

**Livin' the Life**  
**The Shepherd and the Sheep**  
**John 10:1-10**  
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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series in the Gospel of John, *Livin' the Life*. Today we look at the passage where our sermon series comes from, John 10:1-10. Last week we saw that Jesus' heal of the blind man created a controversy with the Pharisees who expelled the man because of his testimony about Jesus. So, we see this theme again in John's gospel, Jesus divided humanity between those who see him as the light and those who reject him as the light. Then Jesus began a conversation with the Pharisees about their blindness and this is where we pick up today in John 10:1-10. The passage can be divided in two sections. In verses 1-6, Jesus gives a metaphor contrasting a true shepherd and thieves and robbers then in verses 7-18 Jesus expands upon and explains this metaphor.

**Jesus is the True Shepherd Who Gathers his Sheep (1-6)**

Jesus starts by identifying thieves and robbers as those who do not have a legitimate right to the sheep so they climb over the fence to get to the sheep (1-2). A sheepfold is a public pen with stone walls which had a single entry point that was large enough to hold several flocks of sheep. At night, the shepherds of a town would bring sheep back from pasture to the sheepfold for protection. The gatekeeper was responsible for watching the sheep and guarding the entrance. Thieves and robbers had to jump the fence to get in. The Pharisees are thieves and robbers (see 9:41-10:1). Attacking the man Jesus healed and excommunicating him from temple and Jewish community is an example of harming the sheep. In contrast, the shepherd enters by the door because the gate keeper recognizes them and lets them in to get his sheep. So, Jesus is the true shepherd who is gathering his sheep while the Pharisees are thieves and robbers who are harming the sheep.

Then Jesus describes several characteristics of sheep. First, sheep hear his voice. Think back to chapter six, Jesus said only those who the Father draws come to Jesus (6:44; 8:47). The man Jesus healed hears Jesus' voice as true and so believes. The Father has drawn him and his believing is the work of God (6:29). Sheep hear Jesus' voice, recognize his claims as true, because the Father is drawing them and so they come to faith in Jesus. Second, the shepherd calls his own sheep by name. In the ANE shepherds identified their sheep by nicknames. His point is that he knows them and draws them to himself (6:34-35). Next, the shepherd leads the sheep out. In the morning the shepherd comes to take his sheep out to pasture. The gatekeeper would let him in, then he would call his sheep to himself and lead them out of the sheepfold to pasture. The sheep follow the shepherd because they know his voice. Jesus is talking about coming to faith, believing, following him. What is the difference between the man Jesus healed and the Pharisees? The man saw the glory of Jesus; the Pharisees did not. Jesus' sheep follow him because he is their shepherd; they have come to faith in him. The sheep will not follow a stranger because they do not know the voice of stranger but flee from him (5). This is why the man healed by Jesus rejected what the Pharisees had to say about Jesus. This is also why the Pharisees do not understand Jesus' metaphor (6), they are not his sheep. Yet, Jesus does not give up on them but explains to them what he means.

**Jesus Gathers his Sheep to Protect and Provide for Them (7-10).**

Jesus is the door for the sheep. All those who came before him were thieves and robbers (7-8). Now Jesus expands his accusation beyond these Pharisees to the majority of Israel's leaders throughout history who harmed the sheep. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture (9). As the door, Jesus is the only means of salvation and the fountain of spiritual nourishment. Twenty times John's gospel tells us that Jesus came because God the Father sent him on a mission to seek and save the lost. The church misses it when we separate discipleship from mission. When you divorce discipleship from mission you no longer have discipleship nor disciples. Discipleship or becoming like Jesus leads to mission. If you are not moving toward

mission, then you are not a disciple. But Jesus does not just save his sheep, he also nourishes them by leading them to pasture. Jesus is the only source of spiritual nourishment who can sustain our spiritual lives. Then Jesus gives the punchline, the Pharisees come only to steal and kill and destroy but Jesus came to give eternal life and abundant life. All false shepherds, all gurus, spiritual or secular, destroy and kill in the end. Eternal life, abundant life gives us the ability to live as humanity was created to live, with a united heart. Humanity restored to a life in God, with God, and for God. Jesus is the only true shepherd who gives eternal life to live for the fullness of life.