus Christ to be an approved laborer and now he talks about though talking about the shepherd the guy in charge of the sheep for leading the flock in and out being accountable to the flock and the hired hand he's distinguishing the hired hand is not a person who is responsible for the sheep he's responsible to the shepherd and at the moment a wolf comes in maybe a couple wolves that's a time where the hired hands like peace out it's getting rough I am uh going this way I have a family at home right but the shepherd is the one who lays down his life that fights the wolf that has

unauthorized is unauthorized to enter that sheepfold who is causing destruction and so this is an illusion of how god has even set up his local church we have local churches all around that jesus christ is the chief shepherd and it is full of people in leadership who are under shepherds like that of a shepherd and you have hired hands and obviously hopefully we don't have any wolves in here today um time will tell i'm just kidding but what qualifies a shepherd to be worthy of being followed and led what qualifies it is the reassurance that those being led know that their leader has their best interest in mind the sheep know that and if need be that leader who is overseeing the flock will lay his life down for the sheep and that is known and this is when difficult moments of wolves devouring god's people the shepherd will step in and lay his life down and say yeah based on my credentials i'm gonna i'm just gonna go down the road to the church around the corner they seem a little bit more put together this isn't for me i'm out right you see all this mixed with the local church and that is a similar allusion to what happens within the sheepfold and a good shepherd is one who is known by those they lead not an untouchable person a good shepherd is one who will sacrifice for those who lead lay down their life for and jesus is modeling the attributes of what it means to be an approved leader of god distinguished from those of thievery and robbers and think back to the issues concerning the many minor prophets of the old testament that are rebuking kings and condemning kings for their abusive use of power to make the labor that should be upon the leaders back being that on the backs of god's people in order that he might benefit from their laboring benefit from their toil abusive neglectful uncaring poor leadership think back to that think even fast forward to the new testament with paul he faced the same problem of false teachers in the church in god's church who would manipulate members in order to benefit from their welfare and jesus is making it crystal clear to the jewish people of his day you want a leader he's got to lay his life down for those that he leads to be known by those he leads and jesus is saying i am that good shepherd i am he with such intellectually astute leaders what is so hard to understand about this this should be good news why are they missing it well jesus wraps up his time with explaining himself in this discourse and moving from a distinguished approved leader being the gate then moving to jesus being the good shepherd who has come to lead appropriately as a model

for them and now Jesus indicates the mission of the shepherd and that's to save look in section three of this text Jesus is the voice of salvation Jesus expounds what he meant in verse four and five which he said in the parable when he has brought out all his own he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice a stranger they will not follow but they will flee from him for they do not know the voice of strangers the voice of strangers verse 16 expounds and I have other sheep that are not of this fold I must bring so and they will listen to my voice so there will be one flock one shepherd for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again no one takes it from me I lay down lay it down on 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 Jesus is the fulfillment and the central focus of what God has been doing throughout Israel's history this is directly related to Numbers 27 where Joshua was a typological leader of God that he was a type of Jesus that foreshadowed ahead and in Numbers 27 in verse 15 we see this is what God has been doing Moses spoke to the Lord saying let the Lord the God of the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them who shall lead them out and bring them in that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd and just as Joshua's mission was to be used by God to rescue God's people so it is for Jesus Christ through Jesus Christ God is on mission to rally the people of God inside and out and this hints hints at the mystery that we see all throughout the epistles of the mystery that's been hidden for ages which is not just the Jewish people but soon to be revealed that it was it includes Gentiles to be brought into that fold this has significant implications to the church today but the whole emphasis upon salvation narrative is contingent upon hearing the words of Jesus just as last week is contingent upon seeing Jesus and seeing what he's doing the sad reality is that those who both claim to hear claim to see are the ones in most need of salvation and should be pitied for their ignorance they're unable to comprehend the truth that God has been revealing to the people of God all throughout time these Pharisees scribes Jewish people have such a robust intellectual agreement of who God is but are blind to his mission to restore that which the fall has broken all throughout the pages of scripture overflow with imagery of God being Israel's

[23 : 52] shepherd and Israel being God's sheep and the tragedy refrained again in verse 6 and interluded in verse 19 there was again a division among the Jews because of these words many of them said he has a demon and is insane why listen to him others said these are not words of one who is oppressed by a demon can a demon open the eyes of the blind with such intellectually astute leaders why is it so hard to understand why are they missing it pride is blind pride is deaf pride is unaware pride is self seeking it is self sufficient pride claims the ability to do what God claims no man could ever do pride pride they got one thing kind of right they said these are not words of one who is oppressed by a demon can a demon open the eyes of the blind and yeah a demon can't necessarily do that but a demon sin can blind their eyes the demon can blind the eyes of those who think that they can see and the tragedy of this text is a standalone fact of confusion that surrounds the reality that Jesus is making crystal clear good news what a tragedy that's unfolding here there's one thing that we can learn from a text like this as we kind of stand back and say what do we do with this we can clearly see that see and hear hopefully that God is able to open the eyes of the spiritually blind that God is able to open the ears of the spiritually deaf and that the most compelling arguments that we can articulate to somebody who is not a believer and not in Christ we can articulate the gospel perfectly and they still don't get it we know one thing is clear that God is supremely in control of opening the eyes of the blind spiritually blind and the ears of spiritually deaf how devastating for God to be rejected by folks who claim to belong to him think about that who in turn prove that they are not part of the sheep fold at all because the gospel is not an inherited right as we spoke about being in the family of God in John chapter 8 and Jesus will return and he's coming back and he's coming back for a pure bride full of sheep not goats not hens and surely not wolves he's coming back for a pure bride of sheep now could it be that the

Pharisees who casted out those who belong to Christ the former blind man that this is the very mission that Jesus is unfolding right now because this passage is strategically I believe right before the feast of dedication a time that marked Israel's history in the Maccabean time period of them rededicating the temple driving out that which did not belong in the temple and could it be that the religious leaders the people who think they have it all together cast out those who belong to Jesus well Jesus is casting out those who don't belong to him I think we'll see that next week but there's several things that I think that we can do with a passage like this as we reflect upon it and I think we can be challenged in different ways as well I think that this can check our lives in four different areas the first being a check for leadership of God's flock pastors retired pastors anybody who may be feeling called to ministry are you revealing qualities that are needed to lead

God's flock because you kind of look at the structure and the health of churches around and you see that there seems to be a lot still even in Paul's day in the days of the kings there still seems to be a lot of thieves and robbers in the pulpit and this has so many illusions the sheepfold the shepherd the hired hands the wolves this has so many illusions and attributes of that of that God has placed here within our local church shepherds who care for who know the sheep who are known by the sheep who are approved laborers by God who are in charge of providing you your spiritual needs to feed you to protect you from wolves so if you're a pastor in this room you know what it's like to look at a passage like this and really check your heart and that we should the second aspect that

I believe that we can look and check in this passage is a check for sheep of the shepherd's flock because too often I look around and I might observe in my own or maybe hear things that are going on of churches that have thieves and robbers in the pulpit that are taking advantage that are capitalizing upon their sheep people of God's family for their own welfare this is a call for sheep to look at a passage like this and say I know what kind of leader God intends to lead me I know a leader and the attributes that are required for that leader because a true leader of the flock is not one whose primary concern is gain from your wallet but only gain according to the gospel and that's gain in salvation people coming to know Jesus

Christ regardless of finances this is known as the prosperity gospel and if there's any prosperity gospel that exists out there let it be our prosperity in Christ and the inheritance that lays waiting ahead for us that's untouchable it's unfading it's a treasure waiting ahead for us let's not find prosperity in the things of this world this is going to be a true leader who is caring for you who is nurturing for you and will give his own life to ensure to see that through do not be deceived by manipulation in ministry by thieves and robbers the third check I think can even be for my own life your life life is checking our own lives it makes us question are we following the chief shepherd and better yet we live in a critical world that watches

[32 : 26] Christians like a microscope to call out our hypocrisy they're already against us darkness doesn't like light we know that but does the world know that you belong to Jesus Christ does the world know it we have two roads to travel as Christians we can continue in a road that reflects fruit of the flesh we can choose another road of living in the fruits of the spirit and this is going to be part of sanctification to the day that we come into glory with Jesus Christ Galatians 5 18 talks about that belonging and it says but if you are led by the spirit and through the Trinitarian belief by the spirit by Christ if you're led by the spirit you are not under the law now the works of the flesh are evident sexual immorality impurity which means filthy sinfulness sensuality unrestrained desire idolatry sorcery visions puffed up in in all these magical things enmity division strife jealousy fits of anger rivalries who's better than one another dissensions sowing discord within the body divisions envy drunkenness orgies and things like these

I warn you Paul says as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God fruits of the spirit but the fruit of the spirit he continues is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control against such things there is no law and look at that belonging in verse 24 and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires so as we check our hearts church my heart included if we belong to Christ verse 25 concludes if we live by the spirit let us keep in step with the spirit let us not become conceited provoking one another and envying one another

I promise not to jump on the pulpit today church don't go through life with an intellectual agreement but living in a life that clearly reveals little understanding and let me unpack that for a moment John 10 makes one thing clear that it is tragically possible to live in a way that you have all the biblical knowledge but be void of biblical and spiritual understanding it doesn't matter how much your intellectual capacity may have you could have all the degrees in the world you could have all the bible memorizations coming from a young child but it is only God who is able to make you understand that knowledge understanding what we know has the power of changing our lives in accordance to that which is understood we live in a different way not of the fruits of the flesh but fruits of the spirit and we have assurance not simply in that what we know our assurance is in that which we understand there was a lack of understanding in this passage and John 10 makes it clear that this is a tragic reality for us even today and lastly this is a check for unbelievers if you're not in

Christ God is on mission and while there is clearly a borderline that marks out where the world ends and the church begins God has not casted you out you were born in sin you were born in a tension with God because God being holy and the sin of Adam has created a hostile people that are living from birth in rebellion to God God has not casted you out but what he is calling to do is to bring you in and that way in is through Jesus Christ John 14 6 and Jesus said to them I am the way I am the truth I am the life no one comes to the father except through me and if you're not in Christ today

I can't coerce you to do anything I'm not a thief I'm not a robber I'm a shepherd and I'm going to give you the good news that is good for your soul today and that news is that the gate is open right now the bad news is if you delay that gate is going to shut and Jesus is coming back and at that point it will be too late don't let pride blind you from your need for Jesus submit yourself to him subject your life to him and say Jesus I know I don't know everything but I do understand something right now I need to follow you and Jesus is beckoning you to come this morning pray