

Jesus Christ & His “I AM” Statements

I AM the good Shepherd (John 10:11& 14)

@Concord Community Church on 07/07/2022

Bible reading: John 10:11-18

Today's subject is the 4th “I AM” statement of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Gospel of John in the New Testament. In this claim, Jesus presents Himself as the true Shepherd and He continues to contrast Himself and false shepherds (false teachers & religious leaders). Revealing Himself to be “the good Shepherd”, Jesus spoke some of the most beautiful, heart-reaching words recorded in all the Scriptures.



Shepherds

The Shepherd had a major role to play in biblical times. Basic tasks included the feeding & watering of flocks, protecting them from dangers and leading them to safety and pasturage. The image of the shepherd is thus used to refer to God's love, care and guidance of His people and also to suggest that sinful human beings are like wayward sheep.

Shepherds were generally regarded as having low social status. However, the term was also used to refer to political & spiritual leaders within Israel and subsequently within the church. The Prophet Ezekiel criticises the false shepherds, who have led Israel to its state of political & spiritual decline. He looks forward to coming of the true shepherd, who will care for the nation properly.

The OT hope of a future shepherd finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, who is the "Good Shepherd" and who is prepared to lay down his life for his sheep. He therefore sets a model for leadership within the church. Christian pastors (derived from the Latin word for shepherd) must therefore care for their people and give them guidance & leadership.

In this 4th I AM, Jesus declares Himself to be the promised good shepherd, who was prophesied throughout the OT (Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:23 and 37:24). This metaphor/ symbolic image pictures Jesus' tender and devoted care for His followers. He is constantly watching over them to guide and keep them from harm.

JESUS' WORK AS THE SHEPHERD (fourfold)

1. Jesus Christ is the *Good Shepherd*. He is called "good" because He risks and sacrifices His life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15; Psalm 22)
2. Jesus Christ is the *Great Shepherd*. He is called "great" because He arose from the dead and He perfects the sheep (Hebrews 13:20-21)

3. Jesus Christ is the *shepherd and overseer* of our souls. He is called the “shepherd & overseer” because He welcomes those who wandered off and went astray (1-Peter 2:25).

4. Jesus Christ is the *Chief Shepherd*. He is called “chief” because He is to return to earth with great glory to reward the faithful (1-Peter 5:4).

Note: God is also called a Shepherd in Scriptures (Genesis 48:15; Psalm 23:1; 77:20; 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34: 11-31).

THE MEANING OF “GOOD SHEPHERD”.

We see the contrast between the true shepherd and false shepherd in the verses 11-13 of our reading in the Gospel of John, chapter 10. The false or bad shepherd is a mere hireling. The hireling flees when danger arises, but the true shepherd gives his life for his sheep. Two points to consider:

a. He is the one who sacrificed His life (v11).

Jesus is called the “Good Shepherd” because He gave and sacrificed His life for the sheep. The image is of a shepherd fighting lions, wolves, bears, or some other kind of ravenous (very hungry) animals in order to save the lives of his sheep. Jesus took on our mortal enemy- the devil, and gloriously defeated him. But it cost our Shepherd His life.

The word “**for**” in V11 is “*huper*” in Greek. A simple word with profound meaning when used with the death of Christ. It proclaims the most wonderful truth known to humanity. It does not mean that Christ died only as an example for us, showing us how we should be willing to die for the truth or for some great cause. What it means is that Christ died *in our place, in our stead, as our substitute*. This meaning becomes unquestionably clear, when read Ephesians 5:2 and 1-Peter 2:21-22.

b. He is not a hired or employed shepherd (vv12-13).

Jesus is called the “Good Shepherd” because He is not a hired or employed shepherd. Jesus is the Shepherd by birth. He was born to be the Shepherd with all the Shepherd’s rights. The sheep are His, and He of the sheep’s. The hired shepherd is not the true, permanent shepherd; he is just a man passing through, hired to provide temporary help to look after the sheep until the real shepherd comes along. In the context of verses 12 & 13, the hired shepherd is a false, unfaithful, and irresponsible shepherd, who has little if any sense of responsibility for the sheep.

Traits & Characteristics of a false shepherd.

- a. He seeks to benefit himself, not the sheep
- b. He is shepherd for what he can get out of it, not to serve and care for the sheep
- c. His primary interest is not the sheep but job security: wages & benefits, position & prestige, money & comfort.
- d. He values himself more than the sheep.
- e. He seeks his own things and not the things of others (1-Cor 10:24; Philippians 2:3-4).
- f. He has no natural care for the state of the sheep (Philippians 2:20).
- g. He has no interest in seeking the lost sheep, lets his life be threatened in the wilderness (Luke 15:4).

THE PROOF THAT JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

What distinguishes the good shepherd from the hireling/false shepherd? Jesus offers us four proofs that identify the good shepherd.

1. He knows His sheep (v14).

Jesus knows His sheep, and they know Him. There is an intimate knowledge between Jesus and His sheep. He knows them, their lives, their being, their all. He knows them

- By name, individuality and personally
- In all their joy and blessings
- In all their trials and sorrows
- In all their wanderings and stumbling
- In all their needs and lack

Jesus' sheep are always on His mind. He is constantly looking after them through His Spirit and caring for them through intercession as well as by companionship. This is proof that He is the "Good Shepherd" of the sheep. Scripture confirms the following:

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out (John 10:3)

But if anyone loves God, he is known by God (1-Corinthians 8:3).

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "let everyone who names the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity." (2-Timothy 2:19).

Jesus' sheep know Him as well, His life, his being, His all. They know Him, believing and trusting

- His love and care
- His mind and word
- His companionship and leadership
- His experience and knowledge
- His destiny and pasture (heaven)

The fact that the sheep know Him so well is clear proof that Jesus is the "Good shepherd" of their lives. Scripture confirms the following:

They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.” (John 4:42)

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
(John 10:27)*

“And this is life eternal, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:7-8)

Which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until the day what has been entrusted (given under care) to me. (2-Timothy 1:12)

Other proofs:

2. He knows His Father—the owner of the sheep(V15a)
3. He will die for His sheep (V15b)
4. He works to increase the number of sheep (V16)

THE FINAL PROOF OF JESUS’ CLAIM: His death and Resurrection (VV 17-18).

The final proof that Jesus is the “Good Shepherd” is His sacrificial death and resurrection. A shepherd could do no greater “good” than to give his life for the sheep. A shepherd who died for his sheep was beyond question a good shepherd. But there is something else here as well. The owner is pleased, deeply appreciative that the shepherd gave his life for the flock. The owner deems the shepherd to be a “good” shepherd.

Jesus is loved by God for His great sacrifice (V 17).

Christ's sacrificial death is the very reason God loves His Son so much. Of course, this does not mean that God does not love his Son just because of who He is, God naturally loves His Son just as any person loves their children. But God loves Jesus even more, in a much more special way, because Jesus was willing to pay such a price to bring people to God.

Note the teaching about the resurrection here. Jesus died so that He might arise from the dead. He took our sin upon Himself to free us from sin (that is, to provide righteousness for us—this is our position). The bible say's...

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1-Peter 2:24).

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin (1-John 3:5)

Then He arose from the dead to free us from death (that is, to provide eternal life for us).

It [righteousness] will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:24-25)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:4-5)

Jesus' death was the supreme act of obedience (V18).

Our Lord's death was the supreme act of obedience. He laid down His life of His own accord. It was voluntary; He willingly died. Nobody

took His life; He sacrificed it Himself. The power to take it was His and his alone.

Please note the critical point: This *charge or command* to die was from God. This fact gives a higher meaning to the death of Jesus than just meeting humanity's need. It means that Jesus not only died for our sins but also because He wished, above all else, to show His love and adoration for God by honouring Him through death.

This aspect of Jesus' death—an aspect that rises far above the mere meeting of our need—is often overlooked. For as giving Himself as an offering to God, Christ was looking beyond our need to the majestic responsibility of glorifying God. This means that His first purpose was the glory of God. He was concerned primarily with doing the will of God, with obeying God. God had been terribly dishonoured by the first human, Adam, and by all humans who followed him. Jesus Christ wished to honour God by showing that at least one human thought more of God's glory than of anything else. Jesus wished to show that God's will meant more to Him than any personal desire or ambition He might have. He wanted to demonstrate His love for the Father. Shortly before He went to the cross, Jesus stated this fact directly and clearly in John 14:31.

(Additionally, can also see Luke22:42 & John 5:30)