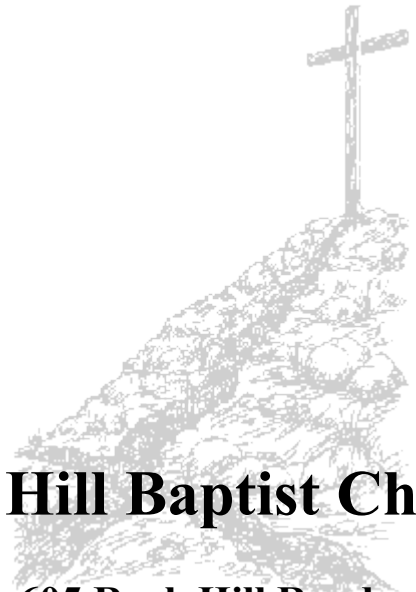


The Shepherd of The Sheep

John 10:1-6



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FOCAL Read Responsively John 10:1-6 KJV Verily, 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.**

When Jesus Christ wanted to teach great truths, many times He spoke in *parables*. Many people believe that Jesus used parables to make His message easier to understand. That was not the case. When Jesus spoke in parables He told great spiritual truths about Himself in everyday language. These truths, however, were often misunderstood, because those who heard them could not understand that Jesus Christ Himself - Who He is - is both the *interpreter* as well as the *interpretation* of the parable.

FOCAL John 10:1 KJV **Verily, 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.

Jesus began His parable with the *double amen* - **verily, verily** - a trademark throughout the Book of John. This

double amen signifies that a great spiritual truth is to be spoken. Let's look at these spiritual truths.

1. Sheep Must Enter The Pasture Through The Door That Is Christ

Of all the scenes that were familiar to the Jew, the *most familiar* was the picture of the shepherd standing watch over his flock. The Jewish people were very used to seeing sheep. Sheep and other clean livestock were big business in Israel.

Sheep were important for food, but more than food these animals were used to worship God under the Mosaic Law.

Illustrate God ordered that - as an illustration of the *Coming Christ*, that every Jew *atone* or *appropriate forgiveness from Him* by the ceremonial killing of sheep. One of the *greatest feasts*, the **Feast of Passover**, required that all of Israel kill sheep to commemorate the time when God saved Israel from the death angel in Egypt. Each Passover (Paschal) lamb was to serve for a "company," which was to consist of not less than ten, nor more than twenty persons¹. So there were *a lot of sheep* in Israel, and every person had seen the sheep, the shepherd, and the fenced in *sheepfold* that each shepherd kept his sheep in. Jesus said:

FOCAL John 10:1 KJV Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that entereth not by the door into**

1 <http://www.sxws.com/charis/passover.htm>

the sheepfold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

In Jesus' parable He emphasized that *the sheep had to enter in through the door*. The Door, or the Gate into the sheepfold or pasture, was wide enough for the sheep to get through, but not so wide that others could sneak in past the Shepherd. The *fence* around the pasture was placed there to protect the Sheep. The *narrow gate* also protected those who were held safely within.

A little further along in this parable Jesus Christ explains that **He alone is the Door of the Sheep**. He says:

FOCAL INTERPRETE John 10:7-8 KJV 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.

Jesus interprets the parable by making Himself to be **the Door of the sheep**. He is the Only Entrance into the sheepfold, the pasture, into the Family of God.

Others may claim to be the Way unto God, but our Lord calls these pretenders to the *Throne of Salvation* **thieves and robbers**. He doesn't call those who try to get into Heaven *apart from Christ* just **thieves**, but He calls them **thieves and robbers**. These are interesting words in the Greek New Testament. The word **thief**² is the Greek

2 G2812 κλέπτης kleptēs *klep'-tace* From G2813; a *stealer* (literally or

word from which we get the English word *kleptomaniac*. A kleptomaniac is someone who steals something from someone, often uncontrollably. The **thief** is the one who steals that which does not belong to him and gets caught. The **robber**³ is someone who sneaks around and tries to take that which does not belong to him, often *by force*. The **robber** is the same as the *highwayman, or the pirate* who - justifying himself by himself - forcibly and harmfully takes from others for his own gain.

When you understand what Jesus Christ our Lord said, you find yourself being *less sympathetic* to those who would try to get into the Family of God and into Heaven *apart* from Christ. Shall God our Savior allow **thieves and robbers** into His Precious Heaven? In the words of C.H. Spurgeon⁴:

"Christ has come that we may have life! If we could have obtained life without His coming, why did He need to come? If life could come to sinners apart from the Cross, why nail the Lord of Glory to the shameful tree? Why Your bleeding wounds, Immanuel, if life could come by some other door? Yet further, why did the Spirit of God descend at Pentecost, and why does He still abide among men if they can be quickened [made alive] without Him? If life is to be obtained apart from the Holy Spirit, to what end does He work in the human heart? The bleeding Savior and the indwelling Spirit are convincing proofs that our life is

figuratively): - thief. Compare G3027. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

3 G3027 ληστής *lēstēs* *lace-tace'* From ληΐζομαι *lēizomai* (to "plunder"); a *brigand*: - robber, thief. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

4 *Life More Abundant*, sermon #1150, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

not from ourselves, but from above!"

This is what Jesus was saying when He told us:

FOCAL INTERPRETE John 10:9 KJV **I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.**

If you **enter into the sheepfold** or *into the Family of God through Jesus* then you are promised salvation. He says, **you shall be saved**, not you *might* be saved. The Shepherd did not just save from the dangers of the world, but the Shepherd also led the sheep to *good pasture*.

The sheep outside of the sheepfold is the prey of any fanged or clawed beast that came nearby. The sheep outside of the sheepfold is liable to find the bite of a snake, or the mauling of a wolf. But once the sheep entered through *the door* it was kept with its family under the watchful eye of the shepherd. The shepherd stood watch at the gate while the sheep **found pasture**, the nourishment of the field.

Jesus Christ is the Door - what then is the Fence or hedge around the Sheep? Though there are some who reject the Biblical teaching of the Trinity of God, I find that

without a Triune God we have no religion at all. Jesus Christ is the Door to the sheepfold, the door to the

Family of God, and the *hedge or fence itself is Eternal God the Spirit.*

We see this illustrated in the account of Job. You all remember Job. He was the righteous man who God placed to the test. When Satan came to test Job he went to God and said:

Job 1:9-10 KJV "Doth Job fear God for nought? {10} Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land."

Give the devil his due, at least in this instant that *father of lies* told no lie. Jesus Christ is the Door to the Sheepfold, and God the Holy Spirit is the *hedge or the fence* around God's own. The thief and robber may try to sneak in to God's Gracious Fields, but *only Family by faith in Christ* dwells there. King David praised the Almighty when he said:

2 Samuel 22:2-4 KJV ... The LORD [is] my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; {3} The God of my rock; in him will I trust: [he is] my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou savest me from violence. {4} I will call on the LORD, [who is] worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved

from mine enemies.

When the Sheep enter through the Door - through Jesus Christ - then they *must* enter into that place of refuge hedged about with God. Once you are saved - entered into the Family of God *by going through that Door which is Jesus* then your every action, your every need, your every suffering, your every pain comes under the direct scrutiny of God.

False Teachers Will Not Use The Door That Is Christ

FOCAL John 10:2-3 KJV **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.**

The **shepherd of the sheep** is the one who enters in by **the Door, by Jesus Christ**. The **shepherd of the sheep** will *always emphasize Jesus Christ as THE Door*. Our Lord Jesus warned us that there would be *many anti-Christ*s who would come and try to lead God's people astray. The shepherd - the God called *under-shepherd* of the flock - will *always* enter in by the Door that is Christ. Our Lord Jesus said in another place:

Matthew 7:13-15 KJV **Enter ye in at the strait gate:** for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because **strait is the gate, and**

narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (15) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

The false prophet and false teacher will always point to *other doors and other gates* to God. They will never point to the *straight and narrow Gate*, that *Door which is Jesus*. The **Porter**⁵, **God the Holy Spirit**, will not bless the false prophet nor the false teacher. The Bible says:

2 Peter 2:1-3 KJV But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

⁵ G2377 θυρωρός thurōros *Thoo-ro-ros'* From G2374 and οὐρός ouros (a *watcher*); a *gate warden*: - that kept the door, porter. Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

False teachers are easy to mark out. They always emphasize *another Door that is not Christ* for salvation. They tell people that the *door of works* will save, or the *door of the Law* will bring into the Family, or even the *door of association* with others who know Jesus as Savior will save. These are not under-shepherds - these are thieves and robbers, wolves in sheep's clothing, attempting to satisfy their greed by making merchandise of you. Avoid these dogs! The under-shepherds of Christ always emphasize Christ in their ministries.

Acts 20:28 KJV Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

If any teach any other Door but Christ as the Way to God, run from them - they are not Christ's under-shepherds - they are thieves and robbers.

2. Christ's Sheep Follow After Kingdom Riches By Following After The Good Shepherd

FOCAL John 10:3-4 KJV **...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.**

Those who belong to Jesus know that - *when they follow Jesus, they follow the greatest of all riches*. Jesus came to bring to His Sheep **abundant life**. We read:

FOCAL INTERPRETE John 10:10 KJV 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.**

This is what the Lord want to give His Family - the **abundant life**. Some people have taken this verse to mean that the Lord promises *prosperity and wealth* to His people.

Now the Lord does give prosperity to whom He will, and He *may* give you monetary prosperity. God gave Abraham wealth, Job wealth, Solomon and David great wealth. They had many *material goods*, but God also has many children who *have no wealth*.

In the Mosaic Law God established the *seven year Sabbath* ..

Exodus 23:11 KJV ... the seventh [year] thou shalt let it rest and lie still; **that the poor of thy people may eat**: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, [and] with thy olive yard.

God did not mandate *physical wealth* to all of His People - else the Sabbatical Year wouldn't have been established. The *poor* were required to give an offering to God, just as the rich gave ..

Exodus 30:15 KJV The rich shall not give more, and the **poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when [they] give an offering unto the LORD**, to make an atonement for your souls.

God often allowed poverty - even among His people - to teach those who had that it was *more blessed to give than to receive* (Leviticus 19:10, 15; 23:22; Deuteronomy 15:11 [the poor shall never cease out of the land]). In Matthew 26:11 Jesus told us "**the poor you will have with you always**". Poverty is in creation, and there will always be those who have less and those who have more. Poverty is not an indication of one's *spirituality* before God. It just *is*, and will always be. That is God's Will. As a matter of fact, Jesus made it clear that riches *often hindered people in their attainment of God*. We read:

Mark 10:21-24 KJV ... Jesus beholding [the Rich Man] loved him, and said unto him, **One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (22) And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (23) And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (24) And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus**

answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

and again,

Matthew 6:19-21 KJV Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (20) But **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

When Jesus spoke of the **abundant life**, He was not speaking of gaining riches in this life. Our Lord Jesus Christ *didn't even carry the purse* for the disciples. Judas Iscariot did that!

When Jesus spoke of the abundant life, He spoke of the **surplus or overflow of Grace**⁶ that is every Christian's birthright. The Sheep of Christ follow after *true riches*.

6 Robertson's Word Pictures, **And may have it abundantly** (kai perisson echōsin). Repetition of echōsin (may keep on having) abundance (perisson, neuter singular of perissos). Xenophon (*Anab.* VII. vi. 31) uses perisson echein, "to have a surplus," true to the meaning of overflow from peri (around) seen in Paul's picture of the overplus (hupereperisseusen in [Rom. 5:20](#)) of grace. Abundance of life and all that sustains life, Jesus gives.

They do not chase money as **thieves and robbers do**, nor do they doggedly pursue after **wages like a hireling**. To do so is to invite disaster. Jesus said:

FOCAL INTERPRETE John 10:11-15 KJV **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. {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.**

In His parable Jesus spoke of **the shepherd of the sheep** who entered in **by the Door**. He then defined **the Door** as Himself, and emphasized that any true Kingdom Shepherd - any true minister of the Gospel - *must* enter in *by that Door which is Christ*. **Donald S. Whitney** in his book *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*⁷ said:

"If anyone makes experience authoritative over the revelation of God in Scripture - run away from him. If anyone adds another book or experience to the Bible making it equal in authority to God's Word - refuse to believe him. If anyone teaches that God can be experienced directly, that is, without the mediation

7 NavPress, page 58

of Jesus Christ and the Bible - don't listen to Him. If anyone says that there are many paths to God, and that Jesus isn't the only Way to Heaven - avoid him."

This is what our Master was teaching. He IS the Door to the Kingdom of God. He IS the Door to the provision of God. He IS the Door to salvation. He IS the Door to Heaven. But Jesus went even farther than that. You see, a Door is a *passive entrance*, an opening that you must step through to go from one place to another. A Door does not follow you, but you get from *point a* to *point b* by going through the Door. There are several doors leading into this Sanctuary, several doors that lead into the Church itself. You can choose any of these doors to get here because each door in this place has equal validity. Yet to enter into God's Family, He has given us only One Door, and that Door is Christ. If you have entered through that One Door which is Jesus you are now Heaven Bound. Only One Door, One Way, One Truth, One Life -- One Jesus, Blessed Be His Holy Name! But Jesus *did not* want His Sheep to believe that His *only function* was to give you access to Heaven. Again, a Door is a Portal, an Opening that allows entrance. Jesus is *much more* than just The Door. He is the **Good Shepherd**. Jesus told us in another place:

Matthew 19:17 KJV .. [there is] none good but one, [that is], God ...

There is, according to our Master, only One Who is Good, and that is God. The Scripture says:

Psalms 53:2-3 KJV God looked down from heaven

upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God. {3} **Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.**

a text which the *inspired Scripture* repeats, in:

Romans 3:10-12 KJV As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. {12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Only God is Good, and He is Good all the time. Jesus Christ called Himself **The Good Shepherd** because He is both God and Man. Mere man could not be good, the Scripture affirms this. Yet He is Good, for He is God. He is the **Good Shepherd**, He is **God our Shepherd**. The Eternal Savior spoke in judgment against those under-shepherds who failed to exalt Him and said through the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 34:9-15 KJV Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; {10} Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I [am] against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver

my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. {11} For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, [even] I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. {12} **As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep [that are] scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.** {13} And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. {14} **I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and [in] a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.** {15} **I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.**

When Jesus called Himself **the Good Shepherd** He emphasized that, as Eternal God, He would watch over all those in His charge. If you have entered into a relationship with God through Him, then you are under His particular care.

He watches you. He knows your needs, your burdens, and moves to supply them. He is the **Good Shepherd** who eternally watches over you. If you would be wise, if you would be cared for, then follow your Shepherd. Walk where He walks, do as He says. Remember that He became your Doorway to God at a terrible price. He deserves your obedience. Further, if you will not obey Him, if you try to Shepherd yourselves, you will soon find that as mere mortals that **there is none good but One, that is God**.

All of our choices apart from Christ are the lesser pasture. If you want good pasture, follow the Good Shepherd. If you have a choice between two paths, follow the path that honors Christ. Ask yourself, *would I do this in front of Jesus? Does my decision honor that Good Shepherd, or does that decision dishonor Him? Can I truly say that Jesus would walk in this place with me, or is this a place of lesser beings and fallen creatures?* Jesus said:

FOCAL INTERPRETE John 10:11-15 KJV **I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.**

He has given His life for you. If you want to have the **abundant life** our Lord promised, you must surrender your life to Him.

Surrender is more than the occasional Church meeting. Surrender is the commitment to follow Him no matter where He leads. We sing that song like a dirge:

**Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,
I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way.**

Though I love that song, I hate the tune - it sounds like a funeral message. It sounds like defeat! When you sing it, dear Church, sing it with victory in your voices! Sing it like overcomers, for He is the Overcomer. Sing it with your heads held high. You are His and He is yours. He will not misuse nor abuse those who trust in Him. He is the Door to Eternal Life. He is the Good Shepherd to the Victorious and Overcoming Life. We overcome only when we follow the Overcomer, Jesus Christ our Savior!

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