



9/22/26

I took a look at A Gospel Primer's 17th reason to rehearse the gospel to ourselves every day. It said that the gospel frees us from the entrapment of self-love. The world teaches self-love as a religion! But this gospel reason tells us that self-love encourages arrogance. The author says the gospel teaches us that God's love is infinitely greater than any love we could have for ourselves. And loving God frees us from the shackles of trying to prove our worth. Pretty cool.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

John 10:7-18

Yesterday, in Psalm 100, I read that "we are His people and the sheep of His pasture." As in so many Old Testament scriptures, I see that this was pointing to Jesus. In John 10, Jesus spoke of being a Good Shepherd. There's a reason why we can "make a joyful noise to the Lord." He leads us with love.

I remember Tim saying in a message years ago something like, "Jesus is not a cowboy, pushing us from behind and using whips to keep us in line. He's a shepherd, calling us with His own special call and loving us so well that we follow Him." I pray the Lord will continue to open my heart to being a willing sheep who understands why He's so worth following. To follow Him as a Good Shepherd is to yes, admit I need His mercy and yes, to believe that He did lay down His life for me and rise again... but more importantly, to follow my Good Shepherd is to confess that He IS my Lord. That's true salvation.

Right before this passage, Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees... I'm sure they did not appreciate what He had to say about them being sheep. They knew... sheep are dumb. Pride blinded them to their need for a Good Shepherd. Vs. 6 says of their understanding, "This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them." I think they didn't understand because they didn't want to understand. I pray that pride will never again blind me.

Vs. 7-10 ~ "So Jesus again said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 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.'"

Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep." In vs. 3, He said the gatekeeper only opens the door of the pasture to his sheep. I think this is saying that the Father is the gatekeeper. Jesus is both the shepherd and the door. What does this look like? He said in John 14:6, "I am the way (the door), the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father (the gatekeeper) but by Me."

I've heard someone say that people contend that Christianity is exclusive because Jesus said He's the only way and a loving God wouldn't do that. The speaker said, "If I invite you to my house and I tell you that there's only one way to get there, and you say you don't want to take my directions and you want to follow your own, you can do that... but you won't ever get to my house... Jesus is not being exclusive, He's being specific." That's love. He actually WANTS us to get there, so He gives us specific directions. And according to this passage in John, He also leads us there if we'll let Him.

Jesus said there are lots of thieves and robbers who try to tell us there's another way. But don't listen to them. If we will listen to Jesus, our Shepherd and door, we will enter His pasture and be saved... from wolves, thieves, and robbers.

The motives of the thieves, wolves, and robbers are simply to steal, kill, and destroy. Don't be deceived. They may dangle carrots (or chocolate) to draw us in, but it's a trap.

Jesus told us His motive. He said, "I came that the sheep may have life, and have it abundantly." The Greek word for life is "zoe", and it means both physical and spiritual life from above... eternal life with our Shepherd. He wants it to be superabundant, beyond expectation. Our God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20). The question is, do I believe this? The more I believe it, the more I'll follow Him.

Vs. 11-15 ~ "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the 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. 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."

Jesus compared Himself to a hired hand. As the Good Shepherd, He was willing to die for His sheep. A hired hand is only willing to take care of them as long as there's no trouble. A hired hand will put his own life as priority over the sheep. He'll say, "This is above my pay grade."

But Jesus calls me "His own." I may be a dumb sheep, but I'm HIS dumb sheep. He cares for

me and knows me in the same way the Father knows Him. Wow. How well does the Father know Jesus? They're ONE, so unified in mind and action that they never veer away from each other in any area of life. He says I can know Him like that, just as He knows me.

I can see here that Jesus is in it for the long game. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." We're gonna enter an eternal pasture where we will know the Lord as fully as He knows us. The Shepherd lays down His life for us in order to make that happen.

O Lord, let me never confuse You for a hired hand!!! In the hard circumstances of my life, You never leave. You stay in it with me. You lead me so that I can find refuge. You help me endure the storms no matter how bad they are. Your word says in Isaiah 30:21 that You speak to me and say, "This is the way. Walk in it," when I turn to the right or to the left. Isaiah 42:16 says of You, "And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them." You are my Good Shepherd who both leads me beside still waters and through the valley of the shadow of death, as it says in Psalm 23. Praise Your name! I KNOW this applies to me because of what Jesus said next...

Vs. 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."

That's me!!! I am not a sheep of Jewish descent, but the Lord has room for me in His pasture! He speaks to my heart and I get to hear His word! I know from Ephesians 1 and other passages that the Lord speaks to me as the Holy Spirit works in my heart and mind, using the word of God, the sword of the SPIRIT, to speak to my soul. Praise You, Lord, for making room for me!!! Praise You that when I enter Your eternal pasture, there won't be a section for the Jewish believers that's better than the sedition for the Gentile believers. We will ALL be one with You, ALL at home with You, ALL free to delight in You. There is no second place at the foot of the cross.

Vs. 17-18 ~ "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, 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 know from John 17:24 that the Father loved Jesus "before the foundation of the world." So, this does not mean that the Father only loves Jesus for laying down His life. But I see from the original Greek transliteration that the Father loves how Jesus chose to lay down His life for us, THAT He may take it up again.

Why is this such a big deal? The Father did not FORCE Jesus into sacrificing His life for us. Jesus chose to do it. He had the authority both to lay down His life and to take it up again. The Father gave Him instruction to do it, but Jesus made the choice to do it.

This is the same call He has on my life. This goes back to the statement that Jesus is not a cowboy, but a shepherd. The commands from scripture are commands, but the choice to obey is mine. Jesus said in John 15:10 that obedience to His commands is the evidence of my love for Him, just as the evidence of Jesus' love for the Father (and me) was obedience to His commands.

Jesus obeyed in humility to the point of death on the cross, because He considered it a joy to endure the cross for my salvation and the Father's glory. And now He's seated at His right hand on the throne (Philippians 2:8 ,Hebrews 12:2).

O Lord, You are my Good Shepherd and the door that leads me to safe pasture. The very fact that You shared this even with the Pharisees who hated You is proof that You want us to find safe pasture in You. Please help me, in all circumstances, to KNOW in my heart and mind and soul that You are with me at all times, leading me to safe pasture whether it's in valleys or on mountains, on sunny days or through the worst storms. I'm a dumb sheep, but not so dumb that I can't hear Your voice calling to me. O Lord, as Amy Carmichael wrote over a hundred years ago, this is my prayer... Let me be "dead to all my natural earthly plans and hopes, dead to all voices, however dear, which would deafen my ear to Your voice."