

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus - The Good Shepherd

John 10

### Opening

Gathering: Why do people need the care and love of a good shepherd?

Today's Focus: God showed His love to us by giving us the Good Shepherd – Jesus.

Key Verses: *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* John 10:11

*My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.* John 10:27-28

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Farming in Palestine

The land east of the Jordan River was cattle country (like US Southwest) - little land was farmed

Cattle and other livestock were raised for meat, milk and hides

The land west of the Jordan River was too valuable for farming to allow cattle pastures

Livestock was limited to herds of sheep and goats grazing in uncleared wilderness

Sheep and goats fit well with steep slopes & crags and hard to reach ravines

Raised for wool, milk and offspring, typically not slaughtered for meat

A significant part of the population kept such flocks, A dozen up to a hundred per flock

The Shepherd's Baggage

Shepherds had to travel light to walk the long distances in difficult places

*Scrip* - A bag or purse of animal skin holding his lunch (bread, dried fruit, olives, cheese)

*Water Jug* - Either a pottery flask or hollow gourd hung from his sash

*Horn of Oil* - Carried on sash to mend wounds on injured sheep

*Sling* - Weapon of both offense and defense, normally tied to belt

Judges 20:16

Shepherds would sling a stone just in front of the nose of a sheep beginning to stray

*Rod* - A 24-30 inch wooden club with a lump of wood at one end, often studded with nails

Normally hung on sash by a leather cord on the other end

Used to protect shepherd and sheep from robbers and wild animals

*Staff* - A straight sapling 6-7 feet long (shepherd's crook used in Europe, not Palestine)

Used to guide sheep, knock leaves from trees for sheep to eat, help in climbing

*Pipe* - A simple musical instrument played to pass time and keep sheep calm

*Cloak* - Heavy coat of sheepskin or homespun wool, used as a cover at night

Worn draped over the shoulders and held in by a sash at the waist

A sick or injured lamb would fit in the fold above the sash

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep and the Sheep Know Him

Since sheep usually weren't raised for meat, they lived with families and shepherds for years

Shepherds gave descriptive names to their sheep like "Brown-leg", "White-nose", "Long-ears" ...

Shepherds intimately knew each sheep, its individual traits and its special needs

Sheep recognized the shepherd's voice, shepherds could often call and sheep would come

If a stranger called, sheep lifted their heads in alarm and, if repeated, ran away

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### A Shepherd's Job is Never Done

During the day a shepherd would search for the best pasture, often hidden in mountains  
He would look for still waters - sheep wouldn't drink from flowing streams  
He would find shade from trees or rock for the sheep to rest in the shadows  
Shepherd would go before his sheep finding the best pathways  
A shepherd led his sheep, he didn't drive them - the sheep would follow  
With little grass, sheep were bound to wander  
With the rest of the flock together and safe, the shepherd would go find a missing sheep  
Hired shepherds had to pay for any missing sheep unless they had proof it was killed  
Family shepherds would risk their own lives to save a sheep from attack  
1 Samuel 17:34-36  
Hired shepherds would run away if the danger got too serious  
Sheep will not lie down when they sense danger, threat, hunger or agitation from pests  
If sheep turn over on their backs, they are "cast down" and need help to be restored

### The Sheepfold

By midafternoon or at the first sign of a storm, the shepherd led the sheep back to the sheepfold  
The shepherd stood in the sheepfold doorway and named off the sheep as they entered  
Sheepfold - A walled off area with one door and 6-ft tall walls of rock  
Protected the sheep at night from robbers and wild animals  
A cave or covered area provided shelter during bad weather  
Sheep normally stayed in open area in pleasant weather  
Village sheepfolds - Communal folds where flocks of sheep & goats were brought together  
Strong keyed door was guarded by the porter, who knew the shepherds  
Shepherds gathered in morning and gave their own calls to separate their sheep  
Hillside sheepfolds - Used by shepherds when far from town during good, warm weather  
Shepherd lay down across doorway so nothing could get in or out except over his body  
The shepherd was literally the door

### Psalms From the Shepherd

With this new understanding of shepherd life, what new things do you see in Psalm 23?  
Psalm 23  
How do you feel knowing that you are loved and protected by God as a shepherd to his sheep?  
Psalm 100

### Like Sheep Without a Shepherd (*Mark 6:34*)

Why did Jesus continue to teach and care for people despite being physically tired and hungry?  
Mark 6:31-34  
Weren't they being cared for by the leaders that were there to shepherd them?  
Jeremiah 50:6  
What happened in last week's story that showed the people's need for a shepherd?  
John 9:17, 33-34

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### Thieves and Robbers (*John 10:1-6*)

How did Jesus describe these Pharisee's relation to the Lord's sheep?

John 10:1

How did the Pharisees differ from the shepherd God wants for His sheep?

John 10:2-5

Did the Pharisees understand this analogy?

John 10:6

Who was the watchman who opened the gate for the shepherd in verse 3?

John 1:29-30, 34

How did Jesus "enter by the gate"?

Luke 18:31

### I Am The Door (*John 10:7-10*)

How did Jesus begin His explanation?

John 10:7, 9

*We can go in and come out* - Hebrew phrase describing absolute security and safety  
Inside is safety and salvation; We can follow Him for pasture (to meet our needs)

How did Jesus contrast Himself with these false shepherds?

John 10:8, 10

### I Am The Good Shepherd (*John 10:11-21*)

How did Jesus further describe that He is not just a regular shepherd?

John 10:11-13

How else is Jesus like a Good and Loving Shepherd?

John 10:14-15

How did Jesus further differentiate Himself from the hired shepherd?

John 10:17-18

How did the people respond to this statement that could only be true if Jesus were God?

John 10:19-21

### The Sheep of His Pasture (*John 10:16*)

If Jesus' sheep know Him, who are those who don't know Him?

Matthew 25:32-33

Who are these sheep that belong to Jesus' flock?

John 10:16

What shepherd did God use to begin gathering His sheep from other folds?

Acts 9:11, 15

Who are the shepherds of this new flock?

Acts 20:28

*Pastor* (Ephesians 4:11) - Latin for *shepherd*

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The Shepherd is the Son of God (*John 10:21-42*)

Where was Jesus 2.5 months later when the Good Shepherd theme was further explained?

John 10:22-23

Temple's Court of the Gentiles was between the Royal Porch and Solomon's Porch

Porches were 40 ft tall and roofed over, People prayed and rabbis taught there

Jesus walked through Solomon's Porch to keep out of wintry weather

Had the Jews finally realized who this Good Shepherd really was?

John 10:24

Why had they not been able to understand despite the evidence of His words and works?

John 10:25-26

What more did Jesus have to say about His sheep?

John 10:27-28

Why is no one able to steal these sheep from Jesus?

John 10:29-30

How did the Jews respond to His direct answer?

John 10:31-33, 38-39 (31-42)

God's Eternal Plan For His Sheep (*Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-16*)

How did God feel about the false shepherds who abused His flock?

Jeremiah 23:1-2

How would God shepherd these people?

Jeremiah 23:3-4

How did the shepherds over God's flock act as hired hands?

Ezekiel 34:1-10

How would God take care of the problem?

Ezekiel 34:11-16

How sincerely would He search for His sheep?

Luke 15:1-10

Closing Prayer

**Response** - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. In what ways do I recognize and follow Jesus' voice?  
(*John 10:2-4; Psalm 23; 28:8-9; Ezekiel 34:25-31; Matthew 23:1-4, 13-15*)
2. How have I listened to and followed the voices of thieves and robbers?  
(*John 10:1, 5; Psalm 119:176; Jeremiah 23:30-40; 50:6-7; Ezekiel 13:10-12; Matthew 7:15-23; 1 Peter 2:25*)
3. How do I try to enter through the gate of Jesus?  
(*John 10:7-9; Psalm 100; Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23; Luke 13:23-30; Rev. 21:10, 25-27; 22:14-15*)
4. Does Jesus recognize and accept me as one of His sheep or as a goat?  
(*John 10:25-28; Ezekiel 34:17-24; Matthew 25:31-46*)
5. Would Jesus recognize me as a shepherd, as a hired hand or as a thief to others?  
(*John 10:1-13; Numbers 27:16-17; Jer. 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Matthew 18:10-14; 1 Peter 5:1-4*)