

Series: The Gospel of John

Day 10: God's purpose

Prayer

O almighty and merciful God and Father. We are deeply aware that we are weak and worthless sheep. Sheep that get hungry and thirsty every day. Sheep that are defenseless against wolves that are out to devour us.

If we now open Your Word looking for food, feed Us with the Bread of Life. Encourage us and give us peace. Fill us with Your Spirit. And let that joy flow to others, but especially to praise and honor You.

Amen

Introduction

We are walking through the 21 chapters of the Gospel of John.

In the first nine chapters in the last nine days we have seen:

- We must see, hear and taste Him so that we can believe and have life
- We will be filled with the Holy Spirit so that streams of living water will flow from us
- As changed people, even in times of hardship, we will not look for the cause of things, but for God's purpose in it

Chapter 10

And so we come to chapter 10 and the question we ask is what is God's purpose? Let us look at it together. Jesus begins to explain through figures of speech. He speaks about a shepherd collecting his flock.

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.***

but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Yesterday we saw how Jesus healed a blind man, and as the chapter progressed the more this man saw, and in the end He saw the glory of God through Jesus Christ and He could confess: I believe and he worshipped Him. As the chapter progressed the less the Pharisees saw. Here we see how blind they really were. It is written:

but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Beautiful figures of speech, but they don't understand. Then Jesus continues and He gives them the reason why he is gathering the flock:

*7 So Jesus again said to them,
"Truly, truly, I say to you,
I am the door of the sheep.*

Two verses later...

*9 I am the door.
If anyone enters by me,*

In John 14:6 it says:

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

I am the door; you need to enter by me. Where to? To the Father. I am the way, I am the truth what you need to learn, the Word and if you find me and go to the Father through me, you will have life. He says:

*9 I am the door.
If anyone enters by me,
he will be saved*

When you go through the door and you are with the Father you will be safe. Another thing will happen:

*and will go in and out
and find pasture.*

He will go in and out to find pasture. He will satisfy his hunger through the Bread of Life. Through Him, saved and pasture. Then He gives the purpose. Do you remember in yesterday's teaching when Jesus came to the blind man His disciples asked why this man was blind, they were looking for the cause. But Jesus said no, the purpose for the blindness is that my Father will be glorified. Look at the purpose. Today He wants to tell us more about the purpose:

*10... I came
that they may have life
and have it abundantly.*

He just taught us why He is gathering His flock and now He is teaching who is gathering the flock. He starts and He says:

11 I am the good shepherd.

Jesus Christ is the good shepherd

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

He repeats it in verse 14

14 I am the good shepherd.

*I know my own
and my own know me,*

And the part in between these verses shows us what someone, who is not a good shepherd, looks like:

12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep,

The big difference between a shepherd and a hired hand is that a hired hand does not own the sheep. The good shepherd owns the sheep, it is his own sheep. He emphasise it again in verse 14:

*I know my own
and my own know me,*

So He gathers them – the Good Shepherd – Jesus Christ. You are saved when you follow the Shepherd through the door. Saved from what?

*sees the **wolf** coming
and leaves the sheep and flees,*

The hired hand runs away...

*and the **wolf** snatches them and scatters them.*

13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

We are kept safe from the wolf, by Him who gathers us – the Good Shepherd. We know now that Jesus gathers His flock, but now the question is how does He gather His flock? He said:

11 I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

...

15... and I lay down my life for the sheep.

He says he lays down His life in verse 11 and repeats it in verse 15. That is the first way in which He gathers His sheep. He lays down His life. Then verse 14 continues and says:

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;

There is a resemblance in the relationship between Me and My Father and the relationship between Me and my sheep. In the figure of speech in the beginning of the chapter He said:

*The sheep hear his **voice**,*

*and he calls his **own sheep** by name*

Just like the Father knows Jesus, in the same way the Shepherd knows his sheep, He calls them by name. First He laid down His life and now He is calling them. He is calling you by your name. Do you listen to Him? You need to know Him to recognise His voice. Then He continues to explain How He gathers His flock.

16 And I have other sheep

that are not of this fold.

*I must **bring** them also,*

He speaks about sheep from another fold. He is speaking to the Jews saying there are other sheep that are not Jews. To us that is a fantastic verse because we know He is also speaking to us. We are sheep from another fold. And notice, they are called in the exact same way. He laid down His life for the sheep. The sheep listens to the shepherd's voice, and he calls his sheep by their names, here it says:

*and they will **listen to my voice**.*

*So there **will be one flock, one shepherd**.*

Note the certainty in this verse. If, for example, I go to Zimbabwe and tell the people in Zimbabwe this message, then I know there is a certainty, because here it says.

16 And I have other sheep

*I must **bring** them also,*

*and they will **listen to my voice**.*

First it says I have and then He says He will bring them and they will listen. They are already His sheep, before they call Him because He already laid down His life for them.

16 And I have other sheep

And then the encouragement and certainty that God's purpose will succeed. God's purpose in gathering this flock will surely succeed.

Because it says:

*and they **will listen to my voice**.*

So there **will be one flock, one shepherd.**

All the nations will form one flock with one Shepherd – Jesus Christ. Ephesians one puts it so beautifully:

*9*making known to us the mystery **of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ** *10*as a plan for the fullness of time, to **unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.** *11*In him we have obtained **an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,** (Ephesians 1:9-11)

It is sure. They will listen and they will become one flock because He predestined it. Now that we have learned what the purpose is, why the sheep should be gathered, that they should be safe, that they should have life and know who it is that gathered them, Jesus Christ, the shepherd. Now that we know how he brings them together - by laying down his life. Now the last part He wants to teach us. But who sent the shepherd? Who commanded that these sheep should be gathered together? And verse 17 says:

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."**

The command comes from the Father, and he sends the Shepherd to lay down his life. He says I lay down my life that I may take it up again, He not only died, He rose again. And so, the Shepherd becomes a door, a passage for me and you that when we die, we know we will be able to rise again and know that we will go through the door that goes to the Father. For he assures us:

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

Someone who can lay down his own life and take up it up again, can only be and must be God. Jesus Christ also God, God the Son. The command from God the Father – come and gather His sheep.

Hebrews 13 summarises it as follows:

20 Now may the **God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, **the great shepherd of the sheep,** by **the blood of the eternal covenant,** *21* equip you with everything good that **you may do his will,** working in us that **which is pleasing in his sight,** through **Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.** Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

We need to realise what he did for us as defenceless sheep. He gathered us together, he saved us from the wolves and out of gratitude we now want to do His will. We are so full of joy that now we only want to do what is acceptable to Him and that we want to work together in this goal of Jesus Christ to gather the other sheep together. And finally, everyone just glorifies Him. To Him belongs the glory for ever and ever, Amen.

Let us conclude

The sheep follow him, for they know his voice

Do you know His voice?

I am the door, the gateway to the Father, to be saved and go in and out and find pasture

I am the good shepherd who *lays down his life for the sheep, and I assure you I know my own and my own know me,*

I have other sheep and they will *listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

This charge I have received from my Father

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.

And this summary explained God's purpose He gave us in verse 10:

I came

that they may have life

and have it abundantly.

Reflection

Today, this passage taught us new things about the Father and Son as Door, Shepherd, Gatekeeper and us as sheep. Read the passage again and write down what you learned.

Thanksgiving

How does the fact that He is the Door and the Good Shepherd stir you to thankfulness? Do you know His voice? Do you follow Him? Do you taste His pastures? And the fact that He laid

down His life for you? Are you telling the other sheep about it? Write down one, very specific, thing that the Spirit is welling up in you, that you are going to do differently during today.

Prayer

O, loving heavenly Father, thank You for Your great loving purpose to send the good Shepherd to gather us, the sheep You already own. Let us know Him so that we will recognise His calling voice. Oh, Door, thank You that we can enter through You to the Father and be safe. Thank You, O Shepherd, for laying down Your life for us. And that we can now run after You for grazing. Yes, even more: For life, eternal life, for joy and a life in abundance.

Use us now Lord, to also be a voice for the other sheep that You already have. Unite us as one flock. We know we just need to call, because You will gather them. You are our Shepherd, we lack nothing. You let us rest in green pastures. You bring us to waters where there is peace. You give us new strength. You lead us on the right paths to the glory of Your Name. Even if we go through dark depths, and virus threats, we will not be afraid, for You are with us. In your hands we are safe.

We look forward to Your eternal purpose that we may sit down to a feast, where You will receive us like a guest of honour where our cups will overflow. Your goodness and love will stay with us all our lives, yes, our eternal life and we will be at home in Your house, O Father, for ever.

Truly, to You belong the glory and the power forever and ever.
Amen