

Jesus, The Good Shepherd **John 10:1-18**

Jesus defined the type of relationship he wants with his followers. When he said, if anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. **Mark 8:34.**

The Bible uses tons of figures of speech (metaphors) to help us understand our God's relationship with us. God is known as our Father and his people his children. (Our Father who art in Heaven...) The Potter and clay, the vine and branches; the husband and bride; God is known as a shepherd and his children are known as sheep. The Lord is my shepherd (Ps.23).

In John 10, Jesus uses this illustration of the shepherd his sheep to show his listeners his relationship with his followers. **John 10:1-18** *this passage shows us what it truly means to follow Jesus and the characteristic of a true follower.*

Read John 10:1-5 Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and he told them this parable.

John tells us that they didn't understand Jesus' point or message of the story.

Verses 7-18 Jesus' explanation of the parable. And he introduces his speech the same way as the beginning: **"I tell you the truth"** (Truly, truly I say to you....

Jesus is the gate for the sheep: Those who came before Jesus were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

The gate through which the sheep enter: The pen used is simply an enclosure made of piled rocks. There is neither roof nor door, but thorns along the top of the rock walls protect the sheep from wild animals, and the shepherd himself sleeps in the entrance, providing a door (cf. Bailey 1993:11; Beasley-Murray 1987:169)

Jesus as the gate provides protection. Whoever enters through me will be saved (v.9). Safe access to find provisions (go in and out and find pasture) *Ps.23:1-2*

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes lie down in green pastures, he leads me besides quiet waters, he restores my soul...

The robbers and thieves: (v.10) Their main concern is to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus has come to give us life, life to the full.

Jesus is the good shepherd: (v.11)

-Lays down his life for the sheep: He doesn't abandon his sheep when the adversary or danger comes. *He doesn't run away from danger* or conflict.

False shepherds run away at the first sight of trouble because they don't care for the sheep. Jesus cares enough to lay down his life for his sheep.

The good shepherd has a close relationship with his sheep. He knows them and they know him.(v14)

The sheep know the shepherd so well that they have learned to listen to his voice; they recognize their shepherd's voice. In fact, Jesus tells us that his sheep will not follow a stranger's voice (**v.3, 5, 16**). Jesus' sheep follow him, and hear his voice.

I see here two characteristics of a true follower of Jesus.

A true follower of Jesus knows Jesus. Has a close relationship with the Shepherd). To know Jesus is to be in a relationship with him. If you don't know Jesus then you are not one of his sheep.

A true follower of Jesus listens to him and follows him.

You have a relationship with Jesus causes you to hear his voice and follow him. (v.26). *Jesus told the religious people: "You don't believe in me because you are not my sheep" (v.27)my sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me."* **Do you see the relationship between Jesus and those who follow him?**

There are people who claim to be followers of Jesus but don't know who Jesus; they have not developed a relationship with Jesus yet. You can tell in the way they live their lives; in the evidence they produce; they don't follow Jesus' instructions; they cannot distinguish Jesus' voice from the voices of impostors.

Jesus is the good shepherd. He laid down his life for his sheep. He did this willingly (**v.17-18**) Jesus' death on the cross made it possible for everyone to become his sheep. He is the gate by which people must enter in order to be saved. **Only those who believe in him become his sheep, followers.**

How do you know you are one of his followers? Do you know him? Do you have a personal relationship with him? Do you hear his voice? He said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. He gives them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of his hand. (v.28) *He is truly a great shepherd.*