



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 10:1-10: The Lord Is Both the Shepherd and the Door of the Sheep

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*"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. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me<sup>[a]</sup> are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

#### Background Notes

At the end of John 9, the Lord rebuked the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness, and now at the beginning of chapter 10 He began to speak about sheep and shepherds. What is the connection? Remember, in the original manuscripts there were no chapter and verse divisions. When John wrote his Gospel he went directly on from John 9:41 into John 10 – no chapter and verse divisions. The text was continuous. So what is the connection between the rebuke of the Pharisees, and now the talk about the sheep and the shepherds? The connection is that the Pharisees fell into the category of "false shepherds" – the thieves and the robbers to whom the Lord referred in verses 1, 8 and 10! The Lord was the **true** Shepherd. The false shepherds led the people astray.

In verse 6 we learn that the Lord was using figurative language: *"Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them."* The Lord was using figurative language. Some translations use the word "parable," but I've already mentioned that there are no parables in the Gospel of John. What is the deal here? Well, the Greek word used here is not the word that would normally be used for "parable." It would be better translated as "illustration" or "figurative discourse." This passage certainly uses parabolic language, but it's not the same as the parables of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), where the parables are usually introduced by the words "and He told them this parable," as, for example, the parable of the sower in Luke 8. So probably the best way to translate this would be a "figurative discourse" on the sheep and the shepherd.

Now to appreciate the details of this figurative discourse, we need to know how a shepherd led his sheep in the first century. A sheepfold was a large walled enclosure made of stone, usually with no roof. Several flocks of sheep would be kept in these sheepfolds, and when a "legitimate shepherd" came to get his flock, the doorkeeper, or watchman of the fold, would let the shepherd pass into the fold. The shepherd would

then call his sheep, and the sheep would know the voice of their shepherd, their true shepherd. The legitimate shepherd would then lead his flock out to pasture. Sometimes the shepherd and his sheep would stay away from his sheepfold overnight, and the shepherd would be out all night in the pasture with his flock. At those times, the shepherd would find some kind of sheltered place in or near the pasture, gather the sheep into the sheltered spot, and the shepherd himself would act as the door. He would sleep right across the doorway so no wild animal or thief could get at the sheep without first encountering the shepherd. That background is important for understanding what's going on in this figurative discourse.

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

### **1. Christ is the Shepherd of the Sheep.**

In this figurative discourse it is easy to see that Christ is the true Shepherd. Now what about the sheepfold, the door, and the doorkeeper? I believe these also have meaning in this figurative discourse. The sheepfold represents the nation of Israel under the Mosaic Law. The Law was good; God gave it to protect His people. The door into the sheepfold represents the way for the Messiah to enter, for the true shepherd to come. That way of entry would be right in line with the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures -- not the way some of the false "messiahs" had come, and certainly not the unscriptural ways the Pharisees wanted the Messiah to come.

The doorkeeper may represent John the Baptist, who by the Holy Spirit prepared the way for the Messiah. John the Baptist opened the door of the sheepfold when he announced to the nation of Israel that the **true** King, the **true** Shepherd had arrived.

With the arrival of the true Shepherd, the true sheep responded to his voice. These true sheep were the disciples and the other true believers in the nation of Israel, such as Nicodemus and the blind man of John 9. But not all in Israel were true sheep -- certainly not the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. The purpose of Christ, the true Shepherd, was to lead His true sheep out of the sheepfold -- out from Judaism, out from under the Mosaic Law, because the Law is not the way of salvation! It's not that the Law was bad, and in no way were the moral principles of the Law thrown out -- but Christ is "the end of the Law." Romans 10:4 tells us, "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*" The Law is not the way of salvation!

So the Lord Jesus came as the true Shepherd of the sheep; He came just as the Scriptures predicted. In the prophecy of Ezekiel 34, after the false shepherds of Israel were denounced, the true Shepherd was predicted. First the false shepherds were denounced: "*And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, '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?''(v1-2).*" Then in verses 22-23 the true Shepherd is predicted: "*therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.*" That one Shepherd is the predicted Messiah; that one Shepherd is Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ is the shepherd of the sheep.

### **2. Christ is the door of the sheep.**

Christ is not only the shepherd of the sheep; Christ is the door of the sheep. The Lord continued this figurative discourse, and in verse 7 we read, "*Then Jesus said to*

*them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." I am the door of the sheep. In other words, Jesus Christ is not only the true Shepherd who came to lead His sheep out of the sheepfold, but now He Himself is the Door for the sheep who are out in the pasture area. The sheepfold is left behind. He is the door to salvation and safety, and the door to pasture. Once again, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture"(v9).*

Jesus Christ is the Door of the sheep. He is the door to pasture, food for the soul. He is the door to spiritual life (v10) – he is the door to the abundant life. *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"*(v10). The Christian life is not a drag -- it is the abundant life! Jesus Christ is the Door of the sheep, and He is the only Door. Good works are not the door! Baptism is not the door! Membership in a church is not the door. Jesus Christ is the Door of the sheep, and He is the only Door.

In Matthew 7:13-14 the Lord Jesus said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."* Jesus Christ is the only door! Christ is the Door of the sheep.

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. Have you heard the true Shepherd's voice?**

Have you heard the Shepherd's voice? Verse 3 says that the sheep hear the true Shepherd's voice. Some people don't want to hear the true Shepherd's voice. Other people listen to the wrong voice. Self-made prophets, like the "Jim Jones's" and the "David Coresh's," are false shepherds. In line with verse 10, they come literally to steal and kill and destroy -- and yet some people follow the voices of these false shepherds. There are many false shepherds and many misleading voices out there. For example, New Age voices are saying that we are all part of God, and we can save ourselves. These are voices of false shepherds.

Have you heard the **true** Shepherd's voice? Jesus Christ is the true Shepherd, and His voice is always in perfect line with Scripture. I mention that what the true Shepherd says is always "in line with Scripture" because some people, even Christians, somehow get the idea that "the Lord told me this" or "the Lord told me that." Very often these things that they claim "the Lord told me" are not in line with Scripture, and therefore no way is that really the "voice" of the **true** Shepherd.

The true Shepherd's voice will always be in line with Scripture. Are you listening to the true Shepherd's voice? Have you heard the true Shepherd's voice?

### **2. Have you found the true Shepherd's pasture?**

*"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture"(v9).* Notice, Jesus Christ is the door of salvation, but He is also the door of the pasture -- that is, food for the soul. *"He will go in and out and find pasture."* We go in and out -- we might say "in to worship" "out to witness" -- we find pasture that is food for our souls.

The primary idea here is that the Christ-centered life is the key for food for your soul. Prayer and a steady diet of Scripture will keep you Christ-centered and Christ-focused, because Scripture is Christ-centered. You will not find food for your soul apart

from Scripture. You certainly won't find pasture in entertainment, or travel, or sports, or business. These things are not wrong -- they are good and proper in their place -- but food for the soul is only found in Jesus Christ. He Himself is the pasture.