



**THE GIFT OF BEING
INDIVIDUALLY KNOWN**

SERMON

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 10:1-21 (ESV)

“1 ¶ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”



“4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.”



“7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.”



“10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

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

12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.”



“13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

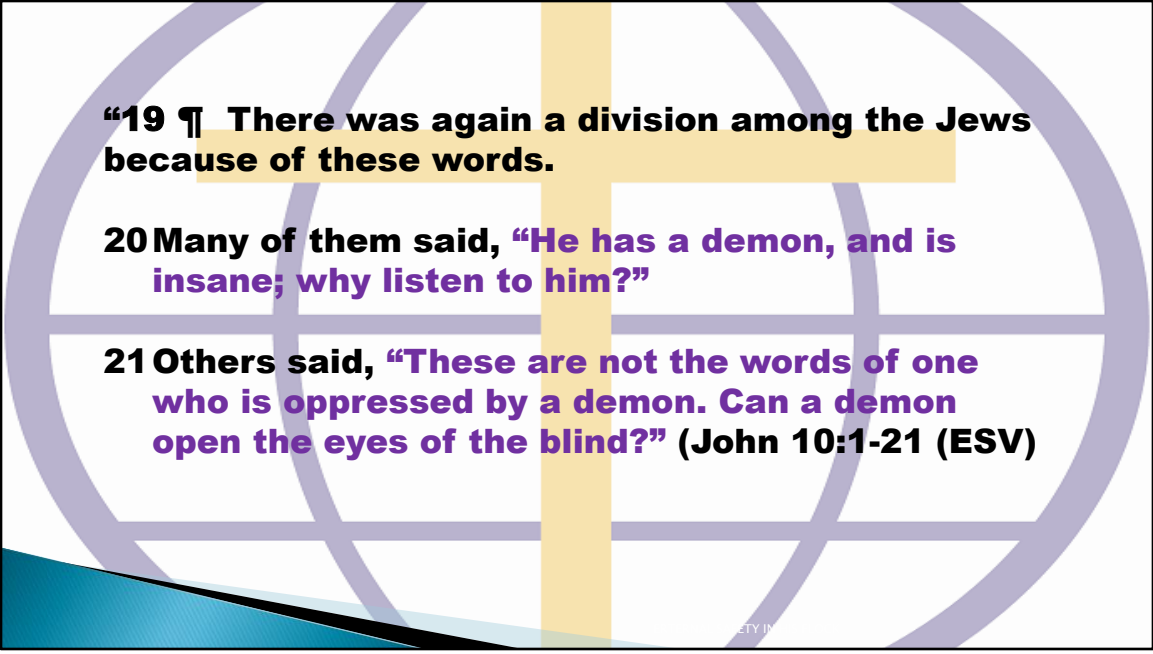
15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”



“16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

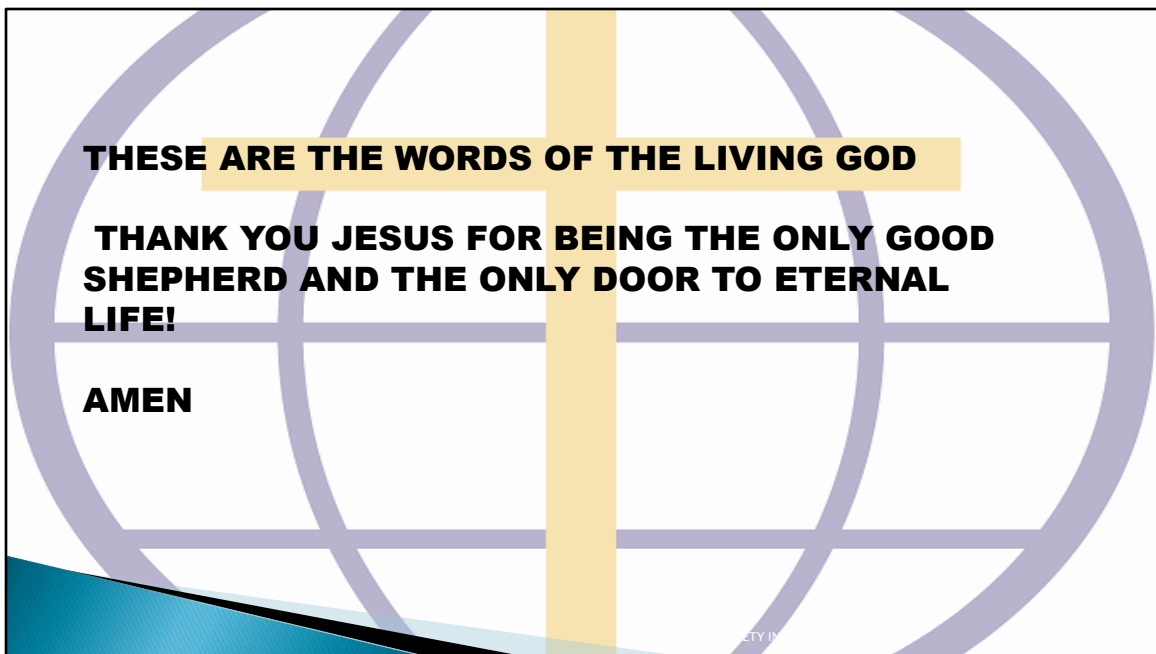
18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.””



“19 ¶ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

20 Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?”

21 Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” (John 10:1-21 (ESV))



When the Bible was originally written, there were no chapter and verse numbers.

The person credited with dividing the Bible into chapters is [Stephen Langton](#), the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 to 1228. While Langton's isn't the only organizational scheme that was devised, it is his chapter breakdown that has survived.

But while chapters are a useful organizational tool, the ability to refer to specific phrases within those chapters would make the system even more usable. [Robert Stephanus \(aka Robert Estienne\)](#) created a verse numbering system in the mid-16th century and was the first person to print a Bible with verse numbers in each chapter.

The chapter and verse numbers we know and love today are direct descendants of these systems. Different languages and versions of the Bible occasionally make use of alternate systems, but our current chapter/verse system is almost universally understood. (From <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog>)

If we were to read the Bible without chapters or verse numbers, it becomes evident that the parable of the good Shepherd came after the healing of the blind man. It

comes after the Pharisees asked Jesus, **"Are we also blind? "**

Jesus proceeds to give them a parable about the shepherd and the sheep and about how the sheep hear the shepherd's voice. They are able to recognize the shepherd's voice from the voice of any strangers. In fact, he tells them that the sheep will not only follow a stranger's voice but they will actually flee from the stranger.

The Pharisees could relate to the literal figure of speech. Shepherd's and herds of sheep were common back then. It was as common as saying "Sobeys". Everybody knows it refers to a large groceries store here in Canada. However, the Pharisees could not understand the deeper meaning of what Jesus was referring to which was imbedded in this figure of speech.

Because Jesus knew the blindness of the Pharisees, he became much more explicit and began to explain who he was.

Jesus' self-revelation of being in an intimate and close relationship with God the Father and himself being God was blasphemous to them.

In the Old Testament, God was referred to as a shepherd and the sheep as God's chosen people, the people of Israel. (Next slide)

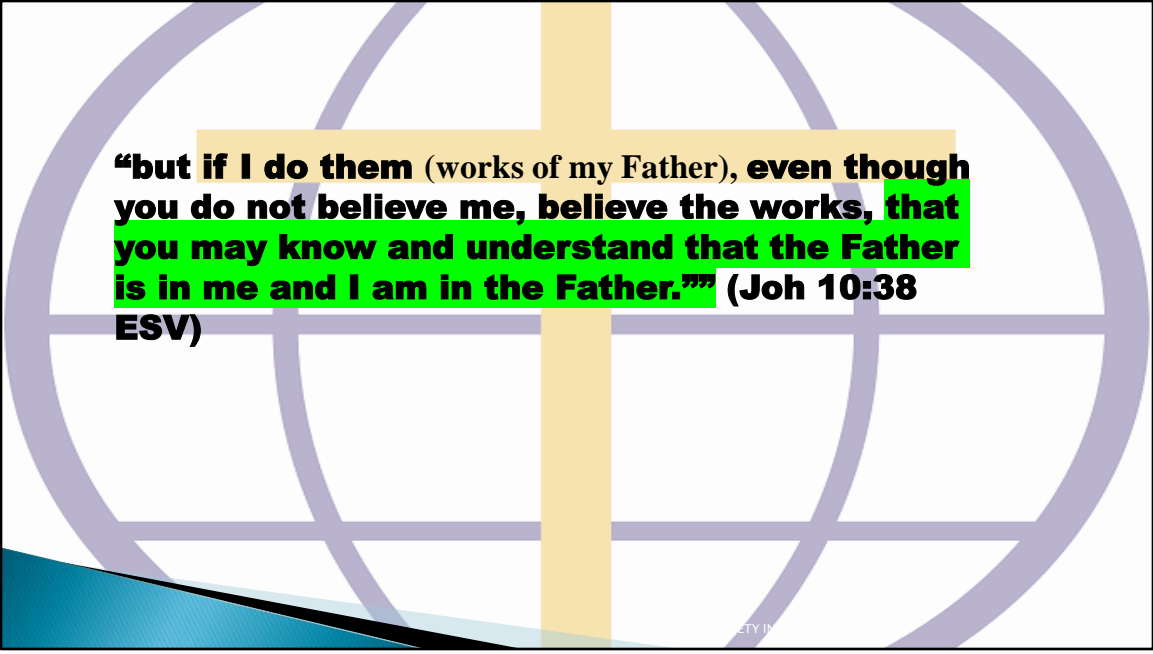


“10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa 40:10-11 ESV)

“And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord GOD.”” (Eze 34:31 ESV)

As followers of Jesus, we take these verses for granted because we believe that Jesus is truly the eternal Son of the living God. We believe that although God the Father and Jesus are distinct in the Godhead, we believe what it says in verse 38 of the same chapter, (Next slide)



“but if I do them (works of my Father), even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” (Joh 10:38 ESV)

Believing this has tremendous importance. Jesus is in the Father, the Father is in Jesus so it means that when we are in Jesus, the man Jesus, we are also in an intimate relationship with God the Father through the Holy Spirit.

This is a reality now because as we saw in last week's sermon, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. It means that we are now part and participating in the eternal relationship of love that God has within himself in the man Jesus. (next slide)



4 ¶ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:4-7 ESV)

When we read the Scriptures, I find them to be beyond amazing!

In the coming ages, we will know exactly what this means to be seated with God the Father in Christ Jesus. We know by faith that this is our present status in God but the full realization will only be at the resurrection when we see Jesus as he is. We will be like him as we read in 1 John.

“1 ¶ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” (1Jo 3:1-2 ESV)



Jesus does not say that he is one of the good shepherds. He says that he is "**the Good Shepherd**".

He does not say that he is one of the doors. He is "**The Door**". There is no other.

Anybody who claims otherwise is a counterfeit.

As God's people, we are assured that God knows us and that we know him.

One of the ways that we know that we know him is that we follow him. We obey what he tells us not to qualify to be in his pasture, in his good hands, but because he has placed us in his pasture by meeting us and calling us to himself.

There is no one who cares for us as Jesus does. He promises to never abandon us. These are the blessings, in every age, of being part of his flock. (next slide)

WHO ARE THE HIRED HANDS JESUS IS TALKING ABOUT?

▶ **7 ¶ “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:**

8 As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep,

9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:”
(Eze 34:7-9 ESV)

I would encourage you to read all of chapter Ezekiel 34, a chapter which clearly points to Jesus.

In chapter 34, we see how the Lord corrects the shepherds who were in it for themselves.

We also read about the internal conflicts that can exist in a herd of sheep, the stronger ones abusing the weaker ones.

John 10 shows us clearly what a good Shepherd does. He both protects and corrects.

First, he corrects the Pharisees showing them that they are not the real shepherds but Jesus is. He rebukes them in no uncertain terms. He tells them clearly that they are looking after their own selves not having the well-being of the people of God in their hearts and actions.

As we read in Ezekiel 34 and Matthew 25, at his return all nations will be gathered before him. He will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Jesus takes total care of his people. He protects the flock, his church from both dangers from inside and dangers from outside.

He did the ultimate by giving his life to rescue us from darkness. He also gives us perfect food, himself, as pictured in the sacrament of communion. The bread symbolizes his broken body for our healing and his shed blood, represented by the fruit of the vine for the forgiveness of our sins.

We live in him and he lives in us. In his pasture, in his fold, in his love our individual identities will be preserved forever. This means that I will always be who I am, you will always be who you are. The big difference is that we will have been made perfect by God! Difficult to imagine but still true!

FALSE CHRISTS

“23 Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.

24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Mt 24:23-24 ESV)

The whole of Matthew chapter 24, also called the Olivet prophecy, was given to the disciples prior to the crucifixion of Jesus.

This chapter describes the problems that would occur during the era of the early church. It also describes progressive world events until the return of Jesus Christ. The painted picture in this chapter is not easy to read. On this earth, in this present age, life has never been easy. In every generation, people have suffered in one way or another. Our generation is no different. Sin and death still produce their awful consequences.

Prophecies are given to give us hope and also to encourage us to stay faithful to Jesus.

There were false messiahs and prophets during the first century. There have been false prophets and messiahs in every century since then.

Jesus is warning us not to be led astray by people who do great signs and wonders.

We have to remember that the god of this world, Satan the devil and his minions are

also able to perform miraculous signs and wonders. We have to be watchful and vigilant not to be deceived by these.

When such miracles and wonders occur, even if many people are enchanted by them, we are always to keep our eyes on the real Jesus, God who came to the earth in our incarnate flesh.

THE GOOD NEWS

▶ **“27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (Joh 10:27-28 ESV)

When we are part of God’s pasture, we hear the true Shepherd’s voice. He knows us intimately! To follow Jesus is a choice we make every day, don’t we? No human being is ever perfect in himself but we do not have to worry. As we humbly follow Jesus, he takes care of us by giving us his grace. The goodness and righteousness we have are not our own but it is received from God himself as a gift.

Our participatory action is to follow him as we are guided by the Holy Spirit.

Then comes the wonderful promise of security and of an unimaginable future.

1 – He gives us eternal life meaning, at the fullness of the resurrection, we will never again rebel against God, never again sin and therefore we will never die when we are transformed in the likeness of the man Jesus Christ. We will then fully know what it is like to live as perfect men and women in relationship with the triune God in the perfect man Jesus Christ. It is important to note that we will never be God. We will forever stay human. This is made possible because Jesus is both fully God and fully man in his being.

Here is Jesus’ desire: **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly John**

10:10 (NRSV).

2 – As we respond to his voice and follow him, no one or nothing will rob us of this precious eternal gift,

Is there any better news than this?

THE GOOD NEWS IS GROWING

- ▶ **“And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (Joh 10:16 ESV)**

It is God’s desire and wish that everyone will come to repentance.

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Pe 3:9 ESV)

God is calling people to himself at his time. He doesn’t force it on anyone. It is his desire that when he opens eyes to his calling that all will follow him. We know that all will not, but it is our hope that most will!!! Our wish and desire for everyone to come to repentance is rooted in God because that is what He desires!

There is not better news than the good news revealed in Jesus!

Right now many scoff at this good news. We are not to be surprised because some, not all, accused Jesus of having a demon and being insane! (vs. 19-21). The blindness of this world caused them not to recognize the incarnate Son of God!

Let us give thanks to God that we have been called to be part of his pasture at this time! Let us all always treasure this great calling never to neglect it.

Let us pray and give glory to God, to our loving triune God.