

Main Idea: In John 10:11-21 we meet the Good Shepherd who presents us with three evidences of His goodness.

- I. The Contrast (11-13)
    - A. A shepherd thinks of his sheep (11).
      1. He's good.
      2. He gives His life.
    - B. A hired hand thinks of himself (12-13).
      1. He does what's natural (12).
      2. He does what's necessary to get by (13).
  - II. The Credentials (14-18)
    - A. He has a special relationship with His sheep (14-16).
      1. He knows us (14).
      2. He laid down His life for us (15).
      3. He makes us part of His flock (16).
    - B. He has a special relationship with His Father (17-18).
      1. He is loved by the Father (17).
      2. He is obedient to the Father (18).
  - III. The Choice (19-21)
    - A. Many said Jesus was demon-possessed.
    - B. Some said Jesus wasn't demon-possessed.
- Make It Personal: What are we going to do with the Good Shepherd?
1. Accept Him.
  2. Appreciate Him.
  3. Avail yourself to Him.

*Scripture Reading: Psalm 23*

*The Lord is my shepherd.*

David made that confession three thousand years ago, and millions followed his hope-giving example in saying the same. The Lord God is my shepherd.

Then two thousand years ago Jesus the Christ walked into Jerusalem and said, “I am the *good* shepherd.” He said it twice, in John 10:11, and then in verse 14. It's a messianic claim, indeed, a claim to deity. I am the One in whom David trusted. I am David's shepherd.

Yet He didn't merely say He is the shepherd, but stressed that He is the *good* shepherd. Why did He say that? What makes the Good Shepherd so *good*?

That's the question we want to answer this morning as we continue our series, “*Getting to Know the I AM.*” Who is Jesus? We have been marveling at His claims this summer. I am the Messiah who offers living water, in John 4. I am the bread of life, in John 6. I am the light of the world, in John 8. I am the gate, in John 10. And now, I am the good shepherd.

As we open our Bibles to John 10:11-21, we're going to hear the good shepherd present us with three evidences of His goodness.

- I. The Contrast (11-13)
- II. The Credentials (14-18)
- III. The Choice (19-21)

I. The Contrast (11-13)

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier development of this passage, see the Gospel of John series at WBC in 2012.

Let's set the context first. Jesus made His good shepherd claim in a context of controversy. Back in John 9, He had healed a blind beggar on the Sabbath, but the miracle infuriated Israel's religious leaders, so much so that they excommunicated the healed man from membership in the synagogue, and then turned their guns on Jesus.

Ironically, these men were supposed to be the shepherds of God's people! They were Israel's spiritual leaders. If you wanted to get right with God, you went to these men to show you the way. But now they're kicking a man out of the synagogue because he is talking in positive terms about the person who gave sight to his blind eyes.

It was then that Jesus told a story about a shepherd, a thief, and some sheep in verses 1-5. Verse 6 says that the people didn't get the point, so Jesus applied the story and told them in verse 7, "I am the gate (the gate was the way sheep could enter the safety of the fold)." He continued in verse 8, "All who ever came before me were [lit. 'are'] thieves and robbers," and of course, He had in mind the Jewish leaders who were standing right in front of Him.

As we saw last time in verses 7-10, Jesus contrasted Himself with the so-called shepherds of His day, and likened them to thieves. In today's text, which begins in verse 11, the contrast takes a different twist. Jesus compares the religious leaders to a hired hand or hireling. It was a stunning contrast, one Jesus' listeners could not miss and surely did not appreciate, for there is a world of difference between a shepherd and a hired hand.

If we're going to understand what makes the Good Shepherd so *good*, we need to think about this contrast. First of all, what's true of a shepherd?

**A. A shepherd thinks of his sheep (11).** That's what Jesus said in verse 11, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Shepherds were quite popular in Jesus' day. When with the sheep, shepherds generally lived in tents made of water-repellent cloth woven from black goats' hair. Because of sparse rainfall, they had to move around in the summer months, often being away from home for days and weeks at a time. The truth is, the shepherd's life was a hard life.

A shepherd carried his own food, as well as a rod or staff. Some shepherds, like David, were skillful with slingshots. His was a lonely life, always on the move. He entertained himself by talking to his sheep, or by making music on a reed pipe.

Jesus used this common knowledge to present a metaphor about Himself, and He emphasized two things.

1. *He's good.* He is the *good* shepherd. Of course, "It's possible to be morally upright repulsively," as someone has said. We've all met people like that, people that have a "holier-than-thou" attitude that makes you want to run.

Not so with the Good Shepherd. Again, Jesus is not just a shepherd, but the GOOD shepherd. For starters, He is perfect and holy, but His perfection is attractive. The Greek language has two words for "good." The one Jesus uses here means "intrinsically good, beautiful, fair."<sup>2</sup> We refer to the "good doctor" in the same way. Jesus is not only "good" at what He does, but also kind and sympathetic. He's the ideal, the model, the standard, and He's attractive too, compelling, magnetic.

Jesus emphasized a second characteristic throughout this section. He said...

2. *He gives His life.* Now we come to a key word in this section, a word Jesus repeats four times. In the KJV, "The good shepherd GIVES [NIV "lays down"] his

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, p. 330.

life for the sheep.” Don't ever think that Jesus' death was an accident. It wasn't. Jesus made it clear that He came to earth to give His life, to die. In the Old Testament, the thousands of sheep died for the shepherd, but when Jesus came, the Good Shepherd died for His sheep.<sup>3</sup>

This is staggering when you think about it. The typical middle-eastern shepherd didn't die for his sheep, not usually. But Jesus says the Good Shepherd came with that very intent, to lay down His life for His sheep. He *gave* His life.

Again, the typical eastern shepherd planned to live for his sheep, but the Good Shepherd purposed to die. If an eastern shepherd was killed by an enemy, his death meant disaster for his sheep, and so he did all he could to stay alive. Yet the Good Shepherd says He intentionally died, and His death resulted in something very good for His sheep. As He said in verse 10, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”<sup>4</sup>

What makes the Good Shepherd so good? This does. He *gives* His life. It's worth noting that Jesus uses a present tense verb. Not *gave*, but *gives*. He gives His life to His sheep. He is a giver.

I read a Civil War story that illustrates this kind of giving. A man was seen planting a flower on a grave at a soldier's cemetery in Nashville. When asked why, he answered, "I was poor, and had a large family of children depending on me for their daily bread, but as the war continued I was drafted; I was unable to find a substitute and made up my mind to go. After I had got everything in readiness, and was just leaving to report for duty at the conscript camp, a young man whom I had known came to me and said: 'You have a big family, and your wife cannot support them while you are gone; I will go for you.' In the battle of Chickamauga the poor fellow was dangerously wounded, and was taken back to hospital at Nashville. After a lingering illness he died, and was buried there. Ever since hearing of his death, I have wanted to come to Nashville and see that his remains were properly interred. Having saved enough money, I came on yesterday, and have today found the poor fellow's grave." As the man ended his story, he took a small board and placed it on the grave. It bore only these words: "He died for me."<sup>5</sup>

Romans 5:6-8 says, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Brothers and sisters, the Good Shepherd gave His life for us. Why would He do that? Because we're worthy? No. We are undeserving transgressors of God's law. He did it because He is the *Good* Shepherd, and the Good Shepherd thinks of His sheep.

Now, what about the hired hand?

**B. A hired hand thinks of himself (12-13).** There's a strong contrast in verse 12, as reflected in the KJV translation, "BUT he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd." The NIV says, “The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep.”

Who is this 'hired hand'? He's the person who works with the sheep, but they don't belong to him. And he works with the sheep for one reason.

Money.

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<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, 330.

<sup>4</sup> Morris, 510.

<sup>5</sup> Treasury of Quotations, 401-2

Don't miss this. Back in verse 8, Jesus warned us to beware of "thieves," for the sheep rustler is certainly dangerous for sheep. Now, in verse 12, He warns us of the "hired hand." He's not an outright enemy, but he's just as dangerous. Thieves and hired hands are both a dangerous threat to sheep.

Keep that in mind, flock of God, for in our day we too face this dual threat of thieves attacking from the outside and hirelings causing havoc on the inside. Both are self-seeking, and both are hazardous to the sheep.

What does this hired hand do? Jesus says he operates by two instincts.

1. *He does what's natural (12).* In verse 12 we see the hired hand in action, "The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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."

To the hireling, taking care of sheep is merely a job. What matters to the hired hand is not the good of the sheep, but merely his own wages. So when the wolf comes, what does he do? He does what's natural. He flees and protects his own hide.

2. *He does what's necessary to get by (13).* In verse 13 Jesus says, "The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." I find the literal translation of this final phrase intriguing, for speaking of the hireling, Jesus says, "It does not matter to him concerning the sheep." That's just the opposite of the literal rendering of 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your care upon Him, for it matters to Him concerning you." A hired hand does what's natural and necessary to get by.

There's a world of difference between Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and a hireling.

You say, "Who are these hirelings?" In John 10, Jesus is talking about the Pharisees. But the truth is, hirelings were harming God's flock long before the Pharisees.

In the Old Testament, God chastised Israel's leaders for failing to shepherd His people. For instance, listen to how God condemned Israel's leaders in Isaiah 56:11, "They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain."

What was true of the shepherds in Isaiah's day? They lacked understanding. They used their position of authority for what they could get out of it. They lived for pleasure, wine, and strong drink as verse 12 reveals, "Come," each one cries, "let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better."

We find a similar assessment of hirelings in Ezekiel 34. God said to Ezekiel in verse 2, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?' What were the shepherds doing? They took care only of themselves (2). They failed to help the broken, weak, and injured (4). They let the sheep wander and didn't search for the lost (6). And the penalty for this sheep-abuse was severe. God said, "I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand (10)."

Then God offered an amazing prophesy in verse 11. He said that He Himself would be what Israel's leaders failed to be. A *Shepherd*.

Listen to Ezekiel 34:11-12, "'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.'"

Who fulfilled this prophecy? Jesus said He did. *I am the Good Shepherd.*

In Jeremiah 23, God pronounced "woe" on Israel's shepherds who were guilty of destroying and scattering God's sheep. He predicted that one day He would set up true shepherds that would feed His own (4).

Jesus isn't a hireling. He's the Good Shepherd. And it's worth noting that before Jesus returned to heaven, He entrusted the care of His people to other shepherds. He told Peter, "Take care of my sheep (John 21:16)." And Peter later wrote this counsel to the elders of the church, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:2-4)."

It's significant that in the Bible the word "pastor" comes from the Greek word "shepherd." In Acts 20:28, Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

I'll speak candidly. God expects a pastor to be more than a preacher who talks on Sunday, or a manager who runs programs during the week. God sums up the job description with one word.

A pastor is a *shepherd*. His task is to represent the Chief Shepherd in feeding, leading, protecting, and sacrificially caring for the sheep.

Men, if you are thinking about pastoral ministry, please know this. Being a pastor is not a job. It's a calling to be a shepherd. There are too many pastors on the payrolls of churches who don't have a shepherd's heart. Oh, some of them can speak eloquently, and sing marvelously, and administrate efficiently, but the sheep aren't on their hearts.

The Good Shepherd intends for His people to look at their under-shepherd and think of Him. By the way, that's true in a secondary sense of every leadership position. If you're a Sunday School teacher, or a youth leader, or a parent, God calls you to *shepherd* those under your care as His representative and for His glory.

Don't be a hired hand. Be a shepherd. Phillip Keller, a former shepherd who became a lay-pastor, wrote this about a hired hand he once knew:

"The tenant sheepman on the farm next to my first ranch was the most indifferent manager I had ever met. He was not concerned about the condition of his sheep. His land was neglected. He gave little or no time to his flock, letting them pretty well forage for themselves as best they could, both summer and winter. They fell prey to dogs, cougars, and rustlers.

"Every year these poor creatures were forced to gnaw away at bare brown fields and impoverished pastures. Every winter there was a shortage of nourishing hay and wholesome grain to feed the hungry ewes. Shelter to safeguard and protect the suffering sheep from storms and blizzards was scanty and inadequate...

"In my mind's eye I can still see them standing at the fence, huddled sadly in little knots, staring wistfully through the wires at the rich pastures on the other side.

"To all their distress, the heartless, selfish owner seemed utterly callous and indifferent. He simply did not care. What if his sheep did WANT green

grass; fresh water; shade; safety or shelter from the storms? What if they did WANT relief from wounds, bruises, disease, and parasites?

"He ignored their needs--he couldn't care less. Why should he--they were just sheep--fit only for the slaughterhouse." <sup>6</sup>

Friends, if we're going to appreciate fully what makes the Good Shepherd so good, we must understand this contrast. Jesus isn't a hired hand who thinks only of himself. He truly is a *shepherd* and He delights in His sheep.

Now, notice something. In verse 14 Jesus repeats His claim, saying again, "I am the good shepherd." Why the repetition? He's giving us a second evidence of His goodness.

## II. The Credentials (14-18)

Look at the first person pronoun Jesus uses again and again in verses 14-18. He makes ten statements about Himself. *I know my sheep. I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep. I must bring them. I lay down my life. I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up again. I received this command from my Father.*

What's Jesus doing? He's moving from contrast to credentials. What makes the Good Shepherd so good? Look at His credentials and you'll see. They fall into two categories. In the first He talks about His relationship with His sheep, and in the second His relationship with His Father.

**A. He has a special relationship with His sheep (14-16).** Throughout the Bible, God uses the term 'sheep' to refer to His people. Take Hebrews 13:20, for example, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." Jesus is the Shepherd. Those who believe in Him are His sheep.

As sheep we enjoy three privileges that Jesus mentions in verses 14-16.

1. *He knows us (14).* In verse 14 Jesus says, "I know my sheep." The word "know" means much more than intellectual knowledge. It speaks of intimacy.

And don't miss the fact that the knowledge goes both ways. Verse 14 again, "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me." So Jesus knows His sheep, and His sheep know Jesus. True sheep are on familiar terms with their Shepherd.

Augustine summed it up well centuries ago when he wrote, "O God! Thou hast made us for Thyself and our souls are restless, searching, 'til they find their rest in Thee."<sup>7</sup>

Ponder this truth. If you belong to Jesus, He knows you intimately. He knows *you*, not just about you, but the real you. He knows your dreams, your fears, your past, your shortcomings, even your heartaches. By the way, the verb "know" is present tense in verse 14, for 2000 years ago, Jesus said He knew us!

How intimate is this knowledge? Verse 15—"Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father." Jesus says the relationship His sheep enjoy with Him is patterned after and reflects the amazing bond He enjoys with His Father. More about that in a moment.

For now, here's a second privilege we enjoy...

2. *He laid down His life for us (15).* He says at the end of verse 15, "and I lay down my life for the sheep." Four times in this passage He says that. *I lay down my*

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<sup>6</sup> Keller, pp. 28-9.

<sup>7</sup> in Keller, 51

*life for the sheep*—verse 15. *I lay down my life*—verse 17. *I lay it down*—verse 18a. *I have authority to lay it down*—verse 18b.

He's talking about the cross. Jesus' death was no accident. It's the reason He came to earth. He came to die for His sheep, and He saw His death as a voluntary, deliberate, substitutionary laying down of His life. *I lay down my life for the sheep.*

Why would the Shepherd willingly choose to die for His sheep? Because the sheep were in trouble and could not save themselves. "All we like sheep have gone astray," says Isaiah 53:6, "and turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

That's why the Shepherd laid down His life, to rescue His wayward and helpless sheep. On the cross He took their sin upon Himself and paid its penalty. He died *for the sheep*, in their place, for their salvation. And of course, then He took up His life again, conquering death and leaving the tomb alive. He did it all for His sheep.

This is sacred truth, beloved. Jesus died so that His sheep might live! He had His sheep in mind throughout His ministry, and particularly when He died. He lay down His life for the sheep.

But it's even more personal than that. Which sheep did Jesus have in mind when He died? Just those first century sheep listening to this teaching in John 10? No. Listen to Jesus in verse 16, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen [KJV "And other sheep I have that are not of this fold"]. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

Who did Jesus mean by 'other sheep'? He's talking to the first disciples in verse 15, Jewish sheep, like Peter and John. But in verse 16 He says He has other sheep that don't belong to this pen, that is, sheep outside of Judaism. Gentile sheep. *I must bring them also.*

Friends, He's talking about us. He's talking about every person on planet earth who would ever believe in Him, Jew and Gentile alike. He had every sheep in mind when He died. He laid down His life for us.

That means we enjoy a third privilege.

3. *He makes us part of His flock (16).*<sup>8</sup> "I have other sheep," says Jesus. When Jesus was speaking in John 10, He had in mind every undeserving sinner His Father had given to Him as a love gift. Some were Jews, but many were *not of this sheep pen*. This was a staggering thought to first century Jewish ears. Other sheep? That don't belong to our pen? Lay down your life *for them too?*

Yes, says Jesus. *I must bring them also.*

Sometimes we talk about the American church, and the Russian church, and the Korean church, but in reality, there is but ONE church, one flock. Jesus Christ gave His life for His sheep 2000 years ago, and He has given us the privileged assignment of going out and bringing them in to the sheepfold.

And in they will come. There is a note of certainty in Jesus' voice in verse 16, "I *have* other sheep...I *must* bring them...They *will* listen...There *will* be one flock." The Good Shepherd will not lose one sheep for whom He died. Do you see that? Do you see how secure His people are? Those for whom He died will come into His flock because He will bring them there and keep them there.

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<sup>8</sup> The word "fold" in the KJV is actually a poor translation based on the Latin Vulgate. The more accurate term is "flock." There is only one Shepherd, and one flock.

This indicates that Jesus did more than make salvation *possible* at the cross. When He died, He lay down His life for His sheep. He had them in mind and died in their place. He secured their salvation. He died in their place and the Father accepted His sacrifice.

Do you know why we must be a missionary-minded church? Because we have a missionary-minded Shepherd! The whole world was on His heart. Is it on yours? Why do we give to missions? Why must we pray for missionaries? Why must we be willing to go, and send our children, and grandchildren? It's because of the goodness of the Good Shepherd. He loves His sheep, all of them, and is committed to rescuing every one for whom He died, and has chosen to use us to reach them.

There's something else that makes the Good Shepherd so good. It's not just this special relationship He has with His sheep. It's something that stands behind that relationship.

**B. He has a special relationship with His Father (17-18).** Jesus talks about this eternal relationship in verses 17-18, and reveals two things. First He says...

1. *He is loved by the Father (17).* Verse 17—"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again." We know that Jesus loves His Father, for sure. That's why He came to earth, to show His love for the Father by doing what He commanded. But here Jesus says that He is loved by the Father. It's His Father that thrills His soul and sustains Him through the darkest valleys of His earthly ministry.

But He's not only loved *by the Father*. He tells us next that...

2. *He is obedient to the Father (18).* 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 authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

That's odd. Jesus says His Father gave Him a command. True love doesn't give commands, does it? Jesus says it does.

What command is He talking about? In this section alone, Jesus predicted His death four times, and His resurrection two times. Why did Jesus die and rise again? It was no accident. It was His Father's commandment. Before God's Son entered the world, His Father gave Him the command (and the authority to fulfill the command) to die and then conquer death, and in so doing, to save His sheep.

And Jesus obeyed His Father's command. Why? Because He loves His sheep? Yes, but most of all, because He loves His Father.

Those are the credentials of the Good Shepherd. He has a special relationship with His sheep, unlike a self-seeking hireling, and gave His life for them. But He also has a special relationship with His Father, a relationship marked by perfect love and obedience.

If that's true, and it is, then so is this. The contrast. The credentials. The *choice*.

### III. The Choice (19-21)

The choice is, what are you going to do with the Good Shepherd and His claims? He said He came to rescue sheep, by dying for them. He said that true sheep will listen to His voice and receive the abundant life He alone offers. So now there's a choice to make. What are you going to do with Jesus and His claims?



You see, Jesus' claims divide the world into two categories. We see it happen in our text. In verses 19-21, "At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, 'He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?' But others said, 'These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'"

See the division?

**A. Many said Jesus was demon-possessed.** They said that because of what He *claimed*. "Why listen to Him?" they asked. But...

**B. Some said Jesus wasn't demon-possessed.** They couldn't escape the power of His words ("These are not the *sayings* of a man possessed by a demon") and His works ("Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?").

So what did this second group do with His claims? Did they believe in Him? We're not told. But of course, it doesn't really matter what they did. They're now dead and gone. John wrote this gospel so that *we might believe that Jesus is the Christ*.

So the questions is...

### Make It Personal: What are we going to do with the Good Shepherd?

I want to make this as simple as I can. We've just heard the Good Shepherd. We've just learned what makes Him so good. Now three responses are in order.

1. *Accept Him.* The Bible says we are all born into this world as sheep that have gone astray (Isa 53:6). We need the Good Shepherd to bring us home. Have you ever accepted the Good Shepherd as *your* Shepherd? Have you accepted what He did for you?

2. *Appreciate Him.* He's not just a ticket to heaven. If we have accepted Him, He is our *Shepherd*, and it's an incredible privilege to belong to Him.

It's also an incredible privilege to belong to His flock, too. Jesus never intended Christianity to be a "me and God" thing. When the Shepherd brings us home, He makes us a part of His flock.

Frankly, that's why church membership is important. It's a way to show you really appreciate the Shepherd and His flock. When a sheep remains all by itself, it's in great danger. But when a sheep becomes part of a flock, and places himself under the care of an under-shepherd, and follows the Shepherd along with the other sheep in that flock, the result is great security and nourishment and spiritual health.

We'll be offering a new members class soon. We'll be adding some sheep to this flock. This is a wonderful way to show the Good Shepherd that you appreciate Him. To follow Him right into His fold and identify yourself with others who are following Him.

So accept the Good Shepherd. Then look for ways to show you appreciate the Good Shepherd. And if we appreciate Him, here's something else we must do.

3. *Avail yourself to Him.* Why? Because He wants to use us to reach the rest of His sheep. We need to get rid of the blinders. We are not the only sheep on the Good Shepherd's heart. He has other sheep too.

There are lost sheep for whom Christ died that have yet to hear the Good News about the Shepherd. They're here in Wheelersburg and Scioto County. And they're in China and Central Africa, too. If we're not careful, we can get so wrapped up in our own lives that we hardly ever think about them.

But we must think about them for they're on our Shepherd's heart. And we must avail ourselves to Him and lay down our lives in order to bring them home.