

John 10vs1-21

Are you being fleeced..?

© St Helen's Church

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, published by Harper Collins Publishers. © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

Are you being fleeced?

John 10 vs 1-21

Setting the scene

In John 10 we get lots about “shepherds and sheep”:

- Sheep are used throughout the Bible as a picture of God’s people.
- Shepherds – the leaders of God’s people...who should rule and care for the sheep.

We start by going back into the Old Testament so that we can contrast Jesus’ teaching with what the Jews already knew through extracts taken from the writings of the prophet Ezekiel, ch 34:

Read Ezekiel 34 vs 1-6: *The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³ You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. ⁶ My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.*

Read vs 10-11: *Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. ¹¹ “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.*

Read vs 14-16: *I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy.^[a] I will feed them in justice.*

Read vs 20-24: *“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, ²² I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³ And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.*

What is God's problem with the leadership of the day?

- The shepherds are "fleecing" the sheep!

What does Ezekiel say God is going to do about it?

- vs 9-10: Judge the bad leaders
- v 11: God is going to shepherd the sheep himself!

v 11: *"For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.*

- v 15: ***"I myself will be the Shepherd of the sheep"***
- v 23: God will set up one shepherd, ***"my servant David"***

Now we come to John chapter 10 vs 1-21. We need to remember that this incident follows on the heels of ch 9 and the Pharisees' persecution of the man who was born blind...

...so Jesus is still in the temple, and the targets of his teaching about false shepherds are standing right in front of him!!!

The chapter gives us the contrast between Jesus as 'the true and only way' and the false alternatives which are on offer....

This teaching of Jesus flatly contradicts the old comment – *"It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere in your belief!"*

"That is simply NOT TRUE!" says Jesus – "Who you believe and what you believe is the difference between life and death!"

The Shepherd and his sheep

Now read John 10 vs 1-6: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

In vs 1-6 Jesus introduces four characters:

- The thief and the robber
- The shepherd
- The gatekeeper/the door
- The sheep

What does Jesus tell us about the shepherd and the sheep?

- The shepherd enters by the door
 - calls his sheep by name , and
 - goes before them, leading them by his voice
- The sheep
 - Hear the shepherd's voice
 - Follow him, knowing his voice
 - Will not follow the false shepherds

Remember all of this is happening by way of explanation regarding the events of ch 9!

So how has the man who was blind shown himself to be a "sheep"?

- He hears the voice of Jesus
- He recognised Jesus as the true Shepherd:

John 9 v 25: He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

John 9 vs 30-33: The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

- He followed Jesus:

John 9 v 38: He said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped him.

Shepherds: true and false

Jesus now explains his parable:

Read John 10 vs 7-13: *So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”

Jesus started this chapter by contrasting true and false shepherds:

vs 1-2: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.”*

Now in vs 7-13 Jesus echoes the ‘thieves and robbers’ picture – by contrasting true and false shepherds:

vs 7-8: *So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.”*

What distinguished the true shepherd from the false?

- The true Shepherd:
 - is the door for the sheep
 - brings salvation and nourishment to his sheep
 - gives life in abundance
 - lays down his life for his sheep

- The false shepherd:
 - is a thief and a robber
 - steals, kills and destroys... he does not give eternal life – he is a sham!
 - does not know the sheep
 - runs away as soon as he sees danger
 - cares nothing for the sheep

In what ways have we seen the Pharisees behave like this with the man who was born blind?

- They weren't in the least concerned for him.
- They are only concerned to protect their own position and preserve their status.

...So why does this matter?

Jesus says: false shepherds lead us falsely - they are wrong and they lead us to spiritual DEATH!!

v 10: *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

What do you think Jesus would say to the person who said: *“It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere in your belief...!”*

- “NO – we can be SINCERELY WRONG!”

An example: if I see my children playing with paracetamol because they sincerely believe they are just sweets ...do I stand back because they sincerely believe they are not at risk?!

Consider how we might make subjective perceptions - *“I think of this as...”* - and contrast with what is the objective reality of this example...

- It doesn't matter what the child *thinks* they are – the tablets will kill them!!

The test: who are we listening to?

Not all who set themselves up as true teachers of God will necessarily be so – we, as the “sheep”, need to exercise our own Biblical judgement!!

So how can we “test” whether a religious leader is true or false?

- The acid test is whether he can bring salvation...
- ...by laying down his life for the sheep
- ...and defending them against the enemy

No religious leader apart from Jesus has ever done this!!

It's clear, isn't it, what Jesus is saying about all other religions... and all so-called 'Christian' teachers who do not point to Jesus as God's only way to salvation:

- The 'hired hand' is NOT a shepherd:

v 12: *“He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.”*

- The 'hired hand' doesn't care about the sheep:

v 13: *“He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”*

Jesus is the true Shepherd!

Read v 9: *“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.”*

What is Jesus offering at this point?

vs 10-11a: *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd...”*

- Jesus = the door to being saved. He is ALL that that the sheep have been searching for – true fulfilment from the Creator!
- This is describing no pale imitation, but rather life connected to God in the present and flowing on into eternity!

The Good Shepherd and his flock

Read vs 14-21: *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”*
¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” ²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

In vs 14-18 we get both the qualifications and the achievements of the Good Shepherd:

1. The qualifications:

- He knows, and is known by, his sheep:
v 14: ***“I know my own and my own know me”***
- He knows, and is known by, his Father:
v 15: ***“...just as the Father knows me and I know the Father”***
- He lays down his life for his sheep:
v 15: ***“I lay down my life for the sheep”***
- He is ‘charged’ or ‘commissioned’ by the Father:
v 18: ***“This charge I have received from my Father”***
- He is loved by the Father:
v 17: ***“For this reason the Father loves me”***
- He lays down his life for the flock voluntarily:
v 18: ***“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord”***
- He also has authority to ‘take up’ his life again – ie to come back to life!
v 18: ***“I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again”***

These qualifications enable us to judge with real confidence WHO the Good Shepherd is!

Only the one who lays down his life willingly for the flock - and is then raised up again from the dead - will qualify!!

He is the only one loved by the Father and he is the only one ABLE to give eternal life to his flock... because only he has defeated death!!

2. The achievements:

- He brings sheep from other “sheepfolds”, not just Israel:
v 16: **“And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also...”**
- He unites the flock:
v 16: **“So there will be one flock, one shepherd...”**
- He brings the flock into an intimate knowledge of himself - the Shepherd - and the Father:
vs 14-15: **“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father”**

Only Jesus crosses racial, social, gender and cultural borders to summon his sheep, and unite them in eternal life – life in abundance!!

Jesus’ explanation provokes a divided response:

Read vs 19-21: *“There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” ²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

We have seen all this played out by the man who was born blind ...and the reaction of “man” to both he and Jesus.

A church in the heart of the City of London conducted a Christmas survey and presented the public with the following question: ‘What do you make of the baby in the manger?’

- 27% saw Jesus as an ordinary child – around whom a myth has developed
- 37% saw Jesus as an extraordinary child – who went on to do great things but met an untimely death ...i.e a tragic figure

BUT v 18 is crystal clear – Jesus would say that he didn’t “lose his life” – he GAVE up his life freely:

v 18: *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”*

The truth is:

- Some will always think that this is ridiculous... they are spiritually “blind” – they WILL not follow the facts
- But others (as in v 21: **“Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”**) could not deny THE FACTS

What a contrast with vs 2-4!

vs 2-4: *“But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”*

Jesus is looking for those who hear his voice.

v 17: *“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.”*

v 18: *“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”*

WHY DOES JESUS DO THIS FOR US?

v 10: *“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

- So who will we choose to listen to?

What next..?

We’ve just looked at the Shepherd... next time we’ll be examining the flock!

John 10 vs 1-21

¹ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

¹⁹ There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” ²¹ Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”