

What Makes Jesus Our *Good* Shepherd?

- 1) **He Lays Down His Life for His Sheep**
- 2) **He Knows His Sheep**

Shepherding Today

- Seems to me, for most ppl today, our intrctn w/shp is limtd to cnty fair: go shp barn, see anmls, maybe pet wooly fur, about it. Certly some among us more invlvd w/shp: you're into 4H or FFA; live on farm, raise livestock; seen shp shorn for wool or sold for meat; used to being around shp. But many ppl today just aren't. The whole concept of shprdng shp just less familiar to many in our culture.
- But back in OT, and in J's day, shphrdng shp: common occp'tn. You might have small fam operatn, dozen/2 shp. Or a wealthy landowner might have a huge flock, hundreds sheep, multpl shphrds. Either way, shp have same needs. Need: led pasture, graze; led water, drink; protectd from wolves bec can't defend selvs. So need: guidance, protection, oversight, care.
- What does that kind/shphrdng look like today? I think if there was modern eqv'lnt to a shphrd today, might be: parent or school tchr or Pol offcr. These 3 ppl: shphrds. Parents love, protect, defend, care for children. School tchrs instruct, guide, nurture, care for students. Police officers risk lives, face danger to defend, protect, serve commnty. These ppl all shphrds over shp; we understand their shphrdng. But today in Jn 10 J says he's our shphrd, we his shp. What mean? How does J fully, perfly embody that position of shphrd over us, who are numerous, defensls, in constant danger of attack by Stn. How J guide, protect, love, care for us? What makes J our perf or, as he calls himself, our GS?

He Lays Down His Life for His Sheep

- 1st, lays down life for his sheep. 5x says! **Vs. 11; 15b; 17a; 18bc**. Big deal to J: lays down life, dies for shp. That's not normal thing for shphrds to do! If you're shphrdng sheep, certly you're going defend them; that's dangerous job. When wolf attacks, rush into flock w/rod/staff; face that danger, fight off attack. Think David, shphrd boy: **"Your servant has been keeping his father's shp. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a shp from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the shp from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it"** (1 Sam 17:34-35). So being shphrd: defntly dangerous job. But no shphrd ever purpsfly, intntnly sacrifice own life to save shp. You'd do best to save as many as possible. But you'd nvr die for shp, would you?
- WLS, where I studied pr, very near MqPD. Road going past PD, leading to Sem, called Buntrock Ave. Named after Chief/Pol Thomas Buntrock. In Dec 1979, Meq Pol involved in hostage situation. Armed intruder broke into a Meq home, abductd 2-mo-old baby girl & father; held them hostage, threatened kill baby unless given safe transprt out/state. Standoff w/Pol ensued. Chief TB (not on duty that night; left home to help w/situation) able negotiate an exchange: his own life for baby & father. So hostages released, and in exchange Buntrock taken captive. Evently shots fired, both criminal and pol chief were killed. TB laid down life to save those hostages. And today, in front MqPD: statue of TB, kneeling next to little girl, to remind an ever-grateful community of his heroic sacrifice.
- J, our GS, laid down life for us his shp. Left home in hvn, placed himself into mid dangerous hostage situation. Stn, like ravenous wolf, had abducted flock, was about devour us, drag us into hell forever. But J stepped in, made an exchange: his life, for ours. We were released, freed, forgiven, saved. But J laid down life on cross. Pursfly, intently, sacrfd own life to save us. **Vs. 11**. Later J'd say: **"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends"** (Jn 15:13). And 1 Jn 3: **"This is how we know what love is: JC laid down his life for us"** (16). Of course, didn't stay dead; J also came back life; rose from dead. **Vs. 17-18ab**, which did on ES morn. The work that Pol do for our community: work/shphrdng. But what makes J our perf, GS: gave his life for sins/wrld; laid down life to save you/me/all ppl. Now lives, reigns, shphrds us forever. This what makes J our GS!

He Knows His Sheep

- And, that knows shp. **Vs. 14-15a**. So not just casual knowldg, like when smone drops name/acqntnc in convrstn. “Know so/so? Yeah, know her; met him before.” No, this knowldg: intimate, indvdl, persnl.
- When OT shphrd sat down hill overlooking meadow where hundreds shp grazing below, would he know each one those shp indvdlly/persly? I doubt! After awhile, don’t all shp look about same? But when J looks down from hvn at this sea/ppl, mass/humnty, doesn’t snidely remark, “All look about same; all these ppl: all have same probs/needs; their prayers all sound same; all just look alike.” No, **vs. 14ab**. Knows you persly/indvdlly. Knows your joys, frustrtns, prblms, hopes, doubts, faith; evthng re you. You’re not just another shp in flock to J; you’re precious little lamb your GS. In fact, J even told prbl once re shphrd, had a shp wander away, left 99 others, go find that one (Mt 18). That’s how much J cares re each one his precious lambs. Or think Ps 23; doesn’t say Lord our shphrd; MY. Very persnl: make me lie down, leads me, refreshes my soul, walks w/me thru val/shdw/dth. My shphrd. **Vs. 14ab**: means loves shp; loves you, persly/indvdlly. Even: **vs. 16ab**. Knows/loves shp you’ve nvr met; he’s their GS too – shp all over wrld. In fact, when J spoke these wrds 2k yrs ago, even thinking re 21st cent Luths in Burl, WI. We are among the “other shp.” J knew us, loved us, long ago.
- **Vs. 14**. And how you know your GS? Bec you know his voice. Little later in Jn 10: “**My shp listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me**” (27). Shp know voice their shphrd, follow when calls. You also know voice/J & follow him by faith. Remem I said: Pol are shphrds; parents & school tchrs too. Parents entrust children to tchrs; and tchrs guide, instruct, mold, shape, love, care for students. All yr long, in our SJ Luth School, our school yr theme: Following GS. As a school, we’ve pondered again/again what means that J is our GS; we shp; we listen his voice, follow him – just like real shp know voice of their shphrd, follow him.
- Do you pay attntn to voice your GS when speaks? You cling to words/J, treasure them? Obey what says, follow his direction? Or do his words go in one ear, out other? Have you stopped listening to J altogether? **Vs. 14**. If you know J, you listen what he says: by coming church, more than just once awhile; by paying attention to service/sermon; by taking in GW at home; by coming BC often, HC often; by daily drowning your sinful nature in waters/Bap. That’s how you hear & know voice/J. It’s very easy be distrctd by all voices out there, clamoring for your attn. But voice/J is the only voice that matters. Your GS knows you, persly, indvdlly. You know him by faith. Listen his voice & follow him.

Our Good Shepherd

- I think re all ppl that’ve shphrdd me in my life: parents, fam, Luth school tchrs, prs, profs, friends, fellow ch membrs; you; and all civil servants, like Pol, who protect me night/day. They have been shphrds to me. But none/them are as good as J. None can shphrd me like J does. He laid down his life for me, to save me; and knows me, persly, indvdlly. And he died for you too; and knows/loves you too. This is what makes us J’s shp; this is what makes J our GS.

John 10:11-18

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.

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.”