

Our 40 Day Journey to the Cross

Day 1 Wednesday, February 22

“Jesus, the True Shepherd”

Please Read John 10:1-6

John 10:1-2

1 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

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

Political and spiritual leaders were often called shepherds in the ancient world. Jesus explained that not everyone among the sheep is a true shepherd; some are like thieves and robbers. One mark of them being a thief and a robber is how they gain entry among the sheep.

In the Old Testament God describes shepherds who have not cared for the flock but only for themselves.

Isaiah 56:11 NKJV

“Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.”

Ezekiel 34:1-10 NKJV

1 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, **2** “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”

3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock.

4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.

5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

7 “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

8 “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock” —

9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord!

10 Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.”

A) Jesus teaches that there is a door, a proper way to gain entry. Not everyone who stands among the sheep comes that way. Some climb up some other way.

B) Many religious leaders gained their place among God’s people (the sheep spoken of here) through various methods – through personal and political connections, through formal education, through nepotism (family connections), through ambition, manipulation, and corruption.

C) A true shepherd comes in the legitimate way, designed by God: **through love, calling, care, and sacrificial service**. God always intended that His people be **led, fed, and protected** by those who come in the legitimate, intended way. The door is there for a reason. Some will always climb over the barriers, but God has the barriers and the door there for a reason.

D) Jesus Christ is the doorkeeper and he is also the very door itself. Shepherds and sheep alike must enter the same door.

John 10:3

“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”

E) The shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out: The shepherd calls the sheep by name, showing that the shepherd has a personal connection with the sheep. The shepherd leads them, providing direction and leadership – without driving or demanding the sheep.

F) “In the Gospels, Jesus calls the following ‘sheep’ by name, Philip, Mary of Magdala, Thomas, and Simon Peter; and on each occasion it is a turning-point in the disciple’s life.”

G) For they know his voice: In the common sheepfolds of ancient times, the shepherd merely gave his distinctive call and his sheep came out from the others, following him out of the sheepfold. Sheep are experts at discerning their shepherd’s voice.

“There is a story of a Scotch traveller who changed clothes with a Jerusalem shepherd and tried to lead the sheep: but the sheep followed the shepherds voice and not his clothes.” **Conclusion**

During the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic followers of Christ have had their way of corporate worship altered dramatically. Social distancing had kept the faithful from gathering and assembling together to worship God and engage in christian fellowship. That caused many of the “weak” among us (1 Thessalonians 5:14) to become easy prey for every pop up ministry and false shepherds that seek to devour straying and lost sheep. Jesus cares that all who follow him would have an appointed earthly shepherd to care for his sheep.

Exercise:

Is there someone you know that has a relationship with Jesus Christ but right now they are without a pastor?

Pray to God the Father through His son Jesus Christ and ask the Lord to give them a pastor that will feed and care for them.