

0. Let me invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to John chapter 10.
1. We have seen the physical and spiritual healing of the blind man in chapter 9.
2. And now we're looking at the confrontation Jesus has with the Pharisees.
3. In chapter 9 He told them they were blind and still in their sins.
4. And now in chapter 10 He tells them they are false shepherds.
5. By the way, even though we have a chapter break at the end of verse 41 of chapter 9, there is no break in the narrative.
6. The audience is the same.
7. Jesus is still confronting the leaders that are part of His audience.
8. Let's begin reading at verse 1 down through verse 6.
9. Read John 10:1-6
10. As we look at this story in chapter 10, you'll notice in verse 6 that Jesus is using figurative language.
11. Some translations state that this is a "parable" (KJV) but the word for parable is not used here.
12. The word that John uses is an untranslatable word.
13. It's the Greek word paroimian.
14. This word occurs only here and in John 16:29.
15. In both places the NASB translates it as a "figure of speech."
16. We know that it does not refer to a parable because if it were a parable, we would hear words such as "like" or "as."
17. Jesus doesn't say He is "like" a shepherd.
18. He says He is a shepherd (v.11).
19. He doesn't say He is like a "door of the sheep."
20. He says, "I am the door of the sheep."

21. Also there are no parables in the Gospel of John.
22. Jesus spoke this way for two reasons: so that some would understand and some would not understand.
23. And it is clear from verse 6 that the Pharisees and Jewish leaders "did not understand what those things were which he had been saying to them" (v.6).
24. As we look at the first 6 verses this morning we see that Jesus presents Himself as the shepherd to the sheep.
25. In verse 7 He presents Himself as the door to the sheep fold.
26. In presenting Himself as the shepherd to the sheep, He is contrasting Himself with the false shepherds of Israel whom He calls "a thief and a robber" in verse 1.
27. So, in chap. 10, Jesus declared Himself to be the "Good Shepherd" who was appointed by His Father as Savior and King, in contrast to the false shepherds of Israel who were self-appointed and self-righteous (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible: John).

He begins first with...

### **I. An Emphasis On What He is About to Say (v.1a)**

He says, "Truly, truly."

In Greek this is "amen, amen."

Jesus uses it 23 times in John's Gospel (1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 28; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18)

Anytime you hear Jesus using these two words, He is about to say something extremely important.

When we hear these words, it is usually after someone says something we agree with.

Here Jesus prefaces His statement with "Amen, amen."

What does He have to say that requires such an emphasis?

John 10:1 says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber."

This discourse grows out of the assumption of the Pharisees to be the only authoritative guides of the people (MR Vincent, Vincent's Word Studies: John).

A.W. Pink says, "The mention of "the sheepfold" at once views these Pharisees in a pastoral relationship. The reference to "thieves and robbers" climbing up some other way denounced the Pharisees as False shepherds, and rebuked them for their unlawful conduct" (The Gospel of John).

So by these words...

### **II. He Identifies the False Shepherds of Israel (v.1b)**

The false shepherd does not "enter by the door into the fold of the sheep." He "climbs up some other way."

He is not a true shepherd that cares for the sheep.

He is a false shepherd.

God had some very strong words for those who lead His people astray.

In Jeremiah 23:1-2 we hear: 1 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have

driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. (ESV)

Jude refers to these false shepherds in verse 12 as "men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves."

He says in verse 16 that they are "grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage."

They, according to verse 16, "are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit."

Peter says in 2 Peter 2:1 they "secretly introduce destructive heresies."

Verse 3 says "in their greed they will exploit you with false words."

They "despise authority" (v.10).

Their "daring, self-willed" (v.10).

They have "eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed" (v.14).

God's people need to be on the alert regarding false shepherds or teachers.

Paul said to the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-31, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears."

Jesus gave a similar warning in Matthew 7:15 when He said, "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

The apostle John even said in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

We are to beware of false shepherds/teachers and we are to identify their fruit.

Speaking of the Pharisees, Jesus had some strong words for them in Matthew 23:1-36.

They were not true shepherds but false shepherds who transgressed the Word of God (cf. Mat.15:3).

Zechariah 11:16 tells us about a coming false shepherd, the Antichrist, whom Jesus will eventually destroy: For behold, I am raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for those being destroyed, or seek the young or heal the maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs. (ESV)

Verse 17 gives another warning: "Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! Let his arm be wholly withered, his right eye utterly blinded!" (ESV)

Now the metaphor Jesus used in John 10 is based on first century sheep ranching.

The sheep were kept in a pen, which had a gate through which the sheep entered and left.

The pen in verse 1 is called "the fold of the sheep" or a "sheepfold."

This was a roofless enclosure in the open field.

It consisted of a wall made of rough stones and provided with a sturdy floor. (William Hendriksen, Baker NT Comm.: John).

Now each village in the shepherding region of Palestine had a fold where sheep were kept at night.

The shepherds would graze their flocks in the surrounding countryside during the day, and then lead them back to the communal sheepfold in the evening.

There the shepherd would stop each sheep at the entrance with their rods and carefully inspect it before allowing it to enter the fold.

Once in the fold, the sheep were in the care of the doorkeeper (a hired under shepherd, v.12), who would watch over them during the night.

He would give only the shepherds access to the sheepfold; therefore anyone who could not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climb up some other way, was a thief and a robber. (John MacArthur, John)

Ezekiel 34 gives the imagery of the false shepherd that Jesus may have had in mind here in John 10.

There the Lord berates 'the shepherds of Israel,' the religious leaders of Ezekiel's day, for slaughtering the choice animals, clothing themselves with wool, yet utterly failing to look after the flock (D.A. Carson, The Pillar NT Comm.: John).

The life of the shepherd was hard.

No flock ever grazed without a shepherd, and he was never off duty.

There being little grass, the sheep were bound to wander, and since there were no protecting walls, the sheep had constantly to be watched.

William Barclay tells us that "on either side of the narrow plateau the ground dipped sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep were always liable to stray away and get lost. The shepherd's task was not only constant but dangerous, for, in addition, he had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially against wolves, and there were always thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep" (The Gospel of John, 53).

So throughout Israel's history, shepherding had always been a familiar part of everyday agrarian life.

And the people all knew that sheep are the most helpless, defenseless, straying, and dirty animals.

They require constant oversight, leading, rescue, and cleaning or they will die (John MacArthur, John).

Jesus says of these false shepherds in verse 1 that they are thieves and robbers.

The word He uses for "thief" (klepto) means, 'to steal,' while "robber" (leizomai) means 'to plunder' (Robinson).

The klepto is the one who is selfishly seeking his own ends, and would avoid detection; the leizomai is one who would use violent means to secure his purpose (The Pulpit Comm.: John).

It's like Judas who was a thief and Barabbas who was a robber or insurrectionist.

There is a climax in the order of the words: one who will gain his end by craft, and, if that will not suffice, by violence (Vincent).

The Pharisees were thieves and robbers.

They sought to rule over the Jews, and yet did everything in their power to hinder them from accepting the true Messiah.

They persecuted those who followed Jesus, and eventually they would put Jesus to death. (William McDonald, Believers Bible Comm.)

The point is that these unauthorized people enter and brutalize the sheep.

Now in verses 2-4 Jesus identifies Himself as...

### **III. The True Shepherd (vv.2-4)**

In verse 1 the false shepherd "does not enter by the door....but climbs up some other way."

Here in verse 2, Jesus says the true shepherd "enters by the door. To him the doorkeeper opens."

The doorkeeper doesn't open the door to a stranger but only to the true shepherd.

According to verse 3, "the sheep hear" only the "voice" of the true shepherd.

Verse 4 says they "know his voice."

"They do not know the voice of strangers" (v.5).

It's like in John 20 after Jesus resurrected from the dead Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping and the two angels in the tomb asked her why she was weeping.

When she turned around she saw Jesus but did not recognize Him. Verse 15 says she thought he was the gardener but when Jesus said her name in verse 16, it says, "she turned around and said to Him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni! (which means, Teacher).

When the true shepherd "calls his own sheep by name" they "know his voice."

D.A. Carson says, "Near-eastern shepherds have been known to stand at different spots outside the enclosure and sound out their own particular calls, their own sheep responding and gathering around their shepherd. This shepherd goes further: he calls his own sheep by name, which at the least means that he calls them individually and thus leads them out" (Ibid., John).

Philip Keller in his book, *A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd and His Sheep*, says, "The relationship which rapidly develops between a shepherd and the sheep under his care is to a definite degree dependent upon the use of the shepherd's voice. Sheep quickly become accustomed to their owner's particular voice. They are acquainted with its unique tone. They know its particular sounds and inflections. They can distinguish it from that of any other person. If a stranger should come among them, they would not recognize nor respond to his voice in the same way they would to that of the shepherd. Even if the visitor should use the same words and phrases as that of their rightful owner they would not react in the same way. It is a case of becoming actually conditioned to the familiar nuances and personal accent of their shepherd's call" (39-40).

Martin Luther says, "This simple creature, the sheep, has this special note among all animals, that it quickly hear the voice of the shepherd, follows no one else, depends entirely on him, and seeks help from him alone, cannot help itself, but is shut up to another's aid" (taken from *The Genius of the Fourth Gospel*).

A.W. Pink says, "It has been thus with God's elect all down the ages. It is so today. There is a general "call" which goes forth to all who hear the Gospel, for "many are called," though few are chosen (Matthew 20:16). But to each of Christ's "sheep" there comes a particular, a special call. This call is inward and invincible, and therefore effectual."

Romans 8:30 says, "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." (ESV)

This effectual call from God is heard by each of the “sheep” because they are given “ears to hear”: “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them” (Prov. 20:12). This effectual call comes to none but the sheep; the “goats” hear it not-“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep” (John 10:26). (Pink)

Something else to notice about the true shepherd is how he leads the sheep.

It says in verse 4, "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice."

Today, sheep are herded, usually by dogs that drive them and keep them going where the shepherd wants them to go.

However, in ancient Israel, sheep were lead.

The shepherd went ahead of them, and where the shepherd went, the sheep followed.

They didn't simply roam all over; they followed the shepherd.

The shepherd was their leader, and if one sheep began to stray, the shepherd would simply call it. (R.C. Sproul, John, 188).

Notice the intimacy between the shepherd and the sheep.

He calls them each by name.

He "goes ahead of them, and...[they] follow him" (v.4).

We even see his care for them when it says in verse 4, "When he puts forth all his own," in other words, he has to get them out of the sheepfold and that sometimes entails taking the rod and urging them on.

He doesn't say to those who love the security of the sheepfold "if you don't come, I'm leaving without you."

No he goes to the doorkeeper.

The doorkeeper opens the door because he knows the shepherd.

He then calls the sheep by name and urges them out of the sheepfold and then he leads them to graze.

Remember Psalm 23?

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the forever (vv.1-6).

So the true shepherd is known by the doorkeeper and the sheep and the doorkeeper opens to him and the sheep follow him.

Now do you remember earlier that I said the reason why Jesus used "this figure of speech" (v.6) when He spoke to them?

It was so that some would understand and some would not.

Here in verse 6 the apostle John tells us that "they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them."

Jesus tells us in verses 25-26 why they didn't understand.

He says it was because they did "not believe."

And because they did not believe they were not "of My Sheep" Jesus says in verse 26.

Verse 27 says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

This sounds like Matthew 7:21-23 where Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

So they didn't understand.

They thought they were shepherds, Jesus says you're not only not shepherds, you're not even sheep.

My sheep hear My voice.

Not only are you not leaders, you aren't even followers.

Now before we close let me help you to identify what Jesus means by this metaphor.

Each of those common elements of everyday life had a symbolic meaning in the Lord's metaphor.

Though some argue that the sheepfold represents the church or heaven, the context (cf. v. 16) indicates that it represents Israel.

In addition, it is hard to see how thieves could break into either the church or heaven and steal sheep (cf. vv. 27—29).

The door is Jesus Himself (vv. 7, 9), who alone has the authority to lead out of Israel's fold His own elect sheep.

The thieves and robbers represent the self-appointed (cf. Matt. 23:2) Jewish religious leaders, who, doing the work of the devil, not God, climbed the walls of the sheepfold to spiritually fleece and slaughter the people. (John MacArthur, John)

### **CONCLUSION**

Let me ask you, "Are you one of God's sheep?"

Have you heard the voice of the shepherd?

Do you follow the shepherd?

Hear the voice of the shepherd now.

He says in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Let's pray.