

**Intro:** Did you know that in Jesus day shepherds were not allowed to be witnesses and give testimony in a court of law? Many of the religious leaders of the day disqualified them under the “wicked” or sinful rule...meaning because they were nomadic and often had the reputation of being untrustworthy they would not give true witness! Because they were often dirty, and unkempt, ceremonially unclean because of the work that they did every day...they were the underclass of polite society.

With that as background...don't you find it interesting that God chose a shepherd, David to be one of the greatest Kings of Israel...and shepherds to be the FIRST witnesses to the birth of His Son! “Hey...you guys...the ones that the Sadducees and Pharisees have rejected and discounted...Yes...YOU are to be witnesses to the greatest event known to mankind!” I think he was sending a message: that the work of Jesus was for EVERYONE, not just the acceptable and religious. Not just those who “had it together”...but everyone. You see, the religious leaders of Jesus day were much like those that Ezekiel took to task.

- Ez 34:1-10

Against THAT background... In John 10 Jesus identifies himself as the GOOD shepherd. He goes on to describe for us what that means. .” That is part of “The Promise” of Christmas! That Jesus Himself is going to be OUR shepherd. That just as his ancestor David wrote...The Lord is my shepherd...I shall not want! Look with me at that Promise...a promise He is making to all who believe in Him. Jesus says there are 4 things we need to know about the ministry of The “Good Shepherd

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### 1. The Good Shepherd KNOWS You. Vs 14-15

There are a number of different words of “know” in the greek NT.

Some talk about “seeing”, knowing facts: Others talk about grasping, recognizing, comprehending: That's what is used here.

Know: Lit = *to grasp or understand; completely or absolutely. Often used to imply knowing personally via relationship*

This knowledge is much greater than just an INTELLECTUAL knowledge or grasp of facts...understand

**Illus:** I know Roland Martin...professional fisherman. Not the way I KNOW my wife!

When Jesus says: I KNOW my sheep, It comes with a large amount of content!

- **He has relationship with us:** Not just knows about us...but knows us completely...how we think, act  
He knows our strengths, our weaknesses, understand our temptations and our struggles  
We are HIS sheep!
- **He knows how you are “put together”** what makes you tick!  
Psalm 139:1-18  
He knows what you love...and what you fear. He knows what builds you up and tears you down  
He knows you better than you know yourself!

**Applic:** That is part of the Promise of Christmas. That God KNOWS you...totally and completely...and loves you, accepts you, seeks your best...and names you as one of His own! He knows you as completely as He knows His heavenly Father! Listen, there is nothing going on in your life that Jesus doesn't know...care about and is paying attention to!

### 2. The Good Shepherd SPEAKS To You. Vs 3-6

That's the promise of Christmas...That we are not left to our own devices...our own wisdom...our own understanding.

We have the promise that we can ASK at any time...and He will give us direction! He speaks to us...for a lot of reasons!

Look at what Jesus says he does for us: for “his sheep”

- **Calls them by name:**  
Jesus calls you to himself:  
**Illus:** When I became a believer  
*It was all intellectual...trying to understand intellectuall: until one day...Do you want to follow Jesus?  
I'm afraid...I will decide to be a Lutheran...good try...only Presbyterians are getting in!  
You want him to lead you...but you don't KNOW him...wouldn't recognize His voice if He spoke to you!  
After you know Him...then he can lead you! Right there I knelt down in my kitchen at home...  
He has been Leading ever since! Sometimes I don't follow very well...but He leads! Speaks, Guides!*
- **Leads your steps:** Not just into relationship with Himself  
But leading in the sense of “God...show me TODAY what I need to do...and not do  
How to love my spouse...Discipline my kids...be the kind of employee, boss, coworker friend
- **Goes BEFORE You!** What an amazing promise! Think about it. If you are paying attention...listening: Prepares way  
Following Him...you will NEVER go anywhere that He hasn't already been before you! He paved the way  
Going to walk through the fire? Been there! Stormy seas...Already charted a course...Problem: Been there done that!  
If you are listening to His call...following His voice...walking in His steps...He has already gone before you!

**Applic:** Here is our problem...We get out in life all by ourselves...Because we aren't listening!

If you are in a place where He ISN'T...then I promise you...you weren't listening His voice: He didn't lead you there  
He didn't lead you there...you got there all by yourself.

**BUT, here is the good news!** If you call on Him...He will lead you OUT!

~Daniel in the Lion's den: God was down there waiting when he hit the ground!

~Shadrach M, A: Waiting for them...come on in boys...Enjoy the fire. Warm yourself here.

King will be calling you out in a minute...til then...you just chill here with me!!!

~Moses and children of Israel in the desert...He led them every step of the way...got in trouble when they wandered!

### 3. The Good Shepherd Brings Others To Himself.

Vs 16

Others: Lit = *Others of a different kind!* (Right then Jesus was talking about Jewish and Gentile)

But the principle holds the same.

God wants to bring all people to Himself! Not just people “like us!” (That’s the point of the shepherds: Marginalized!)

- There are “other” sheep! God cares about just as much as us!

If we are to be a NT church...then we have a mission!

We are to care about people the way Jesus cared.

*Why do we have a Hispanic congregation as a part of our family? Mexico? Cuba? Other sheep!*

God’s work in and through us is GREATER than what He is doing at 475 W. Central Avenue!

Applic: Who are you praying for right now? Got the cards...what happened? Ahh..not for me! Or...Oh...Just what I need!

What “other” sheep in YOUR life? Who are you interceding before God to have know Him?

Who Do you PRAY for: Who are you asking God to bring to Christmas Eve?

Family, Friends; Co workers; Neighbors; Guests

Illus: *Christmas Eve passed Easter Sunday morning years ago as the #1 time people accept invitation*

Some of you might say...well...you know...that just isn’t my thing!

Listen to me...it was Jesus thing! And if you are following Him...It SHOULD be your thing too!

- I MUST bring them! Lit = *It is a moral obligation and moral imperative...I MUST bring them in!*

Who do you feel that way about this morning?

Danger: Walked with Him a while: Get complacent...Comfortable...Lose urgency and obligation

Lk 14:23

Jesus: Go compel them to come in

Israel: Is 42:6 Light to Gentiles (Became obstacle to Gentiles!)

Paul: 1 Cor 9:16 Woe to me if I do NOT preach the gospel I am compelled!

Applic: Here is my prayer for you this Christmas. Embrace the promise...Bring others to Jesus

### 4. The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life For You!

Vs 11, 16, 17, 18

We read that, and our mind goes immediately to the Cross, right? And it should.

Jesus lay down His life for us...It cost Him everything to bring us to the Father

If there has never been a time that you have placed your faith and trust in Jesus to do that...bring you to God...NOW!

But...I think He is talking about MORE than just His death on the cross!

- Daily cost of listening...following...walking with the Father. “The Son does NOTHING the Father doesn’t direct”
- Cost of His family...remember when they thought he had lost His mind
- Cost of the acclaim of this world...being despised and rejected...The King of Glory pushed aside and ignored
- The cost of not being accepted: John in ch 1 “He came to those that were his own...own did not recognize Him!
- Cost of his friends deserting Him in his greatest time of need...

Yet He CHOSE the path...of Laying Down His life:

~No one takes it from me

~When trouble comes...I’m not a hired hand...I’m not going ANYWHERE....

~He is that way with you...whatever you have taking place...

~The Good Shepherd is there.

Applic: Who do you love that way?

Who do you care for that way?

Who do you pray for that way?

Who are you giving your life for that way?

CONCL: David said it thousands of years before Jesus did... “The Lord is my Shepherd”

He KNOWS you...Every single part...and loves you...Right where you are:

He Speaks to you...To guide you (come and seek guidance)

To call you to Himself...and to the Father (Come to pray and know Him)

He brings you...and OTHERS to the Father: Come yourself...Come for Others

He lays down His life for you...Every single day...

And...If you know Him...He calls you to do the same for others

Come pray...for yourself...For others that need to know Him