



Going Beyond the Sermon

Sunday, April 25, 2021 – Dr. John Stephens

“Listening to the Shepherd’s Whisper”

John 10:11-18

Bible S.W.A.P.

S-Scripture

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care 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 I have other sheep that do not belong to 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 in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes^[a] it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

W-What Does it Say and What Can I Obey?

For this sermon series, the Going Beyond the Sermon notes will look to each Scripture passage for direction in discipleship. We will make connections with the stages of discipleship being experienced by the characters in the stories and where we are in the discipleship journey. For the “What Can I Obey?”

portion of study, we will be challenged to take a next step of faith, with the goal of using the passage and notes as a tool for processing and learning to direct ourselves to grow in closeness to Christ.

If you read all of John 10, you find Jesus attempting to make the point that he is the Messiah. He starts with a “figure of speech” that the Pharisees, his listeners, do not understand. So he plainly says, “I am the gate for the sheep.” He follows this with “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” His authority comes from God and God loves him for his willingness to lay down his life of his own accord. Jesus paints a picture of a hostile world full of thieves, strangers, and hired hands who do not care for the sheep as he does. Listen for the “tone of voice” with which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, speaks as he describes his sheep who listen for his voice, know his voice, and follow him completely. In return he gives leadership, protection, and eternal life (v. 28).

The stage of discipleship depicted here is called “Come, Be Me.” Read Mark 3:14 and hear Jesus’ desire for his disciples to “be with him.” In the John passage the intimacy between sheep and shepherd oozes out in Jesus’ description of the relationship between them. He provides entrance and freedom, safety and security, stability, and constancy, and will give his life for them. It is a picture of unconditional love.

A-Apply

It is common in the Christian community to hear folks say, “If only I had a direct line to Jesus” or “I wish the Lord would just tell me what to do.” In this passage, Jesus seems to be speaking directly to this human need *and* God’s desire to meet our need for intimacy through a relationship with Jesus. The stage of discipleship that expresses this longing is called “Come, Be with Me.” This stage is characterized by people owning their faith. While still “doing,” you now embrace “being” with God. You notice that you depend less on church programming to deepen your connection with God. Your beliefs, character traits, daily rituals, behaviors, experiences, and expectations are changing in ways that others may begin to notice. You will look like a sheep! You are consistently responding to the voice of your Good Shepherd. To determine if this is your stage, read the following statements and see if they apply to you at this time in your life.

I attend worship regularly and also set aside time for daily personal worship.

I extend God’s hospitality to people inside the church and beyond.

I am exploring new spiritual disciplines to increase intimacy with God..

I apply Scripture to my life and allow others to hold me accountable in love to it..

I have discovered my gifts and passions and now serve regularly because it keeps me close to Christ..

I am tithing or moving toward it, and I examine how I spend the other 90 percent of my resources.

Today’s passage presents a beautiful picture of intimacy – between God and Jesus and between Jesus and his followers. A great next step for this stage of faith is to practice stillness. Take time regularly to be still, silent, and alone with God. Listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd and be willing to act on what you hear.

P-Pray*

On this day “be with” Jesus as he makes his way from his home base to the marketplace and synagogue (in Mark 3:1-19). Walk with him from the warmth and security of home, family, and friends out into the center of the crowds. Feel the power of Jesus, the power of humility, and the power of being firmly connected with God. What is it like to be so intimately connected with the God of the universe that you can walk into any situation and know that you are doing what God the Father wants from you?

Are you confident that you are doing what God created you to do?

*Each passage in this sermon series invites us to imagine the scene. We will use guided imagery from “Christheart” by Jeanne Miley, as prayer prompts. This week, the prompt is Being Family/Being Oneself, Day Two, p. 55.

**To learn more about the Stages of Discipleship, go to
www.chapelwood.org/mynextstep.**

*Going Beyond the Sermon is written by Teresa Rossy, Director of Grow Ministries,
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Source material is quoted throughout. The sermons are streamed online, and worship is in person at 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary of our Greenbay campus. Go to www.chapelwood.org for details.

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