

Livin' the Life
Secure in the Shepherd
John 10:22-30
October 21, 2018
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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. We are finishing up chapter ten today, 10:22-42. If you have your bibles, turn to 10:22-42 and listen as God's word is read.

Jesus' Messianic Words and Works

Jesus is in the temple with his disciples during the feast of Dedication (22-23). The Jews gather around wanting him to clearly tell them if he is the Messiah (24). In other words, they do not like his metaphor; it is not clear enough. Yet the shepherd metaphor is common in the Old Testament to describe Israel's leaders.¹ The reason God used the metaphor was to prepare the Jews for the true and better Shepherd.² Jesus testified that he was the Christ, the good shepherd, but they did not believe him (25-26). But he did not tell them directly because they wanted a political Messiah to lead them in overthrowing Rome and he was not going to do that. The Jews, just like the rest of us, have a much deeper oppressor that only Jesus can deliver us from, our sin. More important than freedom from Rome was the freedom from slavery to sin. Jesus never intended to set up a political kingdom; his is a spiritual kingdom that is not of this world.

Then Jesus moves from the testimony of his words to the testimony of his works. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep (25-26). Jesus has performed many miraculous signs to testify to his identity as the Messiah but they do not believe because they are not among his sheep. They are of Israel but are not of the remnant of Israel looking for the coming Messiah, the sheep who hear his voice. Think about this for a moment. These are hard core religious people, whose Scriptures prepared them for Jesus yet they rejected him. Just because you are religious does not mean you are his sheep or believe in Jesus.

Jesus Knows His Sheep

In contrast to those who reject him, Jesus describes again characteristics of his sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know and they follow me (27). They hear his voice, that is, they recognize the voice of Jesus as the Messiah who can rescue them from their sin. Jesus knows them, that is, Jesus knows them savingly as in a saving relationship. And they follow him around like sheep following their shepherd or the disciples following Jesus. What does it mean to follow Jesus as a shepherd? The disciples followed Jesus wherever he went because they recognized that he had the words of life (6:68). Sheep or disciples are trusting Jesus daily to form them because they want to become like Jesus. You never grow beyond the gospel. The gospel is what sustains you daily. The gospel must penetrate every area of our lives - your singleness, your marriage, your parenting, your business, your thought life, your sex life, your money, your relationships, etc. The disciples followed Jesus around to learn from him because they wanted to become like him. Then in John 15 Jesus tells the twelve how they will follow him after he is gone, by abiding in him and his word so that they are fruitful (1-17). We follow Jesus today by abiding in him and as we do he forms us so that we are fruitful or become like him. Followers of Jesus follow Jesus by abiding in him and his word daily. Are you abiding? We follow a living Jesus. Following Jesus also means that you follow him as part of a flock. There are no solitary or independent sheep. Do you know what they call a lone sheep? A dead sheep because they are no match for the predators alone. Sheep are always part of a flock and disciples always follow Jesus alongside others.

¹ Jer 23:1-5; Ezek 34:11-17, 23-24; 37:24. See the classic Psalm 23; Isa 53:6; Jer 31:10-17; Mic 5:2-5.

² Isa 40:9-11; Ezek 34:11-31.

And lastly, following Jesus means you embrace the mission of Jesus. Jesus is in the temple because this is where there would be large crowds of Jews and the Father sent him on a mission. He is modeling to his disciples a life lived on mission and will soon give them the same mission. Have you embraced his mission in your life? Introduce others to Jesus and help them follow Jesus.

Jesus Keeps His Sheep Secure

Then Jesus describes what he does for his sheep to guarantee their safety from the wolves. First, Jesus gives his sheep eternal life. Jesus has described eternal life in a multitude of ways already, most recently as abundant life (10:10). Eternal life is the very life of God in us. Jesus gives two consequences of having eternal life: they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of Jesus' hand (28). Remember, the context is chapter ten. The Jewish leaders are thieves and robbers bent on harming the sheep. They are the hired hand who abandons the sheep in the face of predators who snatch and scatter the sheep. The issue for sheep is safety and security. The safety and security of the sheep is not dependent upon their ability but Jesus' ability. Jesus ensures that they never perish and that no one will snatch them out of his hand, like a wolf. The Father stands behind and guarantees Jesus' promise. Jesus says, My Father, has given the sheep to me, is greater than all, and not one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one (29-30). Nothing is stronger than my Father so no one or nothing can sever the relationship between the true sheep and Jesus. The Father backs up the Son to keep the sheep secure for all eternity. He will never lose one of his sheep because the Father and the Son guarantee it by their sovereign and omnipotent will, I and the Father are one (6:37-40). Eternal life by nature is eternal; once you truly have it, you cannot lose it.

Life Group Questions:

1. Why does Jesus use the Shepherd metaphor to describe himself?
2. What does it tell us about our relationship with Jesus?
3. What does the passage say why the Jews did not believe in him?
4. How can this be true and everyone is still responsible to believe in Jesus?
5. How can religious people be so lost?
6. How can sheep be sheep before they become his sheep?
7. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
8. How does Jesus know his sheep?
9. How is it a comfort to you that no one can snatch a true believer from Jesus' hand?
10. Does this mean we can live anyway we want and still be secure? Why or why not?
11. How can Jesus promise that he will keep his sheep safe and secure?
12. How is God speaking to you from this passage and David's message?
13. How should you respond?

