

STUDY GUIDE

CALVARY COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: John 10:1-10

WEEK OF: January 28, 2018



MAIN POINT

Jesus is the only way to salvation, and He loves and cares for His church.

GETTING STARTED

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

- ▶ **What do you know about being a shepherd? How much do you know about the care of sheep? How do you suppose raising sheep differed in the first century from now?**
- ▶ **What were the responsibilities of a first-century shepherd? In what ways does this example help us to relate to Jesus' ministry to us? What might be a similar analogy from our culture?**
- **TRANSITION:** Sheep were a major part of the "economy" in first-century Palestine, especially for the shepherds. Sheep provided them with food, clothing, and money. Needless to say, sheep were valuable and had to be well-guarded and cared for. Shepherds in the first century stayed with their sheep. They led them out to the pasture in the day, watched over them, and then led them back to safety at night. Shepherds could call their sheep, and they would come running like a well-trained dog. Shepherds knew everything about the sheep they cared for. Jesus says here that He is a good shepherd. He cares for us and protects us, and we are valuable to Him. This illustration helps us to understand how devoted Jesus is to the care of His people.

INTO THE BIBLE

READ JOHN 10:1-4

- ▶ **What is the purpose of the sheep pen? If we, as believers, are in the sheep pen, what does that represent for us?**
- ▶ **Who would the modern "thieves and robbers" be who enter "some other way"? How can they be identified?**
- ▶ **Who is the doorkeeper in this illustration? Who might the doorkeepers in the church be?**

* **HELPFUL INSIGHT:** The sheep pen is a place of safety. It was a fenced area, usually by the house, where the sheep could stay at night. Sometimes, they even used caves. The reason that they brought the sheep in at night is because predators like wolves or wild dogs or lions, tend to hunt at night. The sheep pen provided protection for them so that predators couldn't scatter them and eat them. It is hard to say exactly what Jesus meant by the "sheep pen" other than to say it is a place of protection. If we are Christ's, then He keeps us safe from robbers and thieves and predators who would seek to do us harm. In Psalm 23, David likens the Lord to a shepherd and says of him, "Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4). The rod and staff could be weapons used to drive off predators who sought to harm the sheep. Jesus is telling us that He will care for us like a good shepherd. He will watch over our souls, and He will keep those who would spiritually harm us at bay.

READ JOHN 10:5-6

- ▶ **Why wouldn't the sheep follow the voice of a stranger? Have you ever had a pet that would only come when you or a family member called him?**
- ▶ **What is Jesus saying about the nature of discipleship when He says, "They will never follow a stranger"? Where can we learn to recognize the voice of Jesus?**
- ▶ **Why do you think the people failed to understand this illustration?**

* **HELPFUL INSIGHT:** If thieves and robbers weren't enough, the sheep were also in danger of those who would lead them astray. Jesus says that His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him. Shepherds were not like cowboys. Instead of driving the flock from behind, shepherds went out first and the sheep followed their shepherd as he called them. Because the shepherd is with the flock every day, they know his voice and call, and they will only respond to him. We learn to hear the voice of Jesus over the voice of the world by studying Scripture. In the Bible, we hear the voice of the Lord, and the more we study and read it, the easier it is for us to discern how Jesus would have us act in situations in life, and the easier it will be for us to judge right from wrong.

READ JOHN 10:7-10

- ▶ **What does Jesus mean when He says He is the door of the sheep? Who are the thieves and robbers?**
- ▶ **Who is the thief that “comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy”? How does Jesus provide a more abundant life? How has Jesus made your life more abundant?**

* **HELPFUL INSIGHT:** Jesus is the door to salvation because “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it” (Acts 4:12). Anyone or any religion that claims to get people into heaven except by Jesus Christ is simply a robber and a thief. There are false teachers in the world who make a living by taking advantage of the flock of Jesus. They preach for their own profit, and they deceive people by making promises in God's Name that God Himself never made. Jesus is not like that. Jesus came for the benefit of His people, not to rob them of their possessions. Jesus came to give us life, not to steal it from us. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Instead of taking advantage of the sheep, Jesus lays down His own life for their benefit. Jesus said, “Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). Jesus did not come to take advantage of us; He came to care for us. Our heavenly Father loves us, and He takes pleasure in giving us the kingdom. We can be confident in our lives and in our salvation because Jesus, the Good Shepherd, watches over us and protects us.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- ▶ **How does it affect you to know that Jesus watches out for you every moment?**
- ▶ **Have you spent enough time in God's Word to recognize the voice of Jesus from the voice of the world? What are some ways we could learn to hear Christ more effectively?**
- ▶ **If we realize that Satan, the great thief, has come to “steal and to kill and to destroy,” how might that move us to pray for our families and friends in our time before the Lord?**

PRAYER

Offer a time for group members to pray aloud.

- ▶ **Thank the Lord for being our shepherd.**
- ▶ **Thank Him for opening our ears and eyes to hear and see the good things in His Word.**
- ▶ **Ask the Lord to deliver us and our friends from those who would harm the flock of Christ.**
- ▶ **Close by asking the Father to show others that Jesus is the only way to salvation.**