



Groups



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE
for the Sermon given on February 26, 2023
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson
I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD - John 10:1-15

Question: Who was Jesus?

Bottom Line: Because Jesus is The Good Shepherd, we can trust him with our whole life, and with the life to come.

As we enter the season of Lent, we begin a new series called, “**I Am**”. For the next 8 weeks we are going to be considering the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John. I am ... The Bread of Life, The Light of the World, The Gate, The Door, The Good Shepherd, The Way, the Truth and the Life, The Vine, The Resurrection and the Life.

Let’s begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Reading: John 10:1-15

10 “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.^[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Jesus identified himself as The Good Shepherd, which is a rich familiar image from the Hebrew Scriptures. Pastor Bryan identified that a good shepherd does at least three things for the flock.

A good shepherd **guides**.

A good shepherd **provides**.

A good shepherd **protects**.

Choose one of the two questions below to share with the group.

- Which out of the three statements speak strongly to you in your current circumstance?
- Which out of the three statements is challenging to believe and apply in your life?

2. Sheep have learned to recognize the voice of their shepherd. Pastor Bryan shared how he felt a prompting to visit his mother just days after she entered hospice care, unexpectedly being with her in her last moments.

Remember a time you experienced the guidance of the Holy Spirit. How did that experience affect your understanding of who Jesus is? What has helped you to hear and obey His Voice?

3. Sometimes what sheep want is not good for them. The good shepherd provides what sheep need, but not always what they want, because the good shepherd wants the sheep to thrive (John 10:10)

What are the barriers preventing people (sheep) from trusting in the provision of the Good Shepherd? What prevents us from believing Jesus wants His people to live life to the full? How can we support one another to overcome these barriers?

4. The Lord never promises that bad things won't happen to us. In fact, he pretty much promises the opposite – that in this world we will have trouble. What he does promise is that bad things can't get to us. They can't destroy our faith, separate us from his love, thwart His good purpose or rob us of the abundant and eternal life.

How do you feel as you reflect on God's protection? If you feel led to, take a moment as a group to thank the Good Shepherd for protecting each member to be able to come together.

5. Pastor Bryan concludes his message with the following statement: "Because Jesus is the Good Shepherd, we can trust Him with our whole lives, and with the life to come."

What do you need today? **Guidance** for some difficult season or decision? **Provision** for some material or spiritual need? **Protection** from some evil that's threatening your life or your faith? Share this with your group and then lift them to the Lord in prayer.

Take Home Message:

The better we understand who Jesus is, why he came, and what his life was about, the better we understand who we are, why we're here, and what our own lives are about.

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Let's Pray

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

Teaching Points:

- A good shepherd *guides*: through Scripture, our own reason, the counsel of friends, changing circumstances, and by His Spirit
- A good shepherd *provides*
- A good shepherd *protects*
- Whatever you are going through, listen for the voice of your shepherd today. And when you hear it turn to him and follow him. Because He's come that you might have life, and have it to the full.

For Further Biblical Study:

Genesis 49:24-25

because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,
 because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
²⁵ because of your father's God, who helps you,
 because of the Almighty,^[m] who blesses you
 with blessings of the skies above,
 blessings of the deep springs below,
 blessings of the breast and womb.

Psalms 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
 for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk
 through the darkest valley,^[a]
 I will fear no evil,
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.

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

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
 forever.

Isaiah 40:11

He tends his flock like a shepherd:
 He gathers the lambs in his arms
 and carries them close to his heart;
 he gently leads those that have young.

Psalms 16:11

You make known to me the path of life;
 you will fill me with joy in your presence,
 with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

John 16:33

³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.