

# The Door is Always Open

## “The Parable of The Good Shepherd”



*“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.” John 10:9*

This parable found in John 10:1-10 was spoken not only to the Pharisees of that day but it has several lessons for us today. On the surface it is just a story about a man who climbs over the fence to get into the sheep’s pen. Christ tells them that man is a thief and a robber. The true shepherd would go in through the gate. The porter, or gate keeper, would recognize him and let him in. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd and they follow him, but the sheep run from the stranger because they do not know his voice. It is a pretty simple story.

When we study the time when Christ was born, we recall that the shepherds were the ones given the good news that Christ was being born in Bethlehem. We also know from study that the shepherds were not very high on the social scale. They weren’t even allowed to testify in court. Yet, Christ chose the shepherd as His image. Christ could have chosen a king or a ruler, or even a judge but He chose the lowly shepherd.

This particular parable Christ went on to explain. He wanted to make sure they knew the message. He knew He was nearing the end of His time on this earth. The authorities were after him. He told them that He was the gate. So now we also have an allegory, another literary device to make sure people can relate to the idea. We use one thing to represent another idea or concept. It is widely used to make it easier to understand. This has caused much controversy among people who would try to discredit the gospels. Christ was trying to tell them that He was the shepherd who had given His life to come to earth so that we might enter the kingdom of Heaven. It is only through Him, the gate, that we can gain Eternal life.

He is both the gate and the shepherd. This doesn’t bother us if we believe in the Trinity, and know that Christ is the same as the Father and the Holy Spirit. A man can be a father, a son, a grandfather, and a loving husband all at the same time. But this is a walk of faith and can easily be misconstrued for some people. Remember, Christ said that not everyone would understand the parables. He also said that those who did would have their reward.

Christ told them that He would lay down His life for His sheep. I think this would have been something they didn’t understand at the time. The verse reads “Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.” John 10:17-18

I think he was talking about His coming back after He was crucified. He voluntarily allowed His life to be taken for our sins but also knew as God that He would come back again. How can one lay down his life and take it back again? Can we die and then resurrect ourselves? He was willing to give His life, so that His sheep might have life. If we remember some of the last words spoken by Christ found in Luke 22:42, He said: "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Christ was talking to the Jews at this time, but He also went on to say and there were other sheep and they too would become a part of His fold. Most people think He was referring to the Gentiles who were also hearing the message. Christ is telling them a lot in this parable and the explanation of it. He foretells His own death, but they didn't understand it. There are many things in it that we do not fully comprehend today even though we know the history of what happened to Christ and have 20/20 hindsight!

I think this parable can only be accepted through the faith of a child. Maybe that is why Christ spoke in story form, and even then they are too difficult for us to fully comprehend. We often wander from the fold of the Shepherd.

One of the most comforting passages in the Bible also talks about Christ as our shepherd. What a wonderful promise that He is always there to guide us if we ask and follow. As you read it, think of all the promises these few verses give us.

### Psalm 23:1-6

*"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

Prayer: Father, You have given Your life for our salvation. Help us to give of ourselves through Your love so that others will come to know You as their Shepherd and listen to Your voice calling all of us to believe and trust in Your love. We know that you are always there, there is always pasture for us and that goodness and mercy will be with us always if we follow Your lead. Amen

1. Why does Christ symbolize himself as a shepherd?
2. Why were the Jews trying to find something negative about Christ?
3. Were there Gentiles who were also following Christ as this time?
4. What promises are we given through this parable?
5. How does the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm fit into this parable?

### The Parable of the Good Shepherd

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, ‘He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.’ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.” John 10:1-6*