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“I AM the Good Shepherd”

John 10:11-16

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When Jesus speaks of himself as the “I AM,” he is identifying himself with God’s revelation of himself to Moses in Exodus 3. The fourth “I am” statement Jesus makes is in John 10:11-16 where he identifies himself as the Good Shepherd.

John 10:11 *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

John 10:14 *“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”*

The people of Jesus’ day would have clearly understood this illustration. Jesus uses this metaphor to express his relationship to us. He is the shepherd and we are the sheep. In the Bible, there are about 400 references to sheep and about 100 references to shepherds. It is important to note that sheep are often mentioned in a bad light in the Bible. Sheep are helpless, senseless, directionless, and timid! They have no way to defend themselves or escape predators. Sheep are completely dependent on a shepherd for their very survival.

Dr. Bob Smith said, “The existence of sheep is evidence against the theory of evolution. There is no way sheep could have survived that process!”

There is no way sheep could survive without the loving care of the shepherd. The only time that sheep are placed in a favorable light in the Bible is when they come under the loving care of a devoted shepherd.

As Christians, we have to understand that sheep are a picture of all of us. The Bible often uses sheep to depict humanity.

Isaiah 53:6 *“All we like sheep have gone astray...”*

Psalms 23:1 *“The Lord is my shepherd...”*

Like sheep, we need a good shepherd. We also need attention, care and the devotion of a loving savior. Jesus is not just a good shepherd, but he is the ultimate, singular good shepherd. The one flock of Jesus Christ is comprised of smaller flocks that are individual

church congregations. Pastors have a role as under-shepherds of Jesus, the chief, Good Shepherd.

What Makes Jesus the Good Shepherd?

1. He is Sacrificial (John 10:11)

Jesus was willing to give his life for the sheep. A good shepherd stands in the way of harm to protect his sheep. They are willing to risk their lives to stand against predators, thieves, robbers, or those who wish to harm the flock. A good shepherd was willing to lose his life in order that the sheep might keep theirs. The supreme sacrifice that anyone could make is to give their life that someone else might have life. This is exactly what Jesus did for us when he went to the cross. Jesus willingly gave his life for his flock. Jesus took on our sin (though he himself was sinless) that we might take on his righteousness!

2. He is Loving (John 10:11)

John 15:13 *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”*

Jesus demonstrated his great love for the flock by laying down his life! This is evidence of his love.

Romans 5:8 *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

There are a lot of people who struggle with accepting the love of God. This can be due to the shame of past sin or individuals telling themselves that there is no way God could love them. The reality is that God loves us in spite of our sinful state! The enemy also plays games with our thoughts to make us feel like God does not love us. The reality is there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus!

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

The Bible is the story of God’s generous gift to undeserving mankind. No one is good enough to earn it. It is a free gift for all who receive.

3. He is Caring (John 10:12-13)

Jesus distinguishes between a good shepherd and a hireling. A hireling is just someone who is paid to do a job. A good shepherd has a vested interest and calling to care for the sheep. A hireling will run at the first sign of danger, but a good shepherd will fight.

Jesus doesn’t love us because he has to; he cares about us because he wants to! He cares about every single need the sheep have. There is no need you have that is too great for God.

4. He is Personal ([John 10:14](#))

Jesus knows every one of his sheep. He is a personal shepherd. God is not a distant God far removed from humanity; rather, he is a personal, knowable God. God is knowable because God is personal. The question every human must answer is, "Do you know Jesus?" Every individual can have a personal relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Jesus died on the cross for us because he wants to have a personal relationship with every one of us.

You can have a personal relationship with Jesus by simple accepting the free gift of salvation that he offers to all who believe.

Discussion Questions

1. Read the Seven "I AM" statements.
2. Read Psalm 23 and share stories of how Jesus has been the Good Shepherd in your life.
3. How do you share the love of God with some who feels unlovable or like the shame of their past sins excludes them from the love of God?
4. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)