# Lesson 11 [Chapter 10]"The Good Shepherd"

## Remember:

John 9 tells the story of Jesus healing a man born blind. From this man's example, we learn that as we remain true to what we know about Jesus Christ—even when we face opposition—our testimonies of Him will be strengthened.

## Lesson Goal:

Recognize the Shepherd's Voice and follow Him!

## Lesson opener:

One day, Smith was travelling with a guide and came across a shepherd with his sheep. The man showed him the fold into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with a way in. Smith said to him, 'That is where they go at night?' 'Yes,' said the shepherd, 'and when they are there, they are perfectly safe.' 'But there is no door,' said Smith. 'I am the door,' said the shepherd. '... When the light has gone and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless it crosses my body; I am the door.



Jesus teaches that He is both the protector (Savior) of the sheep, as well as their point of access to life beyond the fold -- pasture, water, life, and ultimately, the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Lesson Body:

This chapter is considered as the extension of the Lord's discourse with the Pharisees . The Pharisees had displayed at the end of the previous chapter [9] great hostility towards the Lord and opposed Him as they considered themselves the teachers and shepherds of

God's church. Jesus confirmed that they were blind to the truth as they were not convinced by the miracle of the born blind, they did not want to follow God.

In this chapter, Jesus compares Himself to a Good Shepherd and the Jewish leaders to thieves or wolves who came to steal His sheep.

## Jesus the True Shepherd 10:1-6

The sheep enter the sheepfold at night. Usually this is built close to the shepherd's house. The sheepfold has one door, and it is watched by the guard. Therefore, anyone who intends to steal must creep in by jumping over the wall of the sheepfold.

The true shepherd would enter through the door, but the one who would try to climb up and enter some other way must be a thief. The sheepfold is  a symbol of the church, protected by Jesus from this world.

The word 'door' refers to Jesus, He is the door and doorkeeper. He is the doors that bring us to God. Through His holy Word we get to know the shepherd and recognize those who are not.



There are philosophers who present excellent discourses on virtues and failings. They fill up books. They boldly ask people to join their team if they want to live happily. However, they do not enter through the door [Bible]. Such people intend to destroy, kill and murder.

The shepherd of the sheep is the owner of the sheep. He cares for each one of them and brings them into the sheepfold through the door because he possesses authority.

The good Shepherd does not send his sheep into a field with no wolves. Indeed, He stresses that He sends them 'in the midst of wolves' (Matt 10:16). Therefore, He goes before them. If the wolves attack, they would be attacking Him; and He would transform them into gentle sheep. The Lord has gone before His sheep to the pasture of the Cross so the sheep would not fear death as long as they are with Him.

The shepherds would be doing the opposite if they were to walk at the back of their flock instead of in front of them.

The sheep, who are unreasoning creatures, know their owner and adhere to him. Because they do not know the voice of strangers, they flee from them.

Jesus called them by name [Personal relationship], He doesn't need to compel them to follow Him, He simply calls them and they obey. We must know how to differentiate His voice from the voices of thieves.

Studying Scripture through the teaching authority of the Church and its father and faithfully receiving the Sacraments are the best ways to become familiar with His voice.

## Jesus the Good Shepherd 10:7-21

The Jews did not understand Him; therefore, He went through the parable again more explicitly, interpreting the main features.

Verse 8: **We know that the prophets came before Him: so, were they thieves and burglars?**

God forbid. He meant those who came of their own, without being sent. However, the prophets did not come as distinct beings from Him because they came with Him, to bring His message. Others who separated themselves from Him are thieves and burglars. Many people who had believed in the Messiah had listened to the prophets and were convinced by them. The Lord could be speaking here about Thaeudas and Judas as well as others like the scribes and Pharisees who incited rebellion.

*"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.' 10:9*

He who enters the pasture through the Lord, the divine Door, not only escapes from thieves but also enjoys real liberty. He enters and leaves with full freedom. He enters the Father's embrace to enjoy His divine fatherhood. He leaves to go to the world to witness to the divine love, and to attract many others to the divine pasture. He redeems and guides many, through the Spirit, to God who is their salvation. They will consequently live in supreme happiness.

He is not just 'a way' among many other ways, The Lord is the ONLY way to the Father.

In this sense, He is the Door and we cannot enter heaven through any door other than through Him: He is the only Door.

In verse 10, those who endure to the end, will leave the world through the same door [faith in Christ] to attain eternal life with Him.

The care of 'the good Shepherd' is unique in quality. It involves not only good care, as the Shepherd is preoccupied with His sheep. It is as though He has nothing else to do in heaven and on earth but to care for them. He not only cares for each soul and especially the one that is gone astray; but He does what is even greater for ' He gives His life for the sheep.'

*11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."*

**Are the apostles and church servants considered "shepherds"?**

Yes, they are all members of that one Shepherd; they are united in Jesus and bring people to Him. They are not "the door", this term is only for Jesus.

The Lord tells us about careless shepherds ¬ He calls them 'hirelings' because they serve in return for money or reward and not out of true love for God's people. They flee for their lives abandoning the flock.

The Lord then speaks about the other sheep that are from other nations. These are the sheep that He will gather with those of the house of Israel to form one flock under One Shepherd ¬ All are invited to enjoy the protection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. From the very beginning, Jesus intended for people of all nations to follow Him.

The Lord speaks about His death when He says: "I lay down My life"; and about His resurrection as He says, "take it up again." He has the power and it would have been impossible for all the forces of darkness to act in any manner without His permission. He has the power to lay down His life and to take it up again. The Jews should not boast that they have won; for it is the Lord who has willingly sacrificed Himself.

The Lord says: "This command I have received from My Father." If you were to ask the Lord: 'What is this command'; He would answer: "It is that I die on behalf of the world." St. John Chrysostom.

Some accused the Lord of being possessed by a devil and that He was mad. So why listen to Him? He was unaware of His words and was just hallucinating. Until today, this is the same accusation raised against the Lord Jesus Christ.

Others defended Him and said that Satan would be unable to do His Miracles and deeds.

## The Shepherd Knows His Sheep 10: 22-30

What is the Feast of Dedication and why is it not mentioned in the Torah of Moses?

It is also called the Feast of Lights (known as Hanukkah, celebrated early December) and was instituted by Judas Maccabeus in 164/165 B.C., in commemoration of his purifying the temple after it had been defiled by Antiochus Epiphanies, the Greek and rededicated it to the service of God. It was a newly added feast.

**If You are the Christ, tell us plainly. Why do you deceive the simple- hearted in order to win them as your disciples?**

They knew that the Messiah would be a king. But they believed, according to their minds, that He would be an earthly king. Therefore, they asked Him to give them a clear answer to that effect. This would enable them to report Him as someone who is a rebel and traitor to the Roman authorities.

The Lord indicated that He had informed them previously by words as well as by deeds. He had proclaimed previously that He is the Son of God and the Son of Man who possesses the power of life within Himself; and that He has the Authority to judge.

The Lord puts the blame on them because they deprived themselves from belonging to His flock due to their lack of faith. He offers here the gift of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

**Renewed Efforts to Stone Jesus 10:31-39**

Of course, He knew they were not stoning Him for the miracles, but His intent was to point out that, in determining to stone Him, they were again overlooking His miracles.

Verse 36: If those who receive this honor through grace do not find it wrong to call themselves gods, then how is it that you reprimand Me who naturally am the Son of God?

The Lord Jesus Christ invites His opponents to consider and examine His works so that when they perceive that they are done by His Father, they would believe in Him. There was no other sensible explanation for His miracles.

## Lesson Delivery Idea:

Sheep are relatively dumb animals and can do little on their own. But they are good at following and distinguishing. They can recognize the voice of their own shepherds and follow him but won't pay any attention to others who try to lead them.

This means it is your responsibility to follow God. Being His sheep requires a commitment to follow Him and do what He says. The shepherd may lead a sheep through a dark and scary place, like the valley of the shadow of death, but the sheep must follow the shepherd through that place. You must be willing to give your goals, desires and plans with Christ and even sacrifice them if He asks you too. Others will come and ask you to follow them. Perhaps a friend, a boss or a teacher. They will

ask you to listen to their way. But who will you listen to? Will you follow them or will you follow Christ?

Being a Christian is not that easy. We know what to do, but do we do it? I encourage you whenever you face the choice to follow something else or Christ, choose to follow Christ.

Jesus said He is the door; do we expect this door to be wide?

It is much easier to follow the crowd and go the popular way. It is wide and smooth, no need to make changes in our life. But look at the results. The easy, wide way leads to destruction! But by going through the narrow door of Jesus, we can have life, both here in this world and after we die!

The world does things its way and many Christian's follow suit without thinking it through, largely just because the world is doing that. Dating. Gossiping. Bullying. Wasting time. Focusing on your career more than God and so forth.

There is no way to sneak into heaven. There is one rightful way in, through Christ. Anyone attempting to enter in through another way will be denied access.

Don't believe everyone you hear. There are many false prophets. Always evaluate what you hear through Scripture to see if it is Biblically accurate.

What does the world and those prophets offer? The offers of this world are like all those dumb emails we keep getting. They promise millions of dollars if we only send some personal information. If we do, all we get is "SUCKER" and then some guy laughing at us as we are tricked. All of these offers sound great. Satan makes huge promises. But in the end, he couldn't deliver and never planned on it. Just like he told Adam and Eve that they would be like God. Actually, they died. Don't believe the promises in the world.

What kind of life does God want you to live? What does He offer? He offers ABUNDANT life. God wants us to have meaningful, purposeful and joyous lives.

Living life with or without Christ in some ways can be compared to a person who badly needs glasses. Without glasses everything is dim and confusing. Once he puts on the glasses, everything becomes clear and takes on new shapes that were never seen before. Everything is brighter and happier. Our life is not half empty or half full, but overflowing and abundant! Serve Christ and follow Him and you can taste this kind of life!

**Memory Verse: 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

**References:** Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1