

Lunchtime Service - I am the Good Shepherd

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Date: 22 September 2026

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[0:00] Amen. So we are continuing our series in the seven I am statements in John's gospel. We're looking at who Jesus says he is. And so do you remember if you want to know who someone is, the best way to find out is for them to sit you down and they tell you who they are. It's no good just guessing, no good just hearing rumors. They've got to tell you, they've got to open up.

Well in these statements Jesus is opening up his own identity and revealing to us who he really is and what he has come to earth to do. And today we come to maybe the most well-known of these statements, maybe some of the most well-known words Jesus ever spoke and it's there in verse 11. Who does Jesus say he is? I am the good shepherd. And just in this statement Jesus is describing something important. He's describing his relationship to his people. The relationship between Christ and the Christian. Between the saviour and his church.

We are his sheep and he is the good shepherd. And so in these words Jesus is telling us what he is like as a saviour.

What he's come to do. Who he is in your life right now. And in all of that Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. And so we need to appreciate the picture that he's using here.

[1:39] In those days shepherding was tough. It was tiring. It was serious work. It was often a dangerous job. There was no GPS tracking, no cameras, no quad bikes.

Being a shepherd it meant being in the wilderness with the sheep, leading them, feeding them, protecting them. And sometimes that meant fighting off predators. Without the shepherds, the sheep would die.

And so the shepherd would be out there as their lifeline. And so that is the picture Jesus wants us to have at our heads here. He is the shepherd who leads, feeds, protects, knows, and is near his sheep.

But notice he's unlike any other shepherd. He is the good shepherd. And so in a sense we all have shepherds in our lives.

People or things that we can follow. Things that we treat as a lifeline. Or something to guide us or protect us. Or something that we are just following that we think will bring us fulfilment or life.

[2:52] For those things, they can disappoint. Or guide us in the wrong way. Or just let us down. But here Jesus is saying he's not just another shepherd.

Or another option to follow in your life. No, he is the good shepherd. The worthy shepherd. The one you can trust and follow.

And he will shepherd you perfectly. And so if you are here today and you feel lost or weak or vulnerable. Here is the shepherd we all need.

And in this passage, Jesus is telling us who he is. And why he is a shepherd unlike any other. Why he's the good shepherd. And it's for two reasons. Because the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

And because the good shepherd knows his sheep. And those are the two things I want us to see today. Two things about the good shepherd. Why he's so good. But first of all this.

[3:54] The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus straight away tells us why he's so good. Verse 11. I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. So just think of the opposite there. What would a bad shepherd do? He would neglect the sheep, wouldn't he?

He wouldn't care about their welfare. Or who they are. Or how many he has. He would just leave them vulnerable. In the dark. And the bad shepherd would run at the first sign of danger.

That's the picture Jesus paints in verse 12. A hired hand. A shepherd from the temp agency. He just sees a wolf and runs. He stays safe himself.

But let's the sheep just get torn apart. But Jesus says. A good shepherd lays down his life. A good shepherd is willing to step up and defend the sheep.

[4:57] Face that wolf. Even if it costs him his life. And that is Jesus. But there's something even greater about Jesus here.

Jesus is saying here. Yes he's the good shepherd. But he's not only just willing to lay down his life. He's intending to lay down his life.

He is the good shepherd. Because. He has come. To lay down his life for the sheep. And so this is sacrifice language.

Jesus is using here. When Jesus says. The good shepherd lays down his life. For the sheep. The word for. It means. On behalf of the sheep.

Instead of the sheep. His very mission. His central task. As shepherd. Is to die. In place of the sheep.

[5:55] And so in these words. Jesus is revealing to us. Who he is. And what he intends to do on the cross. The death of Christ.

It wasn't an accident. It wasn't an unfortunate moment in history. It didn't catch Jesus off guard. No. It was intended by Jesus.

Did you see that in verse 18? 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.

The crucifixion of the son of God. Was a planned and intentional sacrifice. By a shepherd. At Calvary.

On that cross. That death was the good shepherd. Laying down his life for the sheep. Which means. For the church.

[6:52] For the Christian. On the cross. Jesus was there. Being our shepherd. Leading and protecting.

And providing for us. In the greatest way possible. That deadly predator. That deadly predator. Predator of sin. That animal. Crouching at our door.

Which could so easily. Tear us apart. The Lord Jesus. On the cross. Had that beast. Set on him. And the good shepherd. Was torn apart for us.

The darkness. Of God's wrath. That should so rightly. Devour the sheep. On the cross. The Lord Jesus. Stood in front of his flock. Laid down his life.

And took it all. When we were most weak. And vulnerable. And helpless. And totally undeserving. Wandering sheep.

[7:50] Running from the shepherd. Our shepherd. Stepped up. And provided for our greatest need. And so for those of us. Who are his sheep. We need to know.

He is not your reluctant shepherd. Who just grits his teeth. And puts up with us. No. He is. The good shepherd. Who willingly.

Laid down his life for you. So notice what this means. To be under the care. Of the good shepherd. It means.

He has laid down. His life for you. That is how. He shepherds his sheep. You can't have this shepherd. Without his death.

And so we need to ask. Ask ourselves. Is this your shepherd? Can you say. Before God. This man laid down.

[8:49] His life for me. Because you may not realize it. But there is a danger. A severe danger. In this world. And up against the beast of sin.

We are very. Very vulnerable sheep. So we have a great need. It is the greatest need. Of your life. We. Desperately need. A shepherd.

And in Christ. Praise God. There is a good shepherd. The exact one you need. Who lays down his life. For the sheep. He is so good.

Because he is the shepherd. Who saves. And if you are one of his sheep. Jesus. Is still your shepherd. Every day.

And if he provided. For your greatest need. On the cross. He. He will surely keep. Providing for you. Whatever you are going through.

[9:45] Right now. Whatever worry. Ways on you. Whatever grief. Is burdening you. Whatever strength. Strength that you need. The good shepherd. Is still.

There for you. Still determined. To protect you. And save you. And he is always. Always near you. He knows you.

And that is also. Why he is so good. Not only because. He laid down his life. But also because. He knows. His sheep. And this is the.

Second and final thing. I want us to see. The good shepherd. Knows his sheep. Look at these wonderful words. In verse 14. I am the good shepherd. I know my own.

And my own know me. That is an incredible thing. To believe. Isn't it? Jesus. Knows me. In fact.

[10:42] Look how well. He knows you. Verse 15. Just as the father. Knows me. And I know the father. As much.

As the father. Knows the son. That is how well. Our good shepherd. Knows us. It is this astonishing. Intimate. All encompassing. Knowledge. When you are. The good shepherd. Sheep. Jesus knows. Everything about you. He knows your name.

He knows your life. He knows your hopes. And your fears. Your past. Your present. Your future. He knows what troubles you. Right now.

He knows what is weighing. On your mind. He knows what you long. To be different. In your life. He knows what you hope. Will stay the same. He is not a shepherd.

[11:39] Far away. He is the shepherd. Always with you. And so as you slowly walk. Into the week ahead. And the events ahead. You go.

With a shepherd. Who knows you. Inside out. And he is guiding you. All the way. Through whatever you go through. Remember Psalm 23.

Even through the valley. Of the shadow of death. And you can be doubly sure of that. Because. You have heard the shepherd call you. Look at verse 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. He is talking about the Gentiles here.

Non-Jews. Which is. Most of us. If not all of us. Through his gospel. Jesus is gathering his sheep. Around this world. So just like that farmer.

[12:39] That Chris mentioned last week. The farmer that shouts. And all his sheep. Kind of lift up their heads. They hear his voice. Well Jesus is calling.

In the gospel. And for those in Christ. We have lifted up our heads. He has called us. Brought us into the flock. Under his care. And so your faith.

And your life. And your obedience. No matter how fragile it is. That is the sheep. Hearing the shepherd's voice. And so if you know the shepherd.

He knows you. And everything about you. So again. What we need to ask ourselves. Do you know the shepherd?

Have you heard his voice? Because he's here. In his gospel. Calling. And to come under his care.

[13:38] It is very simple. Just like a sheep. You just need to hear. And trust. And follow. You might be following.

You might be following other shepherds. In your life right now. Trying to find. Protection. Or guidance. Or something. To fight the loneliness. Or the pain. We all inevitably.

Follow something. In our lives. Whether we call it. A shepherd or not. But Jesus is saying.

Ultimately. That those things aren't good. It can't.

Know you. And love you. And protect you. Like Jesus can. And so Jesus is saying. Stop following those things. And hear his voice. He's calling now.

I am the good shepherd. And when you follow him. You can have the great comfort. Of saying. He laid his life down for me. And he knows me.

[14:37] And this is the comfort. Jesus is giving us here. He's giving us. The great assurance. Of the cross. Because think about it. If the shepherd. Lays down his life.

For the sheep. And he knows. Those sheep. Then Christ. Didn't just die. Generally. For anonymous. Sinners. In a vague way.

Or just merely. Making it possible. For unknown sheep. To be saved. No. The cross. Is the good shepherd. Laying down his life. For his sheep.

That he knows. The father. Has given him. A specific flock. Sheep that he knows. And he dies. For that flock. Which is important to know.

And a great comfort. Because as his sheep. We can be very sure. That he died. For me. And for all my sins.

[15 : 36] Past. Present. And future. The sins. That we commit. Are never a surprise. Or a shock. To Jesus. And there is nothing. Too bad.

That he cannot forgive. He will never say. Oh no. No. That's too much. Because when we belong. To him. We can be sure. My shepherd. Has already gone.

To the cross. For that sin. He's already laid down. His life. For me. The fact. That he knows his sheep. This makes him.

The perfect saviour. This makes him. The good shepherd. In this world. It is very easy. To feel scared.

Or alone. Or overwhelmed. By the weight of sin. Or just lost. And we don't know where to go in life. But Jesus speaks.

[16 : 29] To this lost world. And says you don't need to fear anymore. Just hear my voice. Hear who I am. I am the good shepherd. And the good shepherd.

Lays down his life. For the sheep. Let's pray. Lord God.

We thank you so much. For our Lord and saviour. Our good shepherd. Jesus Christ. We thank you. That we don't need to be alone. In this world. We don't need to.

Walk through our lives. In fear. That we have a shepherd. Who is with us. Who protects us. Who never lets us down. And one who has laid down.

His life for us already. We thank you. That in him. All our sins. Are forgiven. So Lord. As we go out today. As we go out. Into this week. We pray that we would.

[17 : 27] Just have great comfort. And assurance. Knowing that. Jesus is the good shepherd. And he is with us. Right now. And in his name we pray. Amen.