

12 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

KEY TEXT: JOHN 10:1-18,25-30

CENTRAL truth

Over and over again, Jesus used everyday elements to help people understand His identity. We've seen Him use water, bread, and light—and today, two metaphors about sheep. Jesus described Himself as the door to the sheep pen and as the Good Shepherd. Both claims reveal the fierce love and protection He offers to those who recognize His voice when He calls. Yet we still see people refuse to listen to His voice. They cannot see that **Jesus is the Good Shepherd who takes care of His sheep.**

key question

What is the difference between a hired hand and the Good Shepherd?

A hired hand was paid to watch over the sheep. They weren't his, so he might not watch over them with any deep conviction. If his life was on the line, he'd probably let the sheep die and save himself. Sometimes we can think God is like this—callous toward our lives rather than deeply invested in them. But today's text course-corrects what we might believe about God and invites us to see something more beautiful: God loves us enough to die for us, and He is powerful enough to live again.

keep in mind

When Jesus said that His sheep recognize His voice, many students may grow concerned about who does and doesn't recognize Jesus's voice and why that is. Does God enable us to hear Him or do we choose to hear Him? This is one of those tricky theological issues that Christians have always grappled with. It may be worth discussing both sides, but don't let debate sidetrack your lesson. Clearly point back to God's character. He is the Good Shepherd, and we can trust that however He operates, it is with goodness.

Many students worry that they can “lose” their salvation. While this is a common worry, today's text is clear that once we belong to the Lord, we are His forever, no matter what. (See verses 27-29 especially.) Consider how you can console and build confidence in students, while also reminding them of the basics of salvation. Their anxiety may be the Holy Spirit moving them to repent and believe more deeply.

application

What does it look like to truly live as though you believe the Lord is your Shepherd?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: This text can help equip students to view God more accurately—as a loving Shepherd rather than as a callous hired hand. When they find themselves thinking about Him inaccurately, they can call this passage to mind.

FOR THE LEADER: Help students shape their view of God based on what Scripture says. Challenge them to use Scripture to combat thoughts that don't accurately reflect who He is and how He loves them.

WINTER
2022-23