

## John 10:11-18

### Sermon 25<sup>th</sup> April online and live @ SE.

John 10:11-18

11 'I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd **lays down his life for the sheep**. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. **And I lay down my life for the sheep**. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

---

This scripture follows on from the scripture which often steers my life and helps guide my steps and that is John 10: 10

***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.***

When I don't see 'life' in my life, I take it to the Lord and ask what is going on?

It may be that I'm not at peace, or not experiencing life in my relationships, or friendships, my work or health. If Jesus says that I should have life and in abundance, then it's important that we find out why I am not experiencing it. That's doesn't mean I don't have issues or problems but that I am not on the whole experiencing the life Jesus died to give me.

How do we find out why we don't have that life? Maybe this scripture gives us a clue. Maybe it's when we look at Jesus as the good shepherd and work out what that actually means that we may be led into that fullness of life?

You might ask well how do we know Jesus is really interested in our lives? Isn't he just a remote God who is watching from some far-off universe and hoping we make the right moves and then getting exasperated when we go wrong?

I don't think that is an accurate picture of who God is and its in the passage of scripture we have just read that we can know what kind of God we serve.

Let's explore further what the character of God is like so that we can be reassured that he is interested in us.

The passage describes Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Kalos, the Greek word, translated “good,” describes that which is noble, wholesome, good, and beautiful. This is the character of God, and He alone is good.

When Karl Barth was asked what the greatest truth, he had learnt about God in all the years of studying the bible he said this:

***God is good this I know because the bible tells me so.***

Every page of the bible shows the character of God. Even when people believe he is angry and distant, when we read and study the bigger picture and see what is going on we will discover that God is good all the time.

He is not an angry God or a distance God he is a good God.

1 John 4:8 tells us God is love – not a touchy feel love but completely love.

He is always drawing us back to himself regardless of how far we have gone from him.

The Old Testament is as much a love story as the new. His people who he had set apart continually went in the wrong direction, they were rebellious, stiff necked (Deuteronomy 31:27 and God often handed them over to the enemy in order that they would realise what good and evil were, however much like today we choose to call good evil and evil good. (Isaiah 5:20) Its human nature to desire things which often are not good for us.

The book of Hosea is hard reading. God asks Hosea to marry a prostitute as a prophetic sign to what the Israelite people have done to him. How they sell themselves for money to those who don't care about them. How they don't realise how good God is and would rather be ill treat than to live in obedience to a good God.

*Hosea 3:1 The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”*

Then there's a beautiful but if scripture in Hosea 2 which says this:

*“Therefore I am now going to allure her;  
I will lead her into the wilderness  
and speak tenderly to her.*

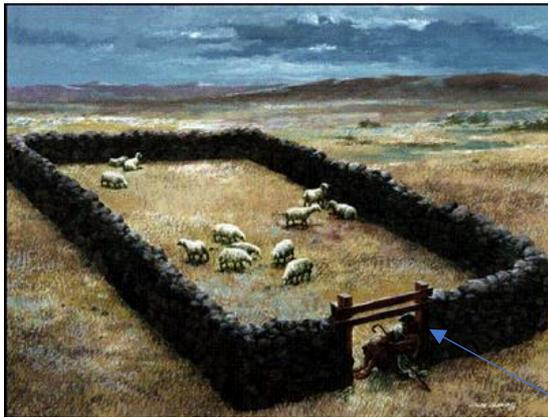
*<sup>15</sup> There I will give her back her vineyards,  
and will make the Valley of Achor<sup>[b]</sup> a door of hope.  
There she will respond<sup>[c]</sup> as in the days of her youth,  
as in the day she came up out of Egypt.*

Unfortunately, if you read the story to its completion Hosea's wife continues to be unfaithful- again a picture of Israel's rebellion (and ours!) and the story ends with the Israelite people still seeking after things that don't bring life.

So firstly, the Shepherd – Jesus - is Good and is Love

**2ndly He is a protector** – he lays down his life for his sheep.

It has been suggested that in the times when Jesus walked the earth Shepherds used to literally lie down in front of the sheep pen to stop predators stealing the sheep.



This is still done in present day Turkey. you can see by this picture that the shepherd is lying down and there is no proper gate the shepherd is both.

This tells us so so much about Jesus. Not only is he good but he is also our protector. He wants us to feel safe and cared for. He has done this by literally laying down his life.

Verse 12 is linked in a way to the beginning of John 10: 10 when it says the enemy comes to steal kill and destroy.

However, Jesus loved us so much and wants us to live life to the full that he gave his own life up so we could be in a relationship with him. He doesn't just give empty promises he gives us everything we need to live a life of fullness.

Verse 16 is key for you listening if you don't yet believe in this God I'm talking about:

*I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

This passage is not just reassuring for those who are already in the fold. But it's for you if you feel way off the fold.

Maybe you are a sheep that has got a little lost over the years and wandered away from God. Maybe you just slowly moved along from one blade of grass to another and then

another and before long you couldn't find the shepherd any longer. Or maybe you grew up never knowing you had a loving God who wants you in his fold?

A loving protector God who wants to bring your life and life to the full?

Well, if that is you, please do get in touch or come along to do the course Christianity Explored which I am beginning on Tuesday.

Don't ever feel that you have gone off too far or have just got to live a life of feeling a little lost. Come home today.

The story of the prodigal son is such an amazing story. The father never stopped looking for the son regardless of how long he was away. He is looking out for us today regardless of how far we may feel or have gone from him.

Why not welcome the good protective shepherd to come and reveal himself to you afresh today.

Let's pray.