

Text John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd.

David says in Psalm 23 says, “**The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.**” Do you believe this? Do you believe the Lord of Lords is your shepherd? Do you believe in him and through him you lack nothing? Or are these just words we mouth and don’t think about seriously? I ask you and myself these questions because this is about life or death, eternal life or death? To “lack nothing” means that in Jesus you have the perfect shepherd. It means he can and does provide for you everything you need in life and in death. Is this true? Let’s study our Gospel lesson for today. As we do let’s listen to Jesus himself. He says, “**I Am The Good Shepherd**”. 1st let’s see who Jesus the Shepherd is. 2nd, let’s look at the Shepherd and his Sheep.

As we turn to our text, Jesus is speaking and he says, “**I AM**” the good Shepherd. With these words he is saying I am the Lord God of Israel, the same one who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. There, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob identified himself as the I AM. So, Jesus is saying he is that God. In the Gospel of John Jesus said at least 11 times “I AM”. In the 4 Gospels Jesus teaches and shows he is the Son of God. Thus, he possess the characteristics and abilities of God--- But Jesus also was and is true man. And as true man he experienced the trials and tribulations of this life; except he was without sin. The result is we have the perfect Shepherd. Jesus himself says I am the GOOD Shepherd. He knows all things, so he knows all about each one of us the sheep. He watches us 24/7. He sees and understands all our needs earthly and spiritual. Also he is almighty There is nothing too difficult for our Shepherd to do. But above all, Jesus loves his sheep; he loves each of them equally & perfectly. After all, didn’t he lay down his life for us all!

But Jesus is the only one who can perfectly do all that a shepherd needs to do for us human beings. He says, I am **THE** good Shepherd. He is not **A** shepherd, like one among several. He is the one and only Shepherd who could and still can help us in every need. He is the one who can properly discipline us. Also, he is **THE SHEPHERD** who help us when we are hurting. And didn’t our Shepherd die so that the sheep might live? When Jesus was arrested, he saw to it that his disciples were not. Yes, they were scattered, but their earthly life was preserved. And when he died and rose, they and we received a new life.

Considering then that in Jesus we have the perfect, good Shepherd, let us look at **US** the sheep. What are we sheep like? What does our good Shepherd have to do while watching over us? An overall good description is this, sheep are dependent; they need someone on whom they can count on at all times. Sheep are timid. They will not leave the sheep pen unless they have someone they can trust. This is the Shepherd. Jesus says that they know his voice and they follow him. This is noteworthy for in the Mideast the shepherds walk in front of the sheep. The sheep follow. ---Sheep are not hunters. The Shepherd must lead them to green pastures; thick green pastures if possible. For early in the morning, sheep get up early, there is heavy dew on the grass. This provides them enough water for the day. Other sources are wells and springs. If the sheep lack proper water, they will wander off in search of it. ---Unfortunately, like us, sheep can be foolish. So, some sheep seek their own grass. They can end up stuck in a thicket of bushes because they saw another patch of green. If the flock moves on they can die there. Other sheep,

being selfish bullies, cause trouble in the flock, They want to be first or have the best grass. The Shepherd needs to discipline them with his rod. The shepherd must care for his whole flock.

Sheep are defenseless. They are easily frightened or made uneasy. Sheep have rectangular pupils, thus giving great side vision. The only enemy they can't see coming are those directly behind them. Yet, they are still basically defenseless against animals like wolves and mountain lions Spiritually, this is true of us also. The shepherd is on call 24/7 to defend them with his rod and staff.

Finally, sheep can roll over on their backs. When they do, they can not roll over to get back up. If the shepherd does not find them in time they die. In the heat that they can die in a matter of hours. When cooler they live a few days. This is why a shepherd keeps counting his sheep. When one is missing, he goes quickly to find it.

Now, let's apply each of these facts concerning sheep to ourselves. For the Bible clearly pictures us as timid, dependent sheep who 1st need a leader. 2nd, we need someone to provide both earthly and spiritual food and water. 3rdly, we need someone to defend us again all evil and protect us from all our foes. Finally, we need someone to rescue us when we are CAST down. Jesus can do all this, there is no one better than Jesus! He truly is THE GOOD SHEPERD.

1st, You KNOW Jesus' voice for he speaks to you in the Scriptures. He says, "Come, follow me ". Didn't he choose and call the disciples and then lead them for 3 years. Didn't he invite others, saying, Come to me with your burdens. I will give you rest. Jesus is always able to give rest to restless sheep.

2ndly, Jesus provides us with food and water for this life. We don't grow food. We don't dig wells. Yet each day the Lord provides us especially with an abundance of food. ---Spiritually, like the dew and grass, God's Word feeds us richly and daily. Every time we come to church or read our Bibles our thirst for forgiveness is satisfied. Our wish to be at peace with God is reassured. We hear again that we are God's children whom he loves. In God's Word, our Shepherd gives us the best pasture and purest water we could hope for.

3rdly, Jesus defends us against our enemies. We, on our own can not overcome the devil, the world and our own traitorous flesh. Luther wrote in his famous hymn, "**The old evil foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight,with might of ours nothing can be done, soon were loss effected.**" But our Good Shepherd fights for us, defends and protects us. He has already freed us from sin and guilt by dying for us. So, we pray daily that he would help us overcome temptations and deliver us from all evil. We want to remain his sheep. And he hears that prayer and answers it.

Finally, Jesus has restored our souls. We flail like a sheep under sin and guilt. We can't undo them. They weigh on our consciences. We fear condemnation. But the Lord can and does comfort us. He reminds us as he did Peter after his resurrection, he has forgiven us. We still are his sheep. And isn't this exactly what Jesus does for us in the Lord's Supper. His body and blood give us a clean heart and renewed spirit. So, let's remember above all else, Jesus laid down his life for us. Our Shepherd loves us that much that he died and rose just so we could be reconciled to God. In this you will find peace for yourself now and forever. JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, is our Shepherd! Amen.

