

## JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-21

Key verse 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Thanks be to the Lord that He richly blessed the 40th jubilee service of Bonn UBF with the abundant word of God, heart-moving testimonies from each house church and spiritual talks. Through this, we were able to remember the mighty work of God in the past 40 years and praise the Lord with all our hearts. We thank the Lord who has worked very powerfully through the life dedication of M. Peter and M. Sarah and has raised up determined disciples of Jesus and spiritual leaders. We were also able to see God's vision for the next 40 years that He will use one-on-one Bible study, disciple making and mobilization of the next generation so that Germany and Europe will be spiritually reawakened and used as a shepherd nation for the world mission, especially the M-mission.

The theme of John's Gospel is Jesus, who is God and who gives us eternal life. In John chapter 10, Jesus reveals himself as the good shepherd who leads people to the glorious green pastures of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Pharisees in chapter 9 had not been shepherds, but only thieves and robbers who tried to destroy the work of God in the man born blind and expelled him from the synagogue. Jesus was the good shepherd for this man born blind, who sought him out again and helped him, so that he could find true blessedness in Jesus, namely confess him as the Son of Man and worship him. The beautiful image of the good shepherd and his sheep makes clear how the relationship between Jesus, the good shepherd, and us, his sheep, looks like. The relationship of love and trust with our good shepherd gives us true security and assur-

ance of life. Today, let us get to know Jesus as our good shepherd and deeply establish the love and trust relationship with him. Let us follow Jesus' example and be used as good shepherds for God's flock of sheep in this generation.

### 1. I am the door (1-10)

Let's look at verses 1 and 2: "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep." Jesus is making a very clear statement here about who is a shepherd and who is a thief or a robber.

The shepherd and the thief differ in their heart motive. The shepherd has an honest and pure motive. He comes to the sheepfold in the proper way, namely through the door. He comes to take care of his sheep and lead them to the best pastures and fresh water so that they can grow healthy and strong and prosper. In contrast, the thief has a disingenuous and selfish motive. He comes to the sheep because he wants to get some personal benefit from them. He may be envious of the owner of the sheep, or he may simply be hungry and want to steal a sheep to slaughter and then eat. He doesn't come through the door either, but he climbs into the sheep pen through a window or through the roof. He grabs out a defenseless sheep and carries it away from the flock.

In the Old Testament, the image of the shepherd and his sheep was often used. It is first an image of God's caring love for his people Israel, always leading them to the best pasture (Ps 23). God wanted the leaders to be good shepherds for their people and even for the whole world (Ezek 3). But the Jewish leaders ignored God's holy mission and became like thieves and robbers who stole God's sheep and misused them for their own purpose, namely for their power and honor.

Verse 2 says, "The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep." The true shepherd watches over his sheep all day long. When evening comes, he leads them into the sheepfold, where they are safe from danger during the night and can sleep peacefully. The next morning he comes back through the door into the sheepfold. He opens the gate to let the sheep out and leads them to the green pasture where they can graze to their hearts' content. In the same way, Jesus, our good shepherd, takes care of us every day, giving us his word daily and leading us to good pastures so that we can grow well and live happily under his guidance.

Let's look at verse 3: "The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." Another characteristic of the shepherd is that he knows his sheep by name. To the outside observer, all the sheep in a flock may look very similar. We can hardly tell them apart. But the shepherd knows each and every one of his sheep intimately. He knows its strengths, its weaknesses, its advantages and its disadvantages.

He knows which sheep is vulnerable or needs special help. He also knows which sheep he has to drive and which sheep he sometimes has to slow down. The shepherd knows each one of his sheep by name. That is why he calls them lovingly: "Lucas! Sarah! Noah!" That the shepherd knows his sheep by name signifies the shepherd's

very personal living love relationship with his sheep.

David said in Psalm 139:2.3: "You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways." It is truly amazing and overwhelming that God, our Good Shepherd, knows each and every one of us by name. Isaiah 43:1 says, "But now, this is what the Lord says- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'" God, my Shepherd, my Heavenly Father knows me personally and calls me by my name. Many people suffer because they have not properly experienced the love of their parents. This can mean a big hole in their heart. But God, our Father, knows us and does not forget us. Instead, He lovingly calls us by name to lead us to Himself, namely His blessed kingdom, where we experience true peace.

In the same way, it is important that we know our an-trusted sheep that we know who they are, what they need, and how we can serve them. Our relationship with the hopefuls is not a business relationship, but a personal life relationship in that we come into their lives so they can personally know their true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and have fullness in Him. Some churches only look at the numbers, how many members or worship attendees they have. But a shepherd cares about each sheep personally, even if it is just one sheep, as if it means the whole world.

Let's look at verse 4: "When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." This verse first says that a shepherd must be faithful. Sheep are sheep. They are headstrong and short-sighted and easily distracted by a beautiful flower. They are also a bit stubborn at times. But the shepherd must be faithful and constantly teach them the word of God so that they can walk the path to the kingdom

of God. Furthermore, the shepherd should be a good role model. The shepherd is not the one who expects something from the sheep, sending them off, "Over there is the pasture, try to find the way!" No, he walks ahead of them so that they can follow him closely and get to the pasture safely. When the shepherd goes ahead of them, they feel safe and gladly follow him.

Jesus is our good shepherd who has gone before us. Jesus completely denied himself by obeying the will of God and giving his life for sinners. Because Jesus completely denied himself and obeyed God to the point of death on the cross, he can also say to us, "Whoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." I know a great woman of faith who, at the age of 25, made a decision of faith to lay down her life for world mission. For this, she gave up the comfortable life in America, gave up raising a family of her own, and humbly worked in the second row with M. Dr. Samuel Lee for 40 years. She is not a woman of big words. But her example of faith, especially her wide shepherd heart, deep Bible study, prayer spirit and humble devotion for world mission exerted the good influence so that many young people decided to follow her example and give their lives for world campus mission.

Let's look at verse 5: "But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Here we learn about a vital characteristic of sheep. It is their innate ability to recognize the voice of the shepherd. Sheep are not necessarily docile animals. Although they are often taught the same thing, they would forget it the next day. When a shepherd says to them, "Sit down," they get up. If he says, "Stand up," they sit down. Sheep are also easily distracted by the various treat bites along the way and then lose their bearings. But a sheep has one crucial quality: it knows the voice of the shepherd. The sheep can distinguish very precisely who is its shepherd and who is the thief.

God is our good shepherd and we are his sheep (Ps 95:7). Our knowledge is very limited. Even if we acquire several doctoral degrees, we can only understand a very small section of the world. But all people have an innate knowledge of God. The Letter to the Romans says that to deny God is a deliberate rejection of the truth of God (Rom 1:21). Man's true happiness lies in his right relationship with God. King David was not happy because of his power or wealth. He was happy because he knew God personally. In the midst of the worst persecutions, he had peace in God and testified in Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He feeds me in green pastures and leads me to fresh water. He restores my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Because David knew and loved God as his Shepherd, he also loved all God's sheep as his own children.

A missionary family came to Bonn 40 years ago with the goal of feeding God's sheep among the students, raising them to be disciples of Jesus and making them blessed in God. For this they left their homeland and later gave up their careers and devoted themselves intensively to the work of making disciples. With this heart, they have struggled together with many co-workers to beatify the native hopefuls in Jesus and in turn raise them up as shepherds for God's hearth. To this day, they are struggling to raise up global spiritual leaders among the students and among the next generation. In this journey of intensively serving one hope bearer after another, they experienced many pains and setbacks. But God blessed their pure shepherd heart and raised up some determined God- and mission-centered house churches that serve the work of God together with one mind.

Verse 6 says, "Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them." The religious leaders did not understand Jesus' parable because they did not want to understand it and repent. Nevertheless, Jesus did not give up on them.

Let's look at verses 7 to 9: "Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." This verse says that Jesus is the only door through which we enter to the blessed life. In other words, he is the only way to the kingdom of God. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." In the world, there seem to be many ways. But this verse says that all others are only thieves and robbers: The goal of thieves is to steal and slaughter and kill. They do not lead the sheep to blessedness, but use them for their own purpose.

But Jesus is the door to the sheep. As soon as we enter through the door of Jesus, all worries and all fears that make our hearts heavy disappear, and we may experience the true blessedness of the Kingdom of God. Jesus promises that all who enter through him will go in and out and find pasture.

## 2 I am the good shepherd (11-21)

Let's look at verse 11: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." This verse teaches us the ultimate marker of why Jesus is the good shepherd. The reason is that Jesus laid down His life for us, His sheep. Jesus did not try to save his own life. To heal a paralytic of 38 years, Jesus risked being accused and slandered by the Jews. Although Satan kept trying Jesus to save himself, Jesus did not save himself, but gave his life as an atoning sacrifice to save us, his sheep, from Satan's clutches and give us eternal life.

A hireling ("employee") outwardly looks very much like a shepherd. In the normal time, he takes good care of the sheep. But he does not do this for the sheep, but to earn

money with it, that is, for his profit or fame. Then, when danger threatens, he thinks of himself first. He runs away as fast as a hundred meter runner. The shepherd, however, does not abandon his sheep. He is more willing to lose his own life than to leave his sheep alone. David was a good shepherd who was ready to fight with the lion and with the bear. Later, he faced the battle against the giant Goliath because he wanted to defend God's people and God's honor. He did not back down out of fear, but proved to be the true shepherd of his people. Verses 14 and 15 say, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep."

According to verse 14, Jesus' shepherding life is a result of his personal relationship with his Father God. Jesus lived in the close love relationship with his Father, who was his good shepherd, so that he could also be a good shepherd for people. God sent Jesus into the world to fulfill the will of God and die as the sacrificial lamb of God. Jesus humbly accepted this will of God and fulfilled it by giving his own life on the cross. Jesus was not helpless. He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." David also testified that God had always been his good shepherd, guiding him best so that he could obey God's will in his life.

Humanly speaking, the task of feeding Jesus' sheep seems to be a losing proposition in this world. Taking care of a person until he can be healed in Jesus and set up as a disciple of Jesus is very tedious. We often experience that people are not grateful, that they reject God's grace, or seek human advantage themselves. Sometimes the sheep also leave us after some time. We must be ready to give ourselves for God's flock of sheep.

M. Dr. Peter Kim in Kiev is a good shepherd who gave his life for the students. Because of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, no one wanted to stay in Kiev. But even though he had health problems in his family, he devoted

edly took care of the sheep. When he laid down his life for the hopeful, and like a grain of wheat died, God raised up many capable shepherds among the students, who now in turn feed Jesus' sheep.

Finally, Jesus is also the good shepherd who cares for all the peoples of the world. Verse 16 says, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." Here the "other sheep" mean all the peoples of the whole world. At that time, the Jews thought that God was only for them. But Jesus also cared about the Gentiles. Jesus desired that they should all dwell with him in his Father's house. Jesus knew God's will as witnessed in Isaiah 49:6: "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles" Jesus fulfilled God's will by giving the world mission to his 12 disciples and sending them out as good shepherds to the whole world.

The main purpose of Jesus' coming was to give his sheep an abundant life. A thief only wants to have an advantage through the sheep. But Jesus did not come to gain anything. Rather, he completely sacrificed his own life for his sheep. He took the punishment of crucifixion upon himself to save us from our sins and open the way to the Kingdom of God. Praise Jesus, who laid down His own life to give us eternal life. Verse 28 says, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

Without Jesus, we would only live selfishly and miserably. But in Jesus, we have the power to love others as well and to be shepherds for them.

I know a young man who is like one of God's lost sheep, wandering disoriented in the world because he does not know his good shepherd. Because of the death of his stepfather, he doubts the love of God. But neither social relationship nor a girlfriend can give him true happiness or satisfaction. What he really needs is to know Jesus, his

good shepherd. Jesus gave his life out of love for him, in order to solve his life problem and make his life truly blessed and happy, and lead him to eternal pasture.

God also desires that the students on the Mat-Nat faculty encounter this Jesus. All science, human success or glory cannot solve their life problem. But Jesus came into this world to be their good shepherd and lead them to the true pasture and true blessedness. May God use our one-on-one Bible study that the young people can come to know Jesus, meet Him as their good shepherd and attain the true blessedness in Him.

Through today's lesson, we learned that Jesus is the good shepherd. He came to feed us and lead us to true blessedness in the Kingdom of God. He knows us perfectly, much better than we know ourselves. He did not save Himself, but rather gave His own life to save us. Because Jesus is our good shepherd, we may also enter through that door and be used as shepherds for the young. Let us follow Jesus' example by committing our lives to lead the sheep to their good shepherd Jesus and give them true life and blessedness in him.