

Topic	Jesus, the Good Shepherd
Reference	John 10
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Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

John 10:22 (ESV) At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,

So, this was a time there was a particular festival. This is the only verse in the Bible that talks about the feast of dedication, it is called Hanukah. It was the time during the Maccabean revolt where after Alexander the great had taken over large tracks of Asia including Israel 300 something BC. There was a struggle between the local people with the Jews and all those Jews who are influenced by the Greeks. There were two particular high priest that led to people astray, diluted worship and then there was a big Maccabean revolt against the two priest which are named. At the end of the revolt, amazingly they overthrew the Greeks and they actually had a dedication in the temple and they celebrated their dedication called the Hanukah.

Hanukah is important because that gives the setting for this particular passage. It is about the betrayal of their leaders. The two priests were supposed to have led the people to worship the one true God, diluted the worship, influenced by the Greeks and it was only through a revolt where they were overthrown and proper worship was reinstated. So therefore when we come to this particular passage, there are mixed metaphors in this passage. One minute he is talking about door, the next minute he is talking about shepherd. So you need to sort it out that there are two metaphors. We need to understand that most of the metaphors convey a similar truth. On one hand we have the door and the good shepherd, on the other hand we have the thieves and the hired hand. So basically contrast is the mother of clarity.

The whole idea is to contrast, so you can have an idea of the options that are left to us. So Jesus is the good shepherd in three reasons

- A. In the areas of our life
- B. He brings intimacy
- C. Security

JESUS BRINGS LIFE:

Let's look at the characters of authenticity

John 10:2-4 (ESV) But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

All these are characteristics of authenticity coming in a proper way, the gatekeeper opens, the sheep respond. On the other hand, if you look

John 10:1 (ESV) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber

John 10:5-6 (ESV) A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So here you have a false leader come in, the sheep will not authenticate his ministry. Historical background, we need to understand from this is taken from Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 34:2-4 2a, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have **been feeding yourselves!** Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but **you do not feed the sheep.** 4 The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

These were the leaders of Israel. These were the people entrusted with the care of the nation and then he reads on

Ezekiel 34:5-9 (ESV) So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; 6 they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. 7 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: 8 As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, **but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep,** 9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

Ezekiel 34:22-24 I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken.

You need to understand this passage in the light of Ezekiel passage. Where the people of God had been brutalized and they are looking forward one day for some restitutions, some restoration and God himself promises that he will come in a person of his servant David.

The next metaphor is the door and the thieves.

John 10: 7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

Suddenly the metaphor changes to door and

8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy

So the contrast, one brings life and one brings death. Then there is a contrast between Good Shepherd and Hired Help. So when trouble comes

John 10:10b I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 10:11 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 10:12-13 (ESV) He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

John 10:14-16 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

So, there is a contrast between the good shepherd. The good shepherd is good simply because he owns the sheep, he cares for the sheep, the sheep respond to him and everybody else does not really care. So it self sacrifice verses sheep sacrifice. Now if we look at the shepherds of the New Testament, we can see the difference between Jesus coming in chapter 9 and the pharisees. The pharisees were interested only in Jesus healing the man on a Sabbath Day. They totally

miss the point that Jesus actually healed the sheep. They were basically showed themselves to be false shepherds. This is Paul speaking to the Ephesian elders just before he leaves and he is taken to Rome and he warns them

Acts 20:28-32 (ESV) Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that **after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;** 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking **twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.** 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 32 **And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified**

Even after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, false shepherds will come. These false shepherds will not come like any Tom, Dick and Harry. The passages teaches us about the good shepherds and bad shepherds. If we look at the issue of money stolen by clergy. All over the world 39 billion US dollars, which is 6% of money donated to church. Total income of global foreign missions is actually the same amount. They actually steal the same amount as you give to missions all over the world. It is shocking. If you look at unreported fraud, churches 95%, secular corporation only 66%. We tend to bury the bad news.

There was an interview with Pastor Nathan Avidian and he say

I am able to vouch the fact that he was surrounded by yes-men. They were not real men. They were not challenging his decisions. They were not asking him to validate his statements or doctrine from the Scripture, or how the word of God should be applied at the grassroots level.

The departure is departure from the word of God. The Modus Operandi of the false shepherd is always the same, gather around yes man. It is very easy to use religion and use the Bible and use something spiritual and everybody will have to listen to you as it were. Now the effect of these sort of leaders

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may **have life and have it abundantly.** V28 I give them **eternal life**, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hands.

The whole idea is life is actually eternal life with the quality of life that will characterize our time with him forever and abundant life, extraordinary, beyond what is necessary. This is what Jesus Christ offers us, but in today's world there

are many prophets that come out and they are kind of twist the message a little bit. The false shepherds move us in a wrong direction. The whole idea is a rights centered gospel rather than a stewardship centered gospel. According to them bad things happen to us due to sin and lack of faith. So basically, believers are to grab hold and control of life again by using faith.

We come to a situation now where we have Christians and non-Christians are not different because their end is the same, material abundance in life. The non-Christians achieve it by hard work. Christians achieve it by faith. The more faith you have, the more material abundance you have in life but the end goal is still the same, so therefore we actually have been hijacked. Augustine of Hippo said *"All abundance, which is not my God, is emptiness to me."*

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. They promise you a fake life and not only that your entire life is consumed and wasted on the wrong things. Jim Carey says,

I guess just getting to the place where you have everything everybody has ever desired and realizing you are still unhappy. And that you can still be unhappy is a shock when you have accomplished everything you ever dreamt of and more and then you realize, "My gosh, it's not about this." And I wish for everyone to be able to accomplish those things so they can see that.

A very highly accomplished actor and my gosh he comes to a situation where he has got everything and yet there is something else missing. Katie Spade a billionaire who recently killed herself. She said this about suicide, *"I would never do that. I would never do that. I would never do that."*

Yet she took her life and then there was a psychologist from the Northwestern University who actually wrote,

*"At some point in everyone's life," "they have said they would never do that. But I believe **we are all** just a few life events away from considering it. So for me, we're all on that continuum."*

There is no such thing as coming up, I won't do that. Suicide is just a few clicks away. What are the factors involved in a suicide

- Perceived burdensomeness,
- Thwarted belongingness,
- Hopelessness,
- Acquired capability,

If you feel that you don't belong to anybody or anything then you feel alone and you want to kill yourself. The desire to belong is so strong. Elizabeth Wurtzel wrote Prozac Nation. She really went off to deep end, she cut herself at a very young age, went on all sorts of things and if you look at it she wasn't a poor person, she was actually in Harvard.

She got good grades at Harvard, and while still in college was a valued reporter for The Dallas Morning News. She won a Rolling Stone college journalism award, and she still has a slew of friends

A person like that actually go into drugs, depression and divorce. This is very insightful, it came out from US today.

Rather than pathologizing the despair and emotional suffering that is a rational response to a culture that values people based on ever escalating financial and personal achievements, we should acknowledge that something is very wrong. We should stop telling people who yearn for a deeper meaning in life that they have an illness or need therapy. Instead, we need to help people craft lives that are more meaningful and built on a firmer foundation than personal success

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If you are depressed, because you lack meaning in life, the pathologist or the psychiatrist give you Prozac because that inner emptiness is perceived as a pathological disease. There is something wrong with you. Actually, there is nothing wrong with you. Kirsten Powers is right. What you are experiencing is actually natural human response to the fact that you are living a meaningless life. So that's why you are depressed and suicidal because something wrong with their culture. They are on an hedonic treadmill, which means you go through life trying to look for things to make you happy, but the fact of the matter, the hedonic treadmill according to psychiatrist is that, good things happen, bad things happen, your happiness goes up and down, but it always goes back to the midline. You need more and more things to stimulate you.

4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Abundant life is a life with direction. Sheep are smart enough to recognize the shepherd and follow the shepherd. Sheep can recognize their shepherd.

Psalms 23:1-3 (ESV) The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He **restores my soul**. He leads me in **paths of righteousness for his name's sake**.

Abundant life doesn't consist on the things that you get in the mall. It consist on a direction, a path of righteousness. That's what Jesus means by an abundant life.

Psalms 16:11 (ESV) You make known to me **the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore**.

It is the path in which the shepherd gives you direction. The direction is where it brings you to an abundant life. Victor Emil Frankl wrote the book Man Search for Meaning and he actually said this,

"What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him."

It is a meaningful life. The good shepherd is a shepherd that gives you a meaningful life. Joy is a product of meaning. Elizabeth Wurtzel said, that is all I want in life: for this pain to seem purposeful. She is actually looking for some kind of purpose. Emily Esfahani Smith wrote a book and she writes about people chasing happiness

"But happiness is about feeling good in the moment, feeling a state of comfort and ease. Meaning is about belonging to, and serving, something beyond yourself. It's about believing that your life matters and that it makes sense. There is a depth of wellbeing that comes with it."

Even as a non-Christian author you come up with stuff that Bible tells you about, it is about meaning, it is about belonging, purpose, transcendence and storytelling.

John 4:34-38 (ESV) Jesus said to them, "**My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work**. 35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that **sower and reaper may rejoice together**.

Jesus conceives of his life as one subsumed by his mission. His mission is to do the task, to do the will of him who sent him and the whole task is about sharing the gospel. In the process of sharing the gospel, there is joy and purpose.
Parable of the sower

Matthew 25:21 (ESV) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. **Enter into the joy of your master.**'

The joy of the master is related to the way the servant has used his talents. The one who didn't use his talents is the place of darkness and gnashing of teeth. So abundant life is related to a task and a purpose where God has created us. You need something that you do that is useful beyond the actual task that you actually do. C.S. Lewis talks about joy and is very interesting how he talks about it. He gives an example of watching light come into a toolshed and when the light came into the toolshed through a little crack and he said these words, most of us are seeing the beam and not seeing the things by it.

What C.S. Lewis is saying is that, we often look at the rays of light and not the source of the rays. You can't enjoy the things of the world unless that stimulates a longing for a meaning behind it.

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 (ESV) There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is **from the hand of God**, 25 **for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?**

We must have transcendence. Whatever we do and eat, if we don't look at the meaning behind it, there is no joy. There has to be a joy. For example, if I give you the best meal in the world and the next day I am going to execute you. How would you feel? Would you actually enjoy that meal knowing that tomorrow will be your last day. The meal needs to be linked to some meaning behind the meal and you cannot enjoy your money unless there is some meaning behind it, which C.S. Lewis says, joy comes from looking through that window and looking at the joy and looking at the source of the blessing that comes only from God.

John 9:25 (ESV) He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. **One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.**"

That is his story. The point is that all his life he lived a miserable life. At the age of survival until Jesus came and Jesus came and put the last piece in the puzzle that puts our suffering in perspective, that frames our story within the larger framework of what God is doing in the universe. Without that picture we suffer

an existential crisis because we don't know why we are here. So when Jesus comes and heals him and he becomes Jesus witness, he puts that last thing and he says now I know why I was blind for 40 years, so that everybody in Jerusalem knows about me, everybody laughed at me, everybody looked down at me and now when Jesus healed me, I am the greatest witness for Jesus Christ in this town. Now I know that last jigsaw puzzle fits together and we are fine. That's why if you look at the abundant life, there is a contradiction in scripture

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they **may have life and have it abundantly.**

Paul writes,

Philippians 1:29-30 (ESV) For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also **suffer for his sake**, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

How do you reconcile both of these scriptures with abundant life. Look at Jesus

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Was Jesus imperfect that he had to be perfected through suffering. Perfect is a vocational sense of the word, so it doesn't imply moral imperfections, to bring to completion, to bring to full measure, to perfect.

Hebrews 5:8-9 Although he was a son, **he learned obedience through what he suffered**. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

Jesus was morally perfect, perfect son of God but he has never been criticized, he has never been hit and still obey. He is being road tested through what he suffered and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey. So this is the template, this is the pattern that the shepherd gives us. The shepherd himself suffered to be perfected as it were.

Philippians 4:10-13 (ESV) I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in **whatever situation I am to be content**. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have **learned the secret of**

facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The issue is not whether you are happy or sad, good things or bad things, the issue is I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, because we are on the road to salvation. We have been saved. We are being saved. We shall be saved. It is a road, we are being road tested. So therefore the abundant life incorporates our story of suffering as well because this is the real life. The whole idea is that reorganization of value

Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 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

That's why we see life in this respect. John Piper says

When we have little and have lost much, Christ comes and reveals himself as more valuable than what we have lost. And when we have much and are overflowing in abundance, Christ comes and he shows that he is far superior to everything we have.

So life is focusing on the immense value of Christ.

INTIMACY:

John 10:3-5 (ESV) To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls **his own sheep** by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out **all his own**, he goes before them, and the **sheep follow him, for they know his voice**. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

During the Philistine uprising in 1980, the Israeli troop actually took over entire village and they confiscated everybody sheep. There was a poor widow who actually was dependent very much on her sheep to survive. She came to the soldiers and say, you have to give me my sheep back because if they don't come out, I will actually die of starvation. The soldier took pity on her and told her to take out her sheep. Her son came and played the flute and 25 sheep came out. It is true the sheep recognize there is an intimate knowledge between the sheep and the shepherd and what we want in the good shepherd because its intimacy, its relationship.

Harold Kushner wrote the book *When Bad things Happen to Good People* and he gave an example of being on the shores of a beach and they saw two to three children playing and they were building a nice big sand castle. The wave comes and it is gone. He thought that there will be tears and crying in children, but they laughed, they held each other hands and they went to another part of the beach and started building another. Life is tenuous, the waves will come and wash everything away but the important thing is that who holds your hands. Jesus offers us intimacy, an intimacy that no human being could give you.

John 10:14-15 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The intimacy is so great that he can lay down his life for the sheep and this intimacy is the basis of his action.

John 10:17-18 (ESV) For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

John 10:30 (ESV) 30 I and the Father are one.”

So therefore when Jesus gives his life to save us, it is God who actually is one with him doing it.

John 17:25-26 (ESV) O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

So this is the intimacy and the kind of love that Jesus promises all of us. Then he says,

John 10:16 (ESV) And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

So Jesus actually has sheep that is not confined to one church. He is telling us that the sheep are out there too and his love is so great for them that he is always thinking about them.

Acts 18:9-11 (ESV) And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for **I have many in this city who are my people.**" 11 And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

These people haven't come to know Christ yet but God says to him, I got many in this city and he is saying to us, I have got many people in Subang Jaya who are my people. Paul says

2 Timothy 2:10-11 (ESV) Therefore I endure everything for the **sake of the elect**, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 1

That is the extent of Christ's love.

SECURITY:

John 10:25-30 (ESV) 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and **I know them, and they follow me.** 28 I give them **eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.** 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

So this is the promise that they will never be snatched away.

John 10:29 My Father, who has **given them to me**, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 **I and the Father are one.**"

This is the work of the father. We are his sheep because the father has given them to me.

John 6:44 (ESV) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws** him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

This verse is actually very controversial. The Greek word is *Elkoo* ----to move an object from one area to another in a pulling motion, draw, with implication that the object being moved is incapable of propelling itself.

If you actually look at the use of the word *Elkoo* in the New Testament

James 2:6 (ESV) But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who **drag** you into court?

John 21:6 (ESV) He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to **haul** it in, because of the quantity of fish

Acts 16:19-20 (ESV) But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** them into the marketplace before the rulers. 2

Acts 21:30 (ESV) 30 Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and **dragged** him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut

So, the whole issue is God actually drags us as it were. God in his sovereign grace and power brings us from death and drags us. Now if he does that, do you think he is going to let you go. That's why in Psalm 23 it says

4. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Once you are in the hands of the shepherd, he will not let you go. Sometimes all of us try to judge people, In Corinthian church a man was excommunicated

1 Corinthians 5:1-3 (ESV) It is actually reported that there is **sexual immorality** among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, **for a man has his father's wife.** 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? **Let him who has done this be removed from among you.**

He was then restored

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 (ESV) Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. 6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, 7 so **you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.** 8 So I beg you to **reaffirm your love for him.**

Even that guy who had his father's wife came back and repented. Never write people off, because when God has he doesn't let you go. King David was man after God's own heart and your neighbor's wife. Still he is David, God forgives him. Peter and Judas both denied Christ, this is what Jesus said about Judas

John 13:27 (ESV) Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

Jesus said this about Peter

Luke 22:31-32 (ESV) Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

The difference between them one came back and the other one never came back. It is a fact.

John 17:12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. **I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

So if God brings you into the kingdom.

29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

So the good shepherd brings you life, abundant life as it should be lived, with meaning, direction, suffering and a context which he frames you in the order of this universe. The good shepherd is a good shepherd because he gives you intimacy. He is the only one who can fill your heart. The good shepherd will never let you go.