

Good Pasture - John 10:14-21

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[0:00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast. I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Well, good morning everybody. Welcome to Calvary Chapel Charlotte. What a beautiful morning. Happy, I'm saying Memorial Day. Labor Day. Memorial Day, we say thank you for your service. On Labor Day, we say thank you for your taxes. Yes, I'm wearing glasses. It's happened. I can see you, but I can't see my Bible. That just happened this year. So, yeah. Alright, turn to John chapter 10 if you're not there already.

And we will continue through John, the book of John. I was getting excited. I was reading ahead. It's like, man, after John 10, we're like right on the heels of Jesus is headed for Jerusalem, his final time.

[1:43] He's going to have, he's going to meet with Mary and Martha in Bethany to raise Lazarus. And then a few days later, he's going to come back. And then he's going to come back. And then he's going to start that whole countdown towards crucifixion.

Now, there's months, months in between. Not us getting to that. But months in between the section we're in now and when we get there to John 11 and 12.

Because John doesn't give us everything. But right now we're finishing up this section where Jesus has been at the Feast of Tabernacles. He's declared himself the light of the world. And then he's been talking about, he talked about this parable we looked at the last couple of weeks.

Where he says he is the shepherd. He is the door of the sheepfold. We looked at the parable of the good shepherd. The true shepherd. How did I identify a true shepherd? He said in John 10, last week, in verse 11, So he's a shepherd that surpasses all others.

He's the most excellent. He's genuine. He's the real deal. How does he ensure his life? Or how does he ensure the life of his sheep? He does so by giving his life on their behalf, doesn't he?

[2:58] We saw last week, we looked at the hireling. And the hireling, the false shepherd, he demands life. What can he get from the sheep? Where the good shepherd gives his life.

The false shepherd, well, what can he gain out of this? The good shepherd looks for what he can give. The false shepherd claims to be from God. He says that he is someone who is there from God.

But the good shepherd, he says, I am God. So we've looked at the last couple of weeks. Last week, we looked at, the intro was talking about what is a shepherd? What does the scripture define as a shepherd of God's sheep?

And the week before, we looked at, you know, the sheep. And we had some very sheepish facts to look at. Well, today, we're going to look at pasture. What is it? What is good pasture?

Well, the word pasture, it just means where the flocks lie down, where the flocks remain, where the flocks rest. And I really liked this definition, the abode of a shepherd.

[4:01] So what is a pasture? It's where sheep are. But there's something else that needs to be there. It needs to be a shepherd there as well. What's the pasture? Remember, we looked at the scripture last week and where Peter says in 1 Peter 5, he tells the elders, the pastors he's writing to, he says, feed the flock of God, which is among you.

It wasn't a church on a farm full of sheep. He's using the same typology where he's referencing that God's people, they're like sheep.

And those who care for them are to feed them. So to feed the flock of God, that where Peter says in 1 Peter 5, 2, to feed them is literally to pasture them, pasture the flock of God.

He's simply passing on, Peter is, to those he's writing to, the admonition Jesus had given him. Remember, Peter, he had denied Jesus three times before the cock crew.

He went out and wept bitterly. Yeah, he did. Jesus appears to him after the resurrection and essentially restores him, the relationship, but it's not until Peter goes to Galilee with the other disciples that Jesus meets with him there and he restores him to ministry.

[5:14] And he says to Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these, more than the people, more than those that you feel like you need to have some kind of like credibility with.

And he says, Lord, you know I do. And he says three times to feed his sheep. The first time he says, feed my lambs and feed my sheep and feed my sheep. So where do God's people feed? If we're God's sheep and we're supposed to pasture, where do we do that?

Is it when we have really good, fun fellowship meals? You know, good food. Is that where we feed God's people? Where do God's people find good pasture? Good pasture is found by following the good shepherd, right?

That's one of our definitions. A pasture, the abode of the shepherd. Psalm 23, we all know that psalm, right? Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still water. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. We want you can look at Psalm 23 with me or just gonna look at a few of those verses of what we can see there.

[6:19] David is writing and saying his relationship with God. David has spent a lot of time with sheep. He sees reflected in his relationship with sheep.

He sees a reflection of, man, this is my relationship with God. The Lord is my shepherd. I love that. The Lord is. You can just stop right there. The whole rest of Psalm 23 is expounding upon that fact. The Lord is. I am Jehovah. The sufficient one. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. And what does this shepherd do?

He makes me lie down in green pastures. So good pasture is a place that's alive and it's edifying. Green pasture means lush, living grass. It's alive and it's edifying. The sheep are fed there.

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. It's a place of rest. The waters are still. The sheep are laying down. There's a place of refreshing.

[7:16] There's water there. There's a place of restoration. So good pasture is alive and edifying. It's a place of rest, refreshing, and restoration. He leads me in the paths of righteousness.

It's where the shepherd leads. I don't get to determine where my good pasture is. Lord, I'd really like it if I could be over here. This would fulfill me. This would satisfy me. And the good shepherd says, well, I'm going this way.

You see, I think as sheep, we want the good shepherd with us, don't we? If we go on to read in Psalm 23, you know, his rod and his staff, they comfort me. It's a comfort to know that he's there. Yet I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. They are with me. But what I really want as a sheep, I want the good shepherd to go my way. I want the shepherd to follow me.

Lord, we're going this way. Are you there? Good. You're going to keep the wolves away. You're going to give me good food. Okay. And instead, he's saying, no, no, no. This good pasture is found where he leads.

[8:14] He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. It's where the shepherd leads. Good pasture is found in the way of righteousness. And good pasture is ultimately for the shepherd's glory.

It's for his name's sake. But isn't it enough? You'd say, isn't it enough just to be a sheep, right?

That's the goal. That's the goal, just to go out and get people saved, right?

Well, yes. Yes, it is. But in Matthew 28, when Jesus gives his commissions to his disciples, he says, Go you, therefore, and teach. The word teach is disciple.

Disciple all nations. The goal is not just sheep, but well-fed sheep.

The good shepherd places his sheep in a pasture where he knows they can be healthy, fed, and grow. The idea is not just to get as many sheep into the field as you can.

[9:23] Would you want to go into a pasture that's full of sheep that look like that guy on the left? Oh, man, I want to go there. That looks like a great church. Oh, a bunch of malnourished, unhappy, skinny sheep.

No, you want to go where they're fat and fluffy. That's where you want to go. That's the pasture you want to be in. Paul says in Ephesians 4, And he gave some pastor teachers, literally, those who shepherd by teaching, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, for fat and fluffy sheep.

But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. And then you remember we've been referencing Acts 20, where Paul is on the shore of Miletus, and he tells them to take heed to yourselves and to all the flock of God.

And right before that, what does he say? I have not shunned and declared unto you all the counsel of God. Good pasture. Good pasture. It's where flocks lie down.

It's where flocks remain. It's where they rest. It's in the abode of the shepherd. He feeds us with good pasture from his word. And good pasture is filled with healthy sheep.

[10 : 36] Good pasture is filled with healthy sheep. Verse 14 in John 10. Jesus, the good shepherd, will speak about sheep today.

We've looked at, last week, we looked at the wolf and the hireling. We've looked at the door. Two times Jesus says, I am the door. Two of his I am statements. And two times he'll say, I am the good shepherd.

Today he'll say it the second time here in verse 14. I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. So the good shepherd has a good relationship with his sheep.

See, the hireling, remember the hireling we saw, sees sheep what? He sees in the sheep only an opportunity for reward. What can I get out of this? What can I get from these sheep? The good shepherd, though, the good shepherd sees an opportunity for relationship.

He says, I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and am known of my sheep. Praise the Lord. The good shepherd looks at us and says, I know you.

[11 : 44] But I wonder how often I am taking time to get to know him. Thank you, Lord, for the good pasture. It's green. Thank you. Oh, still waters. This is a great place, Lord. Do I spend time with him?

Am I there for the shepherd? Or am I there because I like the sheep? Or am I there because I like the grass? See, the good shepherd, he sees an opportunity for relationship.

The good shepherd is the I am. And the I am relates to his people in relationship. In Ezekiel 34, we've been looking at Ezekiel talking about the different, the shepherds and the flocks.

And he says this, thus shall you know that I, the Lord, their God, am with them. And that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And you, my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord.

The I am, the God of this universe, he says, I want a relationship with you. How? How? How does the I am relate to his people, Israel, as a shepherd?

[12 : 49] Well, he gives us a few places that he does that. He relates in commitment, in cost, and in character. He said to them, you are my flock, and I am your God, and you are men.

So commitment, in Jeremiah 30, he says, for I am with you, saith the Lord, to save you. Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a full end of you. But I will correct you in measure, and will not leave you altogether unpunished.

And it's Zechariah, verses 13 through 7, I mean, 13, 7 through 9, I'm sorry. We see cost.

He's committed to his people. He says, I will not make a full end of you. I will restore you. And then we see the cost he's willing to pay for them. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.

Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. And I will turn my hand upon the little ones. Just old King James' way of saying, I will reach out, and I will take hold and protect the little ones.

[13 : 52] And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, through Jacob's trouble, and refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried, and they shall call on my name.

They shall say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And I will hear, and I will say, it is my people. And they shall say, the Lord is my God. He's willing to pay that cost to redeem Israel. And he has the character to go through with it. Isaiah 53, we all know this one. All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. So he opened not his mouth.

He had the character to stand there and take it and say, I will not open my mouth. The I am relates to his people in relationship. In verse 15, Jesus says, you know, he said, I know my sheep and they

know me.

[14 : 59] And then he says, as the Father knows me, even so know I the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. A true shepherd emulates the Father's heart. Because love for the sheep is born out of his relationship with his Father.

As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father. Therefore, it's natural to lay down my life for the sheep. See, the Father did not withhold his son, did he?

And therefore, the shepherd did not withhold himself. He's emulating the Father's heart. Romans 8:32, he that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. For sheep?

Who would give their son for the sake of sheep? How shall he not also with him also freely give us all things? A true shepherd, he emulates the Father's heart. A true shepherd, a good shepherd, has a good relationship with his Father and with his sheep.

Another sheep I have in verse 16. Which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.

[16 : 13] There shall be one fold and one shepherd. A good relationship he has with his sheep. And here we see he has a good flock, doesn't he?

Other sheep I have, which I must bring, that are not of this fold. What's he talking about here? What fold? We're going to look in a minute at the difference between a fold and a flock. Remember that's the homework I gave you last week?

What's the difference between a fold and a flock? I was going to make a joke there, it just came to mind. A fold is how my wife folds towels. A flock is just how I do it. That was free, it was in the moment.

Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. What fold is he talking about? The fold would be the sheep of Israel. The fold of Israel. Jesus is, first and foremost, the Messiah to the lost sheep of Israel, as he states a couple different times throughout his ministry.

Matthew 10, 5 and 6, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, as he sends the disciples out, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15, 24, it's when the Syrophenician woman is coming and begging bread, and the disciples say, send her away.

[17 : 23] And he says, I'm not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He's first and foremost, the Messiah to the lost sheep of Israel. We looked at one of the scriptures in Ezekiel a moment ago, in Ezekiel 34.

Here's another one. For thus saith the Lord God, behold, even I, I will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they've been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

Praise God. He's a faithful shepherd. But praise God, the plan has always been to use Israel to bring others, not into Israel's fold, but into the flock of God.

God has one flock of sheep, but multiple folds. So in John 16, or John 10, 16 here, we have the word fold used twice. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold.

Them also I must bring that there may be one fold and one shepherd. The first fold, the word means enclosure, sheep fold. It's where the sheep are kept. The second one actually means the flock of sheep, the body of sheep.

[18 : 41] So we could actually read this. If we look at the Greek definitions, John 10, 16, a better way of reading this would be, and other sheep I have, which are not of this sheep fold of Israel.

Them also I must bring. And they shall hear my voice. And there shall be only one flock and only one shepherd. Praise God. Isaiah 56, 8 says, The Lord which gathers the outcasts of Israel says, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.

See, as Jesus is speaking this to the Pharisees, to these religious Jews, the things that are ticking off in their mind are all these scriptures from the Old Testament. Other sheep I have, their mind should have gone here.

Oh, yet will I gather others. There's one flock and there's one shepherd. Even if there are distinctly different sheep that make up that flock.

Would you agree that there are distinctions within the flock? One flock, different distinctions.

Galatians 3, 28 says, There's neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for you're all one in Christ Jesus.

[19:53] Different, very distinctly different sheep. I mean, I look around and we're all very distinctly different. Different. The idea is that there's one flock.

There's no one that can say, well, I'm a greater sheep. Because if you look at all of these examples, they're all from the supposed greater to the lesser. Jew, I'm a Jew.

You're just a Gentile. I'm not lesser to the greater. It's comparing the two, bond nor free. Well, I'm free. So as a Christian, I'm a free Christian. Well, you're a slave. You're not as...

Or in that society, I'm a man. You're just a woman. No, Jesus is removing those barriers. But there's still distinctions. We're distinctly different sheep.

There's a fold of Israel. But it's one flock. Jesus would say in Luke 24, as he's walking on the road to Emmaus, remember, he meets the two disciples. And they're hot in discussion about what's been going on.

[20:52] Jesus has been crucified. They heard that some people had risen, said that he rose from the dead. And he said unto them, what things are you talking about? And they said unto him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him.

See, but we trusted that he would have been that which would have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, it's been two days. And I mean, I'm sorry, today is the third day since these things were done.

So we thought this would have been the one. But the chief priests, the rulers of Israel, put him to death. I thought God was supposed to use Israel to be a light to the nations. God would fulfill his plan.

Just as we read in Isaiah, God would fulfill his plan to gather other sheep with or without Israel's cooperation, but still by their involvement, wasn't it?

God fulfilled his plan with their cooperation. No, they rejected Messiah, but they were still involved. And Jesus then goes on and says to them, oh, fools. Only Jesus can say that in a way that you're like, oh, thank you, Lord.

[22:06] Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Those in Israel's fold, they are the people that God has used to bring the Messiah. They are the people that God has used, even without their cooperation, but by their involvement to gather other sheep.

And God is not done with them. He will use them again. And yet those in Israel's fold must still enter God's flock, right? The fold where the sheep are kept. The flock is the sheep itself.

Those in Israel's fold, they must still enter God's flock by the same door that we must enter, that all must enter. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which works by love.

Availeth. How many of you used that word this week? Good old King James. Availeth. Just means that which is, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails anything.

[23:13] It just means it's not going to give you a leg up. It's not going to give you a greater standing. It doesn't mean that there is no Jew. It doesn't mean there is no Gentile. Paul will go on to say, in Corinthians, I believe, he says, hey, have you been called in circumcision?

Do not become uncircumcised. Have you been called a Jew? Be a Jew. Have you been called a Gentile? Remember, don't become a Jew. That's not the point. But the way we become a flock, part of the flock of God, is by faith.

We all come by the same door. We all come into the flock by the same way. Israel cannot say, well, God used us. Yeah, he did. God also used Nebuchadnezzar.

God also used Balaam's donkey. The shepherd's work we see here is imperative, isn't it? I must bring. They shall hear. They shall be. It's an imperative work.

The shepherd must seek sheep. He must speak to sheep, and he must keep the sheep. Imperative. This is not something he takes lightly. It's not something he looks at and says, well, I guess I'm going to do this.

[24:18] He says, I must bring them. They shall hear, and there shall be one fold. I wonder, as a sheep that's being so intentionally sought by my shepherd, I wonder if my response is as imperative

to the shepherd's call.

When he seeks me with such intentionality, when he speaks to me, when he keeps me, is my response so imperative? And I must seek the shepherd.

I must speak with the shepherd. I must hear his voice. I must abide. Is it as imperative? You see, as sheep, he brings us, he speaks to us, and he unites us.

That's what he does. If we let him do it, he'll bring us into good pasture. He'll bring us. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I'll draw all men unto me.

He brings us. He speaks to us. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. And he unites us. In John 17, where he prays, Father, I pray that they also may be one in us, and that the world may believe that you have sent me.

[25:30] Do I allow him to do that? Do I allow him to draw me in, to speak to me and unite me? Or am I just happy I'm a sheep? Nothing wrong with being happy you're a sheep.

But understand what that means, and whose sheep you are. Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life. For what purpose?

That I might take it again. The Son's highest act of love and obedience to his Father was to do what? To lay down his life for his Father's sheep.

The Father's love to the Son was displayed how? That he raised the Son from the dead. The Son honored the Father by the highest act of love he could. Dad, I'm going to go, and I'm going to give my life for your sheep.

Who gives their life for his sheep? And the Father said, Son, death will not overcome you. I'm going to raise you from the dead.

[26:30] And because of that, who else will death not overcome? Sheep. Those are a part of his flock. You see, the Son took up his life again on behalf of the Father's love and on behalf of the Father's sheep.

Yes, it was God's love that raised the Son from the dead. And he did that to honor his Father in response to that love. But he did it for us on behalf of sheep.

So we see that our good shepherd brings us into good pasture, a good relationship, and a good flock. God's flock is a good flock to be among.

And this fold that has some of the flock, I like this fold. It's pretty good, too. God has given us some good pasture.

Verse 18, Jesus says, speaking of his life that he's laid down, he says, no man takes it from me. But I lay it down of myself. I have power, or in the Greek there, I have ability. I have the ability to lay it down.

[27:33] I have the ability to take it again. This commandment I have received of my Father. Here, the good shepherd who leads us into good pasture, he makes a good choice, a very good choice.

He says here that he has the ability to lay down and take up. What is Jesus? Remember? Tells us in the beginning of John, he is the word made flesh. He dwelt among us. So he is the embodiment of God's word.

And he's saying as God, the embodiment of God's word, I have the ability. I have the ability, not just to receive the command, to give the command, but I have the ability to give you the ability to obey the command.

Instead of paraphrasing, I'll just put it up there so you can read it. God's word contains not just the command to obey, but it gives us the ability to obey. See, when we read in God's word, the shepherd's voice to his sheep, we don't have to read it in a way where I can't do that.

No, of course you can't. You're a sheep. You can't do that. But the shepherd can. God's word contains not just the command to obey, but when it does, it gives us the ability to obey.

[28:48] I can step by faith because the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, it dwells in you. And he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwells in you.

So the shepherd, the good shepherd, he made a good choice. Remember the hireling's choice?

The hireling's choice, he chose his own gain, his own safety, and his own care. That's all it was to him.

What can I gain? As long as it doesn't cost me anything. As long as I can be safe. And what about my needs? What about me? What does the good shepherd choose?

The good shepherd chose grace over his own gain. He chose sheep over his own safety. He chose the cross over his own care.

That's our good shepherd. Studying this this week, all I kept coming back to was like, who does this for sheep? I mean, they all look the same and there's millions of them. There's sheep everywhere.

[29:49] You go, you find someone who has sheep, there's, how do you tell the difference? What's it matter? They lose them all the time. You know, it's a sheep. Who does this for sheep?

The good shepherd. Grace over his own gain. Sheep over his own safety. And the cross over his own care. We read it a few minutes ago. All we like sheep have gone astray.

What did he do? He said, well, you know, I got other sheep. I'll let that part of the flock go. They're a little goofy over there anyway. And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed. He was afflicted. Yet he'd opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and the sheep before her shearer is dumb. That's not the place for the shepherd.

The sheep get sheared and the sheep gets slaughtered. But not the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. What kind of shepherd would choose to allow himself to be crucified by sheep?

[30:51] Who would do that? Tell you what, it's one worth following. A shepherd would allow himself to be crucified for sheep? That is a shepherd worth following.

The father's heart. The father's heart is to save sheep even at the cost of his son. And so Jesus says here, this commandment have I received of my father because his heart is for sheep.

Our last few verses for this morning. There was a division, therefore, among the Jews for these sayings. Shepherds' words divide, don't they?

The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder, soul and spirit of joints and marrow is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Shepherds' word, it divides. It divides in a way that honestly I never expect it to when it does. What I think and then it divides and I think, I thought, Lord, I thought that was what you wanted and it's not.

[32:06] And you know, it's never in condemnation. It's never like, oh, I knew that's not what you wanted and I've been doing that this, no, it's usually, that's what you wanted, Lord? I can do that.

I can do that, Lord. I can take that step. I can obey. I have that ability, not in myself. But he's not going to ask me to do something that's outside of my ability with his leading.

It doesn't mean it's something I'm going to be like, yes, I'm able. No, he's the one that's able.

There's a division, therefore, among the Jews, again, for these sayings.

As we've seen again and again and again, Jesus keeps repeating himself to the Pharisees the same words and they just keep in one ear and out the other. And many of them said, we saw this phrase in John 8, we said it's going to come back around to bite them.

Not Jesus, but the Jews. And many of them said, he has a devil and is mad. Why do you hear him? And others said, these are not the words of him that is a devil.

[33:06] Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? In John 8, the Jews said unto him, when they're trying to just discredit him because they can't speak against the truth, well, didn't we say that you're a Samaritan and you have a devil?

It's like, ah, sticks and stones. What's it matter? What's it matter what they're saying? Well, it does matter what's said. Because a lie often enough repeated, someone's going to believe it.

It becomes trendy to say things. In verse 52 in John 8, again they said unto him, now we know you have a devil.

Who's going to believe that? Well, here we are in John 10 and somebody believed it. Somebody believed it and many of them said, it's grown here, this group, he has a devil and is mad.

Be careful. Be careful of your sources. Who's speaking into your life? What words are you hearing? Oh, that doesn't affect me. That's being repeated over and over, this idea.

[34:12] The shepherd's words divide. But the shepherd's words, they also draw, don't they? They don't just divide. They don't just push people away. There's a group of people here that are saying, these are not the words of him that has a devil.

Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? You see, they're recognizing, as we talked about when Jesus healed the man that was born blind, it wasn't a healing. The Jews believed that if you were congenitally blind, to be restored to sight, to have sight, it took an act of creation.

Only God could do that. You and I have had an act of creation that only God could do to restore our sight. The shepherd's words divide, but they also draw.

John 6, 44, no man can come unto me except the Father which has sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. You see, the shepherd, his sacrifice, it was not forced, it was not coerced, it was not manipulated.

Nobody convinced him to do this. It wasn't like the sheep got together and came to the shepherd and said, you know, we took a poll, we voted, and we're going to crucify you because we don't want to die.

[35 : 22] That isn't how it worked. They didn't strong arm him. You know, you see a hundred sheep chasing down the shepherd, we're going to get him. Ooh, scary sheep. No, he willingly gave himself.

The shepherd's sacrifice, it was not forced, it was not coerced, it was not manipulated, and neither will he force, coerce, or manipulate his sheep into a good relationship, a good flock, and a good decision.

He's not going to force you. He's not going to manipulate you, but he wants to have a good relationship with you. He wants you in a good flock. He wants you to make the same good decisions that lead to that pasture, that place where you can lie down, those green, lush, living places in his word.

In Hebrews 12, the scripture tells us that we are to lay aside, that we are to lay down the things that beset us, because in Christ, we have that ability.

As the flock of God, we've entered into the good pasture of the good shepherd. We've entered not into just his good pasture, we've entered into his good life, where we now have the ability to lay down and to take up just as he did.

[36 : 39] We can lay down our lives. We can lay down the sin, the flesh, and our cares. We can lay them down. The world can't do that. The sheep that are not part of his flock can't do that.

And that's where I was referencing Hebrews 12, 1. Let us lay aside every weight in the sin which does so easily beset us. We can do that, so we can run with patience that raised that before us. Because of his good pasture and his good life, we can lay down the flesh. Colossians 3, 8. But now you also put off all these.

And he goes on to list all the deeds of the flesh. You can put those off. You don't have to bear them. We can lay down our cares. I mean, you may not have used that old King James word earlier, but have you had any cares this week?

You wished you could lay down that just seemed to cling to you? Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. What a way he cares for you, too. We can lay down our lives and we can take up his life.

[37 : 52] The life of Christ, the life of the Spirit, and life in the Word. We can take up the life of Christ, but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ. Make no provision for the flesh.

You can do that. Galatians 5, 22-26, but the fruit of the Spirit is love. And then it goes on to list the attributes of love. If we live then in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another, putting those off. What can we do? We can take up the life of the Spirit. We can walk in the Spirit. Sheep outside the flock of God, they can't walk in the Spirit.

No matter how good a Gentile you might be, I'm a good person. You can't do that. No matter how valid your claim is as a, I'm of the house of Israel, you can't do that.

You can't take up His Spirit until you take up His life. And lastly, we can take up the Word. I love God's Word.

[38 : 55] It feeds me so well. It's a good pasture. It's still waters. You know, I've never come to the Word. I mean, like, man, this is crazy. It's like, the waters are all churned.

It's like rapids and the grass is dead and the shepherd's angry. No, never. We can put on, we can take up His life as we put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

when you take up His life, the life of Christ, the life of the Spirit, and you take up the Word, you're taking up good pasture. You're in a place where you can have a good relationship, a good shepherd, a good flock, good decisions.

Are you in good pasture? Are you in a good relationship with your shepherd? Because remarkably, our shepherd doesn't just care for sheep.

He cares for the individual sheep. He knows every single one. Think how big His flock is. And every single sheep, He knows them inside and out.

[40 : 12] He cares for everyone. He knows your favorite part of the pasture to eat in. He knows what's good for you. He knows when it's time to lie down. He knows when it's time to head back out of the fold, out into the wilderness to a new pasture.

He knows when you're going to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Good pasture, it's alive and edifying. Is your relationship with Jesus alive and edifying?

It's a place of rest, refreshing, and restoration. Is your relationship with Jesus a place of rest, refreshing, and restoration? Good pasture nourishes the soul.

I don't know any other place to get nourishment to the soul than Jesus. Good pasture is where the shepherd leads. I think that's the hardest one for us, hardest one for me.

Because I always know where we should go. And he just won't follow me. Good pasture, is your relationship with Jesus being led by Jesus, or are you trying to lead it?

[41 : 17] Good pasture is found in the way of righteousness. Listen, your relationship with Jesus is only a righteous relationship. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

But shall we continue in sin that grace shall abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? That's a nasty, stinky, yucky pasture. Get out of there. Good pasture is for the shepherd's glory.

Your relationship with Jesus brings him glory. God's put us in a flock with other sheep. He's put us in this fold with these sheep.

And part of following the shepherd is learning to love and live with sheep. It's learning to care for sheep. It's learning to help them be fat and fluffy. So if you need prayer, I'd love to pray with you.

Father, thank you so much, Lord, as we just looked at this short section of scripture this morning, Lord, because we want to take some time to just sit with our shepherd. Thank you, Jesus.

[42 : 28] Thank you, Jesus, for providing a place for us to come into a good relationship with our good shepherd, to come into good pasture, to come into a good decision, the best decision we ever made, to go through that door and into the flock of God.

Lord, there are other sheep that you have and them you must also bring. And Lord, we know in context that meant that outside of Israel, you would open a door, Lord, you would open that door to all who would come in.

And Lord, for us sitting here in Charlotte, there are other sheep living next door to us. There are other sheep living down the road. There are other sheep in this city that you must bring. So Lord, we want to be a place of good pasture.

We want to be a place with healthy sheep. We want to be a place where the good shepherd dwells. Meet with us, Lord, as we respond to our shepherd's call.

We love you and in Jesus' name, amen. Guys, we're not sufficient. Sheep are not going to change the world. We're not sufficient, but our sufficiency is of God who has made us able ministers of the new covenant.

[43 : 49] He's our sufficiency. Let's partake together. What a good shepherd.

What a good day. What a good God. Let's stand. Let's worship. Let's go out with praise. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you. May the Lord be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you. Give you peace.