

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon Title: The Good Shepherd, John 10:1-21

Date Preached: February 26, 2017

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INTRODUCTION: In our world today, there are lots of people vying for our attention. Its interesting how one news channel has the words “breaking news” constantly at the bottom of the screen, to get our attention when we change channels.

There is a lot of talk today about fake news, and we are at a point where we really do not know who or what to believe. Those who side with one side of an argument later find out they didn’t know the whole story. It’s really confusing when you do not know who or what to believe. I’m afraid it won’t get any better in the days ahead. That’s why it’s extremely important for us to have solid, unshakeable beliefs in what really matters...and that is — who Jesus is.

OVERVIEW: My five points for today are:

1. You will know the voice of Jesus if you have spent time with him.
2. If you know the voice of Jesus, you will recognize the voice of an imposter.
3. The hired hand is in it for himself.
4. The Good Shepard guides through the ultimate danger — death.
5. Some will discern the voice of the Shepherd; others will not.

First, YOU WILL KNOW THE VOICE OF JESUS IF YOU HAVE SPENT TIME WITH HIM.

SCRIPTURE: John 10: 1- 6 ¹“*Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.*” ² *The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.* ³ *The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.* 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.* 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.”⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

EXPLANATION: As our scripture opens, we have Jesus speaking once again to one of his regular audiences, the Pharisees.

APPLICATION: How do we know the voice of Jesus? We know by knowing the words of Jesus in scripture. Since Bibles are so plentiful, we can all read the words of Jesus for ourselves. As we read, meditate, and study the words of Jesus, we'll come to recognize the voice of Jesus.

How do we know the voice of Jesus? By spending time with others who know the voice of Jesus. I am intrigued by people who say they “live out” their Christian life alone.

Second, IF YOU KNOW THE VOICE OF JESUS, YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THE VOICE OF AN IMPOSTER.

SCRIPTURE: John 10:7-10 ⁷ *Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 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.*

EXPLANATION: Sheep learn the voice of their shepherd. If several flocks of sheep are together grazing, when the shepherds start calling out to the sheep, they go to their own shepherd. Why? Because they have learned his voice.

I want the young people to listen to me. There are many voices competing for your attention today. You've got to learn the voice of Jesus so you can respond to his call.

ILLUSTRATION: I can think instantly of four young people who've told me they are atheists. Two of those were influenced by the teachings of atheist writers. None of them were very rooted in the Christian faith. They had not studied the words of

Jesus. You see, imposters pulling for their minds took these young men easily because they had not studied the voice of Jesus.

Third, THE HIRED HAND IS IN IT FOR HIMSELF.

SCRIPTURE: John 10:11-13 ¹¹ *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*

ILLUSTRATION: A friend of mine, who died years ago, despised his childhood roots of regular church attendance. As an adult, he was a free man who loved to play golf on Sundays while his wife and kids went to church. He came down with a terrible illness, and none of his golf buddies came to see him, but the church folk did. As he began a long, downhill descent, he realized who really cared for him. I’ve visited several in jail who never got visits from all of the buddies they ran around with, but the preacher came, and so did other family members and friends who cared for their well-being.

Those golf buddies were merely circumstantial friends. They were fair-weather friends. They were like the hired hand that leaves the flock when there is danger.

APPLICATION: Jesus is not just a fair-weather friend.

ILLUSTRATION: I was at a funeral recently where a young woman talked about her grandmother, who was a strong follower of Jesus. The young woman had had various problems in life and had spent some time in jail. She talked about her grandmother as “her soft place to land,” which I thought was a beautiful tribute.

APPLICATION: Others may bail on you when you get in trouble, but Jesus is our soft place to land, full of compassion and mercy.

Fourth, THE GOOD SHEPHERD GUIDES THROUGH THE ULTIMATE DANGER — DEATH.

SCRIPTURE: John 10: 14-18 ¹⁴ *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep 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 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.¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”*

EXPLANATION: The Good Shepherd puts himself between his flock and the ultimate enemy. He lays down his life for his sheep. Since Jesus conquered death, he’s the only one who can guide us through it. This is why the Psalmist said, *“Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me”* (Psalm 23:4).

In Verse 16, Jesus made it clear the flock would grow. Those listening didn’t understand him, but do you know who he was talking about? Jesus was talking about the Gentiles. Jesus came, fulfilling the Law of Moses—the fulfillment of all the Jewish faith taught. But, there were others who believed—non-Jews. Jesus said they would be included in the flock. Later on, the New Testament would read that we’ve been “grafted in,” as you’ve heard me say many times.

Fifth, SOME WILL DISCERN THE VOICE OF THE SHEPHERD; OTHERS WILL NOT.

SCRIPTURE: John 10:19-21 ¹⁹ *The Jews who heard these words were again divided.²⁰ Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”²¹ But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

EXPLANATION: The people speaking in Verse 20 were the people who would never get it. They would never know the voice of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. They had been and would continue to be listening to other voices. However, the people in Verse 21 were the people, who were discerning the voice of the Shepherd — open to hearing what he had to say, open to learning about him, open to being one of his flocks.

In this passage of scripture, Jesus speaks in terms of a simile, comparing himself to a shepherd and comparing his people to a flock of sheep.

1. Just as Jesus is the Shepherd of the flock, he's also the Shepherd of each individual sheep. Jesus is the Savior of all, and at the same time, he's my Savior. Each person needs the saving work of Jesus.
2. Just as each sheep needs grass for grazing and water to drink, each person needs the saving work of Jesus. Just as each sheep knows the voice of his shepherd, the shepherd knows when a sheep is missing.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:4-6 ⁴ *“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home.*

If you are not following Jesus' voice, he knows it. He'll seek you out because he is acquainted with you personally.

3. The shepherd models appropriate behavior to his sheep. In caring for his sheep, the shepherd knows when to be calm and when to fight an intruder. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, wants us to be conformed into his own likeness. He wants us to be like him, knowing appropriate behavior — when to be calm, when to be benevolent, when to be alarmed, and when to fight.

APPLICATION: My question to you today is: whose voice are you listening to? Are you listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd — Jesus — or are you listening to other voices. There are lots of voices out there. If you do not know the words of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus, then you'll not be able to distinguish the voice of Jesus over the voices of others.

The voice of Jesus is distinct. It is unlike any other. The voice of Jesus is a call to repentance and a call to follow him no matter the cost. It is a call to separateness. It is a call to be a part of his flock and no one else's.

Not only is the voice of Jesus distinct, the flock of Jesus is distinct. The flock of Jesus cares for each other and has the task of enlarging the flock.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied many centuries before Jesus —

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 53:6 *6We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

God placed the sins of the world on Jesus, and he atoned for our sins. Perhaps you're listening today and you realize you're in the wrong flock. Perhaps you've got a shepherd who is an imposter, one who would bail at the first sign of trouble. Following such a shepherd will cause an incredible amount of insecurity. But, with Jesus as the Good Shepherd, you have nothing to fear because he takes care of his own.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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