
Lessons from Sheep



Sermon Topics

- ❑ 2015 - Psalms 23 The Lord is my Shepherd
- ❑ 2015 - Beware of Wolves
- ❑ Today - Lessons from Sheep
 - Physical characteristics and spiritual applications



Prominent in Biblical times

- ❑ Gen. 4:2 First mention with Abel
- ❑ Job 1:13 Job “7000 sheep...this man was the greatest...”
- ❑ 2 Sam. 7:8 David as a youth
- ❑ Lev. 1:10; 22:19; Num. 18:17 Key part of OT worship
- ❑ Num. 27:17; 1 Sam. 17:34; 1 Kings 22:17 Important role of shepherds
- ❑ Luke 17:7; John 2:14-15 Continued into NT times



Less Prominent Today



A collage of images related to smart home technology and energy efficiency. On the left is a Samsung smartphone displaying the 'eco walk Calculator' app, which shows 'You saved 6.5 trees' and 'Total 2014 trees'. In the center is a line graph titled 'Home Electricity Use' showing energy consumption for various appliances like a dryer, fridge, web server, outdoor lights, TV, and heater. To the right is a solar panel mounted on a white base. Below these are smaller images of a car's interior, a grassy field, and solar panels.



Less Prominent Today

- ❑ Modern urban/suburban world disconnected from rural life
- ❑ Need reminding to appreciate truths in God's word



Focus Areas

- ❑ Relatively defenseless needing protection
- ❑ Poor sense of direction
- ❑ Flock animals
- ❑ Trusting
- ❑ Can be overburdened
- ❑ Need a good shepherd
- ❑ Need to be good sheep
- ❑ Offered in sacrifice

Relatively Defenseless

- A herbivore generally lacking natural defenses, especially vulnerable are young lambs, diseased, elderly
 - 1 Sam. 17:34-35
 - *“But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; ...”*



Relatively Defenseless

□ Spiritual application

- Matt 9:36

- “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”

- Matt. 10:16

- “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves . . .”

- Luke 10:3

- “Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”



Relatively Defenseless

❑ Spiritual application

- Matt. 7:15

- ❑ *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”*

- Act 20:29

- ❑ *“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up ...”*

❑ To potentially include

- Friends
- Family
- Teachers
- Scientists
- Media
- “Christians”
- Members
- Ourselves



Poor Sense of Direction

❑ Stray off

- 1 King 22:17

- ❑ *... I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd*

❑ Spiritual application

- Isaiah 53:6

- ❑ *All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; ...*

- Isa. 55:8-9

- ❑ *8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. ...*

- Jer. 10:23

- ❑ *O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*

- Judges 17:6

- ❑ *everyone did what was right in his own eyes*



Flock Animals

- ❑ Tend to be social animals
 - *Sheep display an intensely gregarious social instinct that allows them to bond closely to other sheep and preferentially to related flock members. Flock mentality movements protect individuals from predators.*
- ❑ Spiritual application
 - Heb. 10:23-25
 - ❑ *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*
 - 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another,*



Flock Animals

□ Spiritual application

- Acts 20:28

- *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

- 1 Pet. 5:2

- *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;*



Trusting

- ❑ Trustingly follow the rest of the flock (or shepherd)
- ❑ Spiritual application
 - Ex. 23:2
 - ❑ *You shall not follow a crowd to do evil*
 - Jer. 50:6
 - ❑ *My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray;*
 - Matt. 7:13-14
 - ❑ *... wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ...*
 - Luke 6:39
 - ❑ *Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?*
 - Matt. 7:15
 - ❑ *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*



Can Be Overburdened

- ❑ Not a pack animal
 - Can get stuck on their back (British “cast down”)
- ❑ Spiritual applications
 - Psalm 30:10
 - ❑ *Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me; LORD, be my helper!*
 - Psalm 55:22
 - ❑ *Cast your burdens on the Lord, and He will sustain you*
 - Heb. 13:6
 - ❑ *So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”*
 - Gal. 6:2
 - ❑ *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*



Need a Good Shepherd



- Knows
- Leads
- Provides
- Protects



Need a Good Shepherd

- Due to these physical characteristics, a good shepherd is needed by the sheep
 - Lead/guide to suitable pasturage
 - Seek when straying
 - Help when burdened
 - Defend against predators
- John 10:1-15
 - *“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ... he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ... The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling ... who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep..”*

Need a Good Shepherd

❑ Spiritual applications

- Psalms 100:3

- ❑ *Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

- Isa. 40:11

- ❑ *He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.*

- Psalms 23 With the LORD as Shepherd:

- ❑ Provides our needs, brings us comfort, restores our soul, leads us on the paths of righteousness, assuages our fears, protects us from evil, accompanies us, comforts us



Need a Good Shepherd

□ Spiritual applications

- John 10:1-15

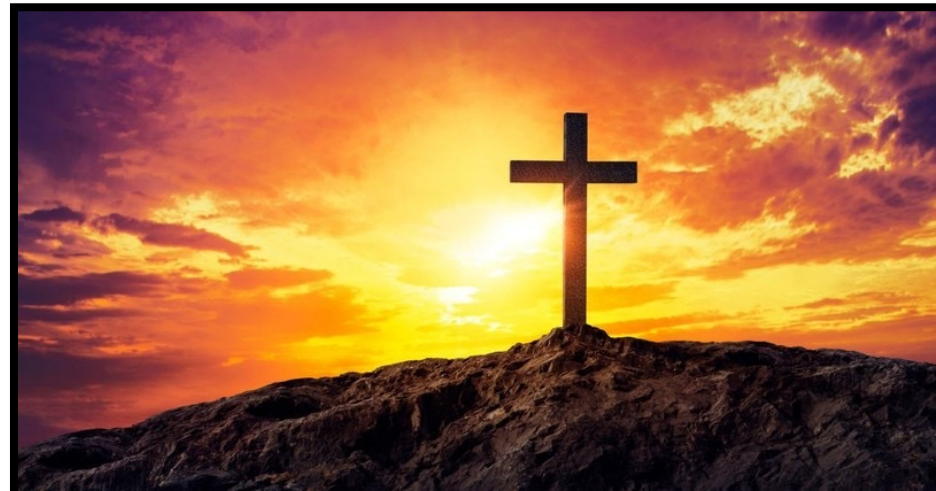
- *“... I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ... And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”*

- 1 Pet. 2:24-25

- *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

- John 1:29

- *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*



Need a Good Shepherd

- Concerned over lost sheep
 - Ezekiel 33:11:
 - *Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?*
 - Luke 15:1-7
 - *What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ... likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*
 - 2 Peter 3:9
 - *9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

Need to be Good Sheep

□ Trust and follow the Shepherd

- John 10:4-5, 14, 27

- *“And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. ... I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

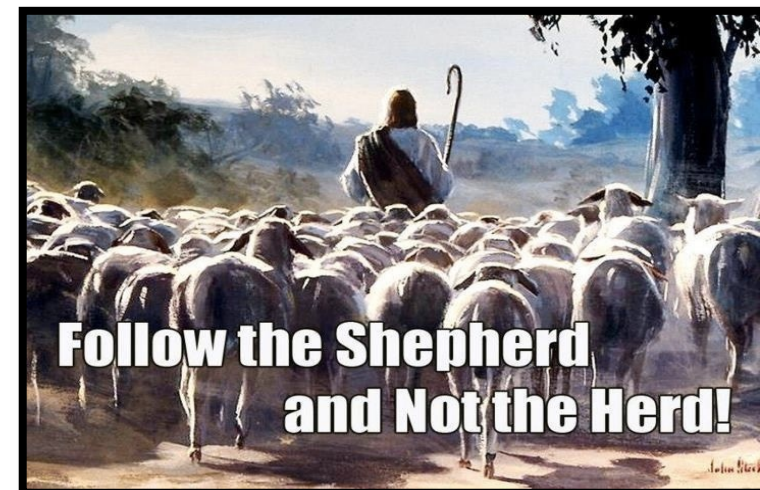
□ Be gentle, kind, compassionate, prayerful, and humble --- not predators

- Matt. 10:16

- *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be ... harmless as doves.”*

- Isa. 11:6; 65:25

- *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb ... the wolf and the lamb shall feed together*



Need to be Good Sheep

□ Be careful

• Matt. 10:16

- *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

• 1 John 4:1

- *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*

• Matt. 7:15-16

- *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.”*

• 1 Pet. 5:8

- *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*



Offered in Sacrifice

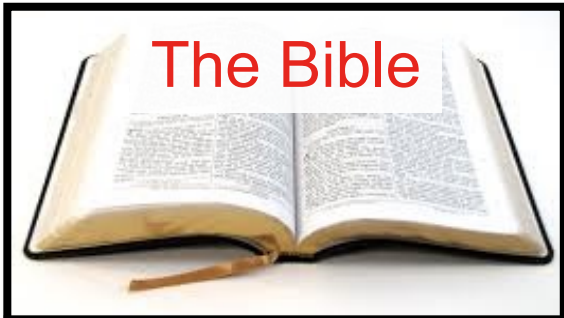
- ❑ Frequently associated with offerings to God – without blemish, best parts
 - Gen. 4:4; Num. 6:14; Lev. 14:10
 - ❑ *Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.*
- ❑ Spiritual application
 - Living sacrifice
 - ❑ Rom. 12:1
 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*
 - ❑ Heb. 13:15-16
 - *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*



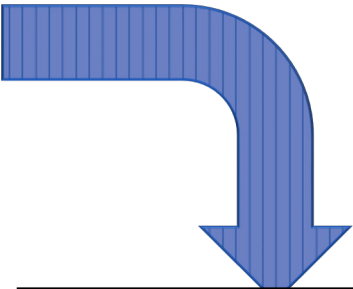
Conclusion



- Leads
- Provides
- Protects



- Needs met
- Goodness
- Mercy
- Confidence
- Comfort
- Peace etc.



Conclusion

- ❑ It is a personal relationship
 - “my Shepherd” – I belong to God
- ❑ Need to acknowledge our role and inability as sheep
 - Very counter-culture in a society that values strength, independence (insult to “follow like a bunch of sheep”)
 - Weakness, inability to provide for ourselves, wander off and get in trouble
 - Willingness to listen, follow, submit John 10:27
- ❑ Need to take practical steps to follow the Shepherd
- ❑ What about you?
 - Are you willing to admit you are a sheep and in need of a Shepherd?
 - Have you strayed away from the flock?

