

Introduction: Pg. \_\_\_\_

After my first year of seminary, I had the privilege of traveling to the country of Ecuador to engage in some mission work. I was excited to not only be taking my first mission trip to South America, but also to be doing so with one of my best friends (J. Greene) and going to a place where one of my heroes from church history, missionary Jim Elliot, had shared the gospel and was martyred about 50 years earlier at the age of 29. "He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Like most travelers, I was eager to experience the culture of Ecuador and I wanted to bring home a memento from our time there. I don't know about you, but I like to look for local art when I travel. Since you can't bring back food (you know a little steak and eggs and rice; or a little chorizo with the mmm mmm sauce), and put it on the shelf in your home to be enjoyed daily, I figure art is the next best thing. :) At one of the markets, we saw all of these elaborate wood carvings. There was one in particular that caught my eye. It was this carving of a "pastor," which is the Spanish word for shepherd. Not only did it embody the vocationally calling I was pursuing, but more importantly, it reminded me of Jesus, who describes himself as...

### **"Jesus. The Good Shepherd"** **John 10:1-21**

John 10 is going to invite us to... **Be led by Jesus as the Good Shepherd who gives abundant life by laying his life down.**

Context: These words pick up right where we left off in John 9 where Jesus is exposing the blindness of the spiritual leaders in Jerusalem. His comments really point to the horrendous spiritual care people received under the Pharisees, which set up the contrast for how Jesus operates as "The Good Shepherd."

- In this passage, Jesus uses the metaphor of a Shepherd and Sheep. Jesus is the Shepherd. His people (those who follow him) are the sheep.
- Sheep = Not the smartest animals in the world.

T: What does it look like to know the Good Shepherd? And how we can be assured of his care for us.

#### **I. If you hear his voice, follow Jesus as your Good Shepherd.**

- Why would you want to follow Jesus? Why would you want to follow anyone? - Because of who he is and because of what he delivers.
- BEHOLD message... 2020 Vision happens by first: "Beholding the Glory of Jesus."
- What do we learn about Jesus?

#### **Jesus knows you intimately. (1-6; 14-15)**

- Look at verse 3: The sheep hear his voice. Verse 4: [the sheep] "know his voice." They listen to his voice (8 & 16)
  - Isn't there something soothing about a familiar voice? When I call my 83 year old grandmother, not only is there a comfort from simply hearing the sound of her voice, I know whatever she tells me, I can TRUST.
  - Why? She is more than an acquaintance. She loves me and knows me. She wants what is best to me, and she's showed me that for 35 years.
- Jesus also calls us ["his own sheep by name"]
  - Every friendship starts with knowing someone's name.
  - That's why we wear name tags on Sunday. To help us overcome the awkwardness of forgetting someone's name, but more importantly, because we value relationships. We value

knowing and being known, because we understand God made us for relationship and community.

- God desires a deeply intimate relationship with us.
  - In verses 14-15, Jesus says the relationship we enjoy with him is like the one he enjoys with God the Father.
  - Let that sink in.
- Jesus knows us, and he is the way we know God. He says, "I am the Door" (3<sup>rd</sup> "I am" statement.) I am the entry point to a true relationship with God. If you remained in the lobby, you would only hear an echo, but when you came through the doors you truly experience worship here.

T: Jesus also

### **Jesus will lead you faithfully. (3-5)**

- Check the end of verse 3: He "leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him."
- This is the essence of Christianity:
  - Jesus blazes the trail. We follow behind.
  - He ascends the mountain. We follow behind.
  - Jesus finds the green pasture. We get to enjoy by following him.

### **Jesus will provide for you generously. (10)**

- Check verse 10. Unlike the thieves who will break in and steal, kill and destroy the sheep, the Good Shepherd gives abundant life.
- What is abundant life?
  - Is it an abundance of material possessions? An abundance of comfort?
  - We're all chasing luxury; we all want more. Could it be that these cravings for a nicer meal, nicer clothes, nicer car, nicer home, nicer phone, nicer pens (that's my thing - found some good ones for a dollar a piece, see me after the service)
  - **"Luxury wants to be called abundance and satiety; but you are fullness and the inexhaustible treasure of incorruptible pleasure." -Augustine**
  - He is the treasure! He offers us himself. The Christ life is the abundant life. To be with him and to be like him is life's greatest gift!

T: Everything Jesus provides for us will be protected.

### **Jesus will protect you completely. (12-13)**

- Look back at 11-13
- Jesus stands his ground for us. He won't run, nor will he back down. He says: "To get to them, you gotta come through me."
- Nothing can touch our souls. Someone who is only hired to watch over the sheep for a short period of time will run at the sight of danger because they're more concerned about their own safety and well-being, but not Jesus.
- In the words of the Psalms, he goes before and behind us. He's got our back. He's got our front. He's got our side. He's got our diagonal. He's got us.
- Patrick's prayer?

T: He protects because he cares. End of 13...

Think about the richness of this metaphor. Jesus is the Good Shepherd: He knows, leads, provides, and protects his sheep. This is the goal of pastors (or shepherds) of a local church.

### Pastors of the local Church

- 1 Peter 5 tells pastors to “shepherd the flock OF GOD among you” willingly, eagerly, and exemplary.
- A Pastors goal should be to shepherd like Jesus shepherds. You should pray this for us.
  - Know: We do our best to keep up. We want to know. It can’t work be a one-way street. Forgive the awkward and cheesy explanation, but as my 2 year old could tell you: even sheep know how to say “Baaa...”
  - Lead - Direction; Vision; Provide through Teaching (leading to Green pastures, so you will be equipped (as Ephesians 4:12 says) “for the work of ministry.”
  - Protect - from false doctrine and through unwise missteps through godly counsel.
- Our goal is to be like Jesus, but don’t expect us to be Jesus.
  - We are people like you. Not perfect. Yes, we are to be great examples but we need grace too.
  - We can’t be everywhere, know everything, meet every need.
  - That’s why we go about ministry as a team, and our Group Leaders serve as extensions of our pastoral team.

### II. If you follow Jesus, you can be assured of his love.

- Here’s how? The greatest quality of the Good Shepherd is that he is willing to die for his sheep.
- How could you express greater love for someone that dying in their place?
- This is what Jesus says he will do in verses 11, 15, 17, & 18. All of these references is pointing ahead to his impending death on the cross.
- We can be assured of His love because he’s willing to give His life for our life.

T: Let’s look at the lengths of his love together

### The Love of Christ (Luke 15:1-7)

- **Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:1-2)**
- Anyone who claims to follow Jesus, cannot live with a “we’re better than you” mentality; “we deserve God’s love more than you” mentality; you shouldn’t love and befriend “those kind of people.”
- To give those people the reason behind his action he says, let me explain the heart of God to you...
- **So he told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:3-7)**
  - Did you catch that? *He* goes after *us*?!? We were wandering far from home, walking down destitute paths, filled with empty pleasures.
  - And then, did you get that next part? He puts *us* on *his* shoulders? What’s the implication? He is carrying us to where we need to be. That’s a picture of salvation. Our salvation, being brought back into a right relationship with God is totally of his grace...
  - And then that next word (it’s waaay too much) he rejoices? Is this your view of God. God is not some grumpy old man running the universe with a scowl on his face. He is throwing an unending party. He rejoices!
  - AND then brings others into his joy, over us? I’m done.

- This story tells us the story of heaven...
- Do you see yourself in the story? We are the One. Jesus has come after *us*.
- Why would he love us? Remember, he knows us. He knows our flaws. He knows our weaknesses. He knows how we have turned away and rejected him. To be fully known by God and truly loved by God is an amazing thought!
- This is what Tim Keller says in his book on marriage, and these words should color every relationship we enjoy: **“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is [what it means to be] loved by God.”**

T: The love of Christ flows from the compassion of Christ

### The Compassion of Christ

The nurturing care Jesus extends to people is rooted in his compassion.

- In Matthew 9, it says “Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**” (Matthew 9:35-36)
  - His compassion arose from what he saw.
  - That means the question for us is whether or not we see as Jesus sees.
  - These verses bother me, because I often feel like I lack the compassion of Christ.
- To care like Jesus cares we must see like Jesus see.
- Just two months ago, I saw something in the Bible that I’d never noticed before...
- I was thinking about Boston... Thinking about the upside-down city vision we have as a church...
- And I thought about Jesus and how he related to the city of Jerusalem. Listen to the words of **Luke 19:41-42: “And when he drew near and SAW the city, he wept over it, saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!” *Shalom*.**
  - What provoked the tears of Christ? He saw people far from God failing to experience God’s shalom. You remember that shalom refers to “universal flourishing, wholeness, delight . . . the way things ought to be.” (Plantinga)
  - Jesus, knew better than anyone what *shalom* was all about. He made the world a place of shalom. He defines shalom. He left the *shalom* of heaven to be our Savior.
  - AND Jesus knew the depth of our depravity and brokenness apart from God’s grace better than anyone. Why do you think Isaiah 53 calls him a “man of sorrows.”
  - So here’s what’s going on: Jesus saw the gap between the way things ought to be and the way things were and it crushed him. It moved him to tears. He could not take it!
- Let’s slow down long enough to see the needs and FEEL the needs around us.
  - Are you broken over the brokenness around you?
    - News 1 - A woman died yesterday morning in a house fire in the South End.
    - News 2 - Milton High Senior was Fatally Struck by SUV this past Wednesday.
    - News 3 - Another Homeless Person Died from a Bacterial Infection last week.
  - Are you broken over the state of peoples’ souls in your city? *Jesus says it is through him that we experience life (7, 10)*
- *Here’s a simple but potent prayer: God, give us brokenness.*
- *Here’s the good news... we can see as God sees because he has given us his light - new spiritual sight. The Pharisees were blind - They did not understand (verse 6). They were blind*

T: Finally, Jesus extends his compassion to all people.

### **The Inclusion of Christ (7, 16)**

- Jesus invites all people to walk through the door of his life to find God.
- He has “other sheep that are not of this fold. I *must* bring them in also.”
  - Here Jesus is talking about bringing in non-Jewish people known as Gentiles. This is us! We have been brought in or we are invited in to be one flock with one Good Shepherd!
  - If you were to ask me, “Tanner, what do you love about the church, and specifically, your church, RHC?” I would say: “the beauty of unity in diversity.”
  - We’re all different, but God loves all of us, and he brings us together to be on a unified mission with him.
- If this is the aim of Christ, how could we not want in on that?
  - Here’s an encouragement. We’re going to be inviting (invite cards) 100s and 1,000s of people to worship with us, hang with us, serve with us, “hunt” eggs with our kids (or make a mad dash for a bunch of eggs), and learn about Jesus with us.
  - In all of your inviting, could you invite, or better yet, could you bring someone that is not like you? They may look different, talk different, act different, come from a different culture. This is the beauty of ““o-ther.”
  - If he didn’t love the “o-ther,” we would not be here today.
- Jesus is the radically inclusive God.

T: We can be assured of the love and the compassion and the inclusion of Christ because he laid down his life for us, but that’s not all. Jesus guarantees his authority over life and death. This is what Easter is all about.

*Conclusion:* Look at the end of this story (19-21)

- Jesus is Insane! Or he is God! The growing weight of evidence in John’s Gospel points to Jesus being the Promised one of God.

### *Response*

Take your Connect Card...

- I know some of you are exploring who Jesus is and why he came. You may not know what to think about him. You may even think it sounds insane that a man could have been God. - Could I buy you a cup of coffee, a have a no pressure conversation this week?
- Some of you are saying: I think God is opening my eyes. I see that he’s a Good Shepherd and I need him. I need leadership, and abundance, to be known and loved like that. I hear his voice. I trust his voice.
- Let us know that today!

*Prayer....*