

Title: **HIRELINGS AND SHEPHERDS**

Text: John 10:6-21

Subject: *Hirelings and Faithful Pastors*

Date: Sunday AM — November 15, 2003

Tape: *John #68*

Readings: *Jeremiah 6:9-7:16*

Ezekiel 22:23-31 & 33:7

Introduction:

George Whitefield once declared, “As God can send a nation or people no greater blessing than to give them faithful, sincere, and upright ministers, so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world, is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, and unskilled guides. And yet, in all ages, we find that there have been many wolves in sheep’s clothing, many that daubed with untempered mortar, that prophesied smoother things than God did allow.”

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These wolves in sheep's clothing were prevalent in the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They were common in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry. They were found in the earliest churches in the days of the Apostles. And they are common today. In fact, throughout history, **the wolves have always been the majority, the accepted, praised, applauded and exalted leaders of the religious world;** and faithful Gospel preachers have always been, and are today, held in contempt, despised, mocked, ridiculed, slandered and opposed as wolves.

- Martin Luther — John Calvin
- John Knox — John Bunyan
- George Whitefield — John Gill
- C. H. Spurgeon — W. Huntington
- A. W. Pink — Rolfe Barnard

The title of my message is **HIRELINGS AND SHEPHERDS.** Our text is John 10:6-21. God's servants are shepherds, pastors, given by God to his church for the care of

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their souls (Jeremiah 3:15). All false prophets are hirelings.

1. HIRELINGS

In the 10th chapter of John's Gospel, our Lord Jesus spoke pointedly to the religious leaders of his day and identified them as hireling shepherds. Remember, this parable was spoken to those Scribes and Pharisees who had just put a man out of the synagogue because he had been healed by the Master. They sat in Moses' seat and assumed the office of shepherds, teaching the sheep the things of God, but without the knowledge of God and without the authority of God. They fed themselves, not the sheep. The Lord Jesus calls them hirelings, thieves and robbers.

- **The Sheepfold** (v.1) is the Church of God.

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- The Door into the Church and Kingdom of God is Christ, his blood and righteousness (vv. 1, 7, 9).
- **The True Shepherd** is Christ, the Good Shepherd. — He gave his life for the sheep. — He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out of the wilderness into Canaan, out of darkness into light, out of Babylon into the sheepfold.
- **The Porter** who opens the way for Christ and causes the sheep to hear his voice and follow him is God the Holy Spirit.
- **The Sheep** are God's elect. — Some are in the fold. — Some are yet straying. — But all God's elect are Christ's sheep.

Now, read verses 6-10.

(John 10:6-10) “This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. (7) Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am

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the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

With those words, our Savior shows a clear distinction between all false shepherds and all true shepherds, using himself as the standard and example of the true shepherd. He continues the same analogy in the following verses, and declares that...

Propositions: The one great distinction between hirelings and true shepherds is just this: — The hireling cares not for the sheep, because he is just a hireling.

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(John 10:11-15) “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 **But he that is an hireling**, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 **The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.** 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” — What blessed words! As you read through the Scriptures, it would be both instructive and delightful to mark **the many names** by which our Savior describes himself in this blessed Book. There are more than a hundred

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of them, I think 107. There is a good reason why he has so many names — One, even a few, could not describe him.

Our all-glorious Christ has so many offices that one name could not represent or explain them all. Indeed, all of them put together do not describe him. Paul said, — *“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”*

Of all the names given, that of a shepherd is, perhaps, the sweetest. Our Savior was a master Artist. He drew pictures with words that explain things more clearly than volumes of defining words. **As this chapter opens, he contrasts himself with a stranger.** Here (vv. 11-15), he **contrasts himself with a hireling,** whose own the sheep are not. Let’s look at the passage, marking the contrast between the hireling and true pastors, true shepherds.

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A HIRELING IS “a person who works only for pay, with little or no concern for the value of the work.” **A SHEPHERD** is “a person who tends sheep, a protector, a guardian, a defender, a keeper, one who watches over, provides for, feeds and carefully guards a flock.”

2. HERE IS A HIRELING.

Our Savior uses the word “*hireling*” to describe all self-serving preachers, pastors and religious leaders, those men who claim to be God’s servants but refuse to enter the sheepfold by the Door, those who climb up some other way. — The hireling, the false Shepherd will not submit himself to the righteousness of God, will not enter by the Door, will not trust Christ alone for righteousness.

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The Master tells us plainly that all who climb up some other way are thieves and robbers (v. 1). **They come only “to kill, and to steal, and to destroy”** (v. 10). Read verses 12 and 13 again. **Here are the common features of a hireling preacher.**

(John 10:12-13) “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”

He is a hireling; that is to say, the end he seeks is the hire. — You know that the Word of God plainly teaches that every faithful Gospel preacher is to be maintained by the generosity of God’s people. The fact that a man is supported by the people he serves does not make him a hireling .— “*The*

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laborer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7). In fact, a man may be hireling who receives no financial remuneration from any church.

- A hireling is a man who is motivated by his own lusts. A true shepherd is motivated by his Master.
- Sheep control hirelings. True shepherds cannot be controlled by sheep.
- Yet, the faithful shepherd is to be maintained by the flock he serves. The Scriptures are crystal clear about this.

(1 Corinthians 9:7-14) “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? (8) Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? (9) For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? (10) Or saith he *it* altogether

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for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. (11) If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? (12) If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. (13) Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? (14) Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”

(Galatians 6:6) “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”

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(1 Timothy 5:17-18) “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (18) For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.”

The church of God is not a business; and faithful men cannot be hired. Money talks everywhere in the world. And money talks in religious organizations. But money has no voice in God’s church. And money has no voice with God’s servants.

The hireling is one who seeks the hire and not the flock. This was often, indeed the most common, charge God laid against false prophets in the Old Testament.

Isaiah complained of it in his day. — “*His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark;*

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sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter” (Isaiah 56:10, 11).

Jeremiah said the same thing in his day. — *“For, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet, even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely”* (Jeremiah 6:13).

Ezekiel spoke of the false prophets in exactly the same way, describing the hireling shepherd as one who feeds himself. — *“Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”* (Ezek. 34:2).

Paul said exactly the same thing about false prophets in his day. — *“For all seek their*

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own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"
(Philippians 2:21).

This is the black mark of the hireling. —
*"He that is a hireling, and not the shepherd,
whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf
coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth."*
**But it is not merely the seeking of money
that marks the hireling. It is seeking things
for himself.**

- Ease — Honor — Fame
- Position — Power — Influence

The hireling is one "**Whose own the sheep
are not.**" — He has no love for the sheep.
The hireling is not part of the family. The
hireling is not a son, or a brother, or a father.
He has no connection with the sheep. He has
no connection with the souls of men. He is
one of the "clergy," a "reverend." They are
just "lay people," "sheep."

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“The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” That is another feature of a hireling. — I do not suggest or imply that any man who moves from one congregation to another is a hireling. That is not the case. God may move a man from one place of service to another. But I do mean to say, and our Lord means for us to understand that the hireling always watches out for number one. He always takes care of himself. If a wolf roars, he flees, because he is a hireling. — The hireling is always found on the side of the wolf!

He is not willing to bear any reproach or persecution, for Christ and the Gospel. He is not a keeper of the flock, like David who went after the lion and the bear. When they rose up against the sheep, David did not flee, but caught them by the beard and slew them. He is not a keeper of the sheep like the Apostle Paul, who fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, who turned his back on none, who

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gave place to none, no, not for an hour, that truth might continue.

When the wolf comes (Satan — Trouble — Persecution — Opposition — Slander — Reproach), the hireling flees, the sheep are scattered, the name of God, his church, and the Gospel of the grace of God are dishonored. But the hireling protects himself and gets “a call from the Lord,” telling him that “his work in that place is done,” and moves on to greener pastures.

The hireling is one who flees when the sheep are most in need of a shepherd, because “*He careth not for the sheep.*”

(John 10:12-13) “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling

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fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”

His only interest is himself, his name, his reputation, his future. He does not care for the sheep. He does not care what becomes of the sheep. They are just so many pebbles in his road to success.

John Calvin wrote, “He who looks to the hire, and not to the flock, though he may deceive others, when the Church is in a state of tranquility, yet when he comes into the contest, will give proof of his treachery.”

(Zechariah 11:17) “Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”

3. **HERE IS THE TRUE SHEPHERD.**

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All that is here said of the hireling, as it identifies the hireling, by contrast identifies the true shepherd, the faithful Gospel preacher. — **The hireling serves himself; but the faithful shepherd serves the sheep.**

(2 Corinthians 2:17) “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7) “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; (2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. (3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this

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world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

The hireling has no personal interest in the sheep. They are not his. — **The true shepherd has a very personal interest in the sheep. They are his.** — God's family is his family. God's people are his people. — Christ's sheep are his sheep. Faithful pastors stand in a peculiar relation to the Lord's

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sheep. **Faith shepherds are called fathers** (1 Corinthians 4:15; Galatians 4:19; 1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 10).

- Like fathers they are instruments of birth.
- Like fathers they provide for the family.
- Like fathers they educate the family.
- Like fathers they lead the family.
- Like fathers they protect the family.
- Like fathers they are devoted to the family.

True shepherds, true pastors are set as watchmen who stand on the watch tower.

— They watch over the souls committed to their trust as they that must give account (Hebrews 13:7, 17). The relationship of faithful Gospel preachers and the people they serve is a relationship that outlasts death.

(1 Thessalonians 2:19) “For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

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(Philippians 4:1) “Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.”

(Colossians 1:25-29) “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (26) *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (27) To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (28) Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (29) Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

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God's servants are men to whom the Lord Jesus has entrusted the care of his sheep; and they care for the sheep.

(Acts 20:31) “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

(Romans 1:9) “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”

(2 Corinthians 2:4) “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.”

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(Ephesians 1:16) “Cease not to **give thanks** for you, **making mention of you in my prayers.**”

(Philippians 1:3) “**I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.**”

(Philippians 4:1) “Therefore, **my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown,** so stand fast in the Lord, *my* **dearly beloved.**”

(Colossians 2:1) “For I would that ye knew **what great conflict I have for you,** and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.”

(1 Thessalonians 3:9) “For **what thanks** can we render to God again for you, for **all the joy** wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.”

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This is the mark of a true shepherd. But a hireling cares not for the sheep, he does not and cannot weep for the sheep, he has no anguish of heart for them. He does not care what happens to them. — **When the wolf comes, the hireling flees because “he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep;” but the faithful shepherd will not flee from the wolf and will not abandon the sheep.**

In the Word of God **the wolf specifically represents both false prophets and heresy.**

(Acts 20:29) “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

The time when the wolf comes is the time to mark who the true shepherd is. He stands to protect the sheep when heresy comes in, or when a persecuting world stretches out its hand towards them. At such times **the true**

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shepherd stands between the fold and trouble.

(Isaiah 52:7) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

4. HERE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

(John 10:11) “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

(John 10:14-15) “I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

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The Good Shepherd gave his life for his sheep. — The sentence was written against us, “*Thou shalt die.*” The Lord Jesus Christ stepped in and died for us. “*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*” (Isaiah 53:5). He did it out of free love, just because he loved us. “*He gave himself for us.*”

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

When we enter into heaven’s glory, it will be altogether because of the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep.

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep.

- Eternally!
- As His Sheep!
- Delightfully!

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The Good Shepherd is known of his sheep, because he graciously makes himself known to them.

- We know his voice.
- We know who he is.
- We know what he has done.
- We know where he is.
- We know what he is doing.
- WE KNOW HIM!

The Good Shepherd seeks the sheep (vv. 16-18). Christ seeks his sheep, and all true shepherds, all true pastors seek the Lord's sheep.

(John 10:16-18) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. (17) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down

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of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

5. A DIVISION

(John 10:19-21) “There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. (20) And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? (21) Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?”

Here is a large crowd of religious people divided over doctrine! Religious people always are. What multitudes there are who defend, fight for, and divide from family and friend over doctrine, even fussing about Christ, who never trust him! — The Lord Jesus was standing in their midst, teaching the gospel publicly, expounding the Old

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Testament Scriptures; but they believed not on him. They were divided over the Savior's doctrine — “**for these sayings**” (v. 19).

- Sovereign Election
- Covenant Mercy
- Suretyship Responsibility
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace

Some said he was a demon-possessed madman. Others objected. They would not go that far. But none believed (v. 25).

Do you trust the Son of God? Has the Lord Jesus Christ made himself known unto you? Has he given you an understanding to know him that is true? Are you in him that is true? This is the mark of all his sheep. “*I am known of mine.*” The sheep...

- Hear his voice.
- Follow him.
- Know him and know his voice.
- Will not follow a stranger.

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If you now trust the Son of God, the Good Shepherd has brought you into his fold. The blessed Son of God has claimed you as his sheep, whom he redeemed, whom he has called, whom he will keep. Thus he fulfills his word by the prophet Jeremiah (3:15; 33:12-16)

(Jeremiah 3:15) “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

(Jeremiah 33:12-16) “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down. (13) In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about

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Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth *them*, saith the LORD. (14) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

(15) In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. (16) In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."

Amen.