

The Characteristics of the Good Shepherd's Sheep

John 10:22-30

Intro:

1. If Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd, then you are His sheep.
2. But sheep are rather dumb animals who have to be cared for constantly for the very simple basics of life.
3. When you discover what sheep are then you can better understand your relationship to our Good Shepherd.
4. So - what are the characteristics of the Good Shepherd's sheep?

I. v27a - They Recognize the Shepherd's Voice

- A. A shepherd will call his sheep out of the fold.
 1. A "fold" is a corral made out of boards, rocks or thorn bushes.
 2. The sheep can recognize their own shepherd's call & come to him when he calls.
 3. When this happens, they separate themselves from the rest of the flocks.
- B. Your Good Shepherd calls you today. **Heb 1:1-2 - In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.**
 1. God has spoken to you through the Lord Jesus but you must listen & respond to what He has said.
 - a. **Rom 10:17 - Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**
 - b. **Jn 18:37 - "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Only those who are of the truth will hear the shepherd's voice. To everyone else, it is foolishness.**
 - c. **Rev 3:20 - Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.** To respond you must open the door of your heart so the Lord will come in.
 2. Examples of how people have responded to God's voice.
 - a. God spoke to Adam but he hid himself (**Gen 3:8**) - but when He spoke to Isaiah, the prophet said, "**Here am I, send me!**" (**Is 6:8**).
 - b. **Act 9:10-18** - When God spoke to Ananias he tried to talk the Lord out of the mission - but he finally went, preached to & baptized Saul.
 3. When called, you become separated from this world by your Shepherd.
 - a. **1 Pet 2:9 - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**
 - b. **Holy** (αγιος) = separated apart.
 4. But to be separated you must be willing to:
 - a. Deny yourself, take up your cross & follow (**Matt 16:24**).
 - b. Forsake your loyalty to the world (**Lk 14:26 & 33**).
 - c. Continue in the Lord's word (**Jn 8:31**).
 - d. Begin bearing spiritual fruit (**Jn 15:8**).

II. v27b-28A - They Follow Where the Shepherd Leads

A. Where does a shepherd lead?

1. He leads his sheep to physical necessities. **Ps 23:2 - He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,**
2. He guides his sheep down the right paths. **Ps 23:3 - he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

B. Where does your Good Shepherd lead you?

1. Lord Jesus will lead you to physical necessities.
 - a. **ILL: He feeds the birds & clothes the lilies (Matt 6:26-29).**
 - b. **Matt 6:31-33 - So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**
2. Lord Jesus will guide you along the right path. **Ps 48:14 - For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.**

III. v28b - They Stay in the Shepherd's Care

A. A shepherd protected his sheep. **Ps 23:4 - Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

B. Your Good Shepherd will protect you.

1. From physical harm.
 - a. **ILL: The Egyptian army drowning in the Red Sea (Ex 14:5-31).**
 - b. **ILL: A Christian woman about to be raped called to the Lord & assailants fled.**
2. From spiritual harm.
 - a. Did you see any of the scary movies the week of Halloween? No need to be afraid of ghosts (demons)!
 - b. Don't be afraid that you might lose your salvation because you're not good enough. None of us are good enough! **Rom 8:38-39 - For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Your Lord is a wonderful Good Shepherd for you. He loves you, cares for you, protects you & cherishes you. In response to His mercy & love, take the responsibility to become the best possible sheep you can be!