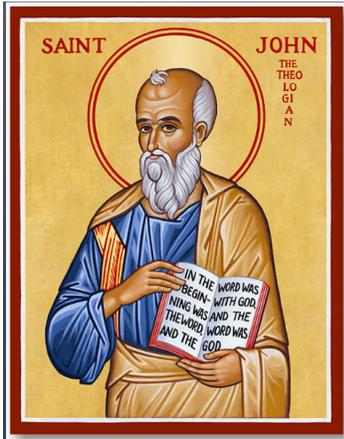


John 10 (NRSV)



Jesus the Good Shepherd

10 “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 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. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes[a] it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

19 Again the Jews were divided because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?” 21 Others were saying, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Jesus Is Rejected by the Jews

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah,[b] tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.[c] 30 The Father and I are one.”

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?” 33 The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.” 34 Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your law,[d] ‘I said, you are gods’? 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’—and the scripture cannot be annulled— 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand[e] that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” 39 Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. 41 Many came to him, and they were saying, "John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.

Footnotes:

John 10:18 Other ancient authorities read has taken

John 10:24 Or the Christ

John 10:29 Other ancient authorities read My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand

John 10:34 Other ancient authorities read in the law

John 10:38 Other ancient authorities lack and understand; others read and believe

Overview

Comparison with Canonical Gospels

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
"I am the Good Shepherd"				10:1-18
Division among the Jews again				10:19-21
Jesus at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem				10:22-39
Jesus Withdraws across the Jordan				10:40-42

Themes

- Incarnation
 - 10:36 The logos/son is both identical to God and distinct from God. Accordingly whether Jesus call himself the Son of God or claims full unity with God, the formula of "the father in me and I in the father" comes to the same thing.
- Replacement
 - 10:36 The festal theme is replaced when Jesus claims to be the one the Father consecrated and sent into the world.
- Rejection
 - 10:6-21 The language is deliberately mysterious. Jesus has no intention to clarify things. Indeed for the enlightened there is no need to do so. For the unenlightened this makes no sense. Jesus audience goes on fighting with themselves while his opponents try to find some way to validate who he is.
 - 10:25-26 Jesus is direct: I did works, you did not believe them. Because you are not my sheep. He is saying very clearly that no matter how clear he is, there are people who will not believe because there are people who do not belong to God.
- Discipleship
 - 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."
 - 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand.[c] 30 The Father and I are one."

Key Stories and Teachings

“I am the Good Shepherd” 10:1-18

10:1-5 The shepherd imagery is royal imagery. Shepherd was a common synonym for ruler in Jewish scripture and Homeric epics. The Lord is my shepherd could be translated into the Lord rules me. One must recognize that Jesus is both the speaker and the touchstone of truth. One’s next step is to place oneself under his direction, to know his voice and to follow him. This is how we signal our recognition of his legitimacy.

10:6-21 Jesus is deepening the metaphors of the gate and the shepherd. The only legitimate point of access to God, and the true ruler. The sheep are really his, and he is really an agent of creation. He knows the sheep as intimately as he knows his father. His sheep will listen to no one else. There are unexpected sheep to be brought into the flock. And all of this at a cost of Jesus life.

Jesus losing his life is not a forced sacrifice. Jesus has volunteered to do so. He is acting with complete freedom and in continuity with the father’s loving command.

The language is deliberately mysterious. Jesus has no intention to clarify things. Indeed for the enlightened there is no need to do so. For the unenlightened this makes no sense. Jesus audience goes on fighting with themselves while his opponents try to find some way to validate who he is.

Division among the Jews again 10:19-21

10:19-21 The Jews including the Pharisees are now divided into two groups: some believe Jesus has a demon; and some defend Jesus on the basis of his healings.

Jesus at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem 10:22-39

10:22-30 This challenge from the authorities elicits from Jesus the ultimate statement of his identity: I and the Father are one. (See Prologue 1:1-18).

And it gives Jesus confidence that his opponents cannot harm him until his hour.

10:31-38 Jesus seems perplexed that “I and the Father are one.” Is taken as blasphemy.

10:36 “I’m God’s son.” Is not a short hand statement, or a legal plot, but a natural consequence of Johannine theology and language. The logos/son is both identical to God and distinct from God. Accordingly whether Jesus call himself the Son of God or claims full unity with God, the formula of “the father in me and I in the father” comes to the same thing.

Psalm 82¹ Jesus responds quoting Psalm 82 “I have spoken; you are gods.” The mere arrival of God’s word makes humans gods – how then can anyone complain about Jesus’ words? Jesus assertion is so

¹ Psalm 82 A Plea for Justice/A Psalm of Asaph

1 God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

2 “How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*

3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.

4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk around in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 I say, “You are gods,

far outside the audience's understanding of the Psalms that they ignore his statement and go back to active hostility.

Jesus Withdraws across the Jordan 10:40-42

10:39-42 Jesus escape is miraculous for the opponents had him surrounded in the Temple portico. He withdraws to the Jordan River valley countryside.

Reflections

1. To construct a Christian pastoral ministry without emphasizing **substitutional death** of Jesus Christ have reckoned without a full understanding of John 10 – what does Jesus' substitutional death mean to your spiritual life? (Countryman)
2. 10:7-10 Jesus is the door to the sheepfold – the Church. People must come in and out through Jesus to the Church. The pasture is the rest of the world. Do you accept that **Jesus is the doorway to God** and the Church? (Temple)
3. **How is clergy and lay religion different?** How clear are you about the differentiation between the religion of lay people and clergy. (Temple)

Bibliography

- Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament
- The Harper Collins Study Bible
- L. William Countryman, The Mystical Way in the Fourth Gospel
- Josh Moody, John 1-12 For You
- The Oxford Bible Commentary
- William Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel
- Tom Wright, John for Everyone Notes

children of the Most High, all of you;
7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince."^[a]

8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for all the nations belong to you!

Footnotes:

Psalm 82:7 Or fall as one man, O princes

Raymond E. Brown Notes²

This is a metaphorical discourse. One of the few in John. It is directed at the Pharisees Jesus has accused of being blind in 9:40-41.

John 10:1-21 the Good Shepherd and John 15:1-17 I am the Vine are the closest John comes to parables so popular in the Synoptics.

John offers a mixture of metaphors for Jesus to explain that he is the gate by which the shepherd goes to the sheep and by which the sheep come into the fold and out into the pasture. Jesus is the model shepherd who both knows his sheep by name and is willing to lay down his life for them.

This operates on two levels:

1. A critique of the Pharisees who are the immediate audience for the parable; and,
2. A critique of other Christians who have human shepherds (pastors) who might seem to rival the claims of Christ.

10:16 refers to sheep not of his fold and expresses his goal of there being one sheep herd, one shepherd, suggest that when the Gospel was written there was division among Jesus followers.

10:22-42 Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah³)

10:36 The festal theme is replaced when Jesus claims to be the one the Father consecrated and sent into the world.

The issues raised against Jesus about being the Messiah and blaspheming because he said he was God's Son resemble the substance of the Sanhedrin inquiry recounted by the Synoptic Gospels⁴ just before Jesus died.

Jesus escapes and goes back across the Jordan River to where the story began (John 1:28) and the JohnBap witnesses still echoes.

The Harper Collins Study Bible Notes⁵

10:1-21 Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees.

10:1-5 Close to a parable in John. It presents a highly realistic picture of Palestinian shepherding in the 1st Century CE. (It also hints at a plotline.) The parable focuses on the gate (10:1-2) and the shepherd (10:3-5).

10:8 Leaders of previous revolts who made messianic claims.

10:11-13 The Good Shepherd: God and Jesus
The hired hand and bad shepherds: Israel's rulers

10:11 "the good shepherd lays down his life."⁶

² Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament

³ Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the altar and the reconstruction of the Temple by the Maccabees in 164BCE after several years of desecration by the Syrians.

⁴ Luke 22:66-71

⁵ The Harper Collins Study Bible

⁶ 1 Samuel 17:34-35 (NRSV)

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it."

10:16 other sheep – likely the Gentiles.

10:22-39 This is Jesus last controversy with the Jewish authorities before his arrest, and represents the ongoing conflict of the Johannine community with being kicked out of Synagogues.

L. William Countryman Notes⁷

Jesus is trying to point the way from enlightenment to new life – from insight to new experience –

10:1-5 The shepherd imagery is royal imagery. Shepherd was a common synonym for ruler in Jewish scripture and Homeric epics. The Lord is my shepherd could be translated into the Lord rules me. One must recognize that Jesus is both the speaker and the touchstone of truth. One's next step is to place oneself under his direction, to know his voice and to follow him. This is how we signal our recognition of his legitimacy.

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Jesus losing his life is not a forced sacrifice. Jesus has volunteered to do so. He is acting with complete freedom and in continuity with the father's loving command.

The language is deliberately mysterious. Jesus has no intention to clarify things. Indeed for the enlightened there is no need to do so. For the unenlightened this makes no sense. Jesus audience goes on fighting with themselves while his opponents try to find some way to validate who he is.

10:22-30 This challenge from the authorities elicits from Jesus the ultimate statement of his identity: I and the Father are one. (See Prologue 1:1-18).

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Psalm 82⁸ Jesus responds quoting Psalm 82 "I have spoken; you are gods." The mere arrival of God's word makes humans gods – how then can anyone complain about Jesus' words? Jesus assertion is so

⁷ L. William Countryman, *The Mystical Way in the Fourth Gospel*

⁸ Psalm 82 A Plea for Justice/A Psalm of Asaph

- 1 God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
- 2 "How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*
- 3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
- 4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
- 5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk around in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 I say, "You are gods,**

far outside the audience's understanding of the Psalms that they ignore his statement and go back to active hostility.

10:39-42 Jesus escape is miraculous for the opponents had him surrounded in the Temple portico. He withdraws to the Jordan River valley countryside.

Josh Moody Notes⁹

The key to understanding this passage is 10:11 – that the good shepherd is the one who lays down his life for his sheep – later the risen Lord will tell Peter to shepherd Jesus' flock (21:15-17) – you will give your life to service.

10:1 who is it that climbs in through another way? Everyone except the shepherd of the flock. So since this passage follows the Pharisees throwing the formerly blind man out of the synagogue, the flock, Jesus is implying that they are not the good shepherds.

10:3-4 The shepherd is the one whose voice the sheep follows. In the middle east the shepherds do not have dogs to help herd the sheep. They do not walk behind the flock with the dogs in front. They walk in front and speak to the flock which then follows them.

Question: do we still hear Jesus voice today? Or how do we hear Jesus voice today? The answers can be through scripture, prayer, meditation and service. The Bible tells us that God speaks to us in creation; in conscience; and supremely in Christ as spoken and heard in the Gospels. The spirit empowers us to hear Jesus.

10:7 Jesus is the shepherd and the gate. Calvin wrote that the church was the sheepfold and Jesus is the door.

10:10 Entering through Jesus as the gate will give followers life, but not just to be alive for ever but to be alive abundantly or to the full.

10:11, 15, 17, 18 The good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep.

To construct a Christian pastoral ministry without emphasizing substitutional death of Jesus Christ have reckoned without a full understanding of John 10.

Jesus death is for his sheep – on account of – or in place of – or instead of – or a substitute for

We do not need to know Greek to understand this meaning.

The good shepherd, Jesus, puts his body on the line to protect the sheep from the wolf.

He is willing to risk his life, and actually does so on the cross. The Lord came as the Shepherd King not the Warrior King.

10:14 The good shepherd knows his own and his own know him. There is an intimate relationship between the two. This is the prized gift of grace that followers of Jesus receive.

10:12 Who is the wolf? Anyone or thing trying to kill the sheep. He is talking about the pharisees in the immediate context (in fact he is talking directly to them.)

10:16 Who are the "other sheep"? Gentiles

children of the Most High, all of you;

7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince."^[a]

8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for all the nations belong to you!

Footnotes:

Psalm 82:7 Or fall as one man, O princes

⁹ Josh Moody, John 1-12 For You

10:17-18 On the one hand, the Father loves the Son because the Son is going to lay down his life for the sheep. This suggests a submission of the Son to the Father. On the other hand, Jesus lays down his life on his own authority and by his own intention. The command is received from the Father, which suggest submission. So God the Father and God the Son have a relationship that may be beyond simple logic or explanation.

10:24 It is Hanukkah and the Pharisees are trying to decide would they or would the not follow Jesus? The Pharisees imply that the reason they have not made up their minds is that Jesus has not been clear enough about his identity. "How long will you keep us in suspense?" Are you the Messiah?

But they know and have already concluded that Jesus is both acting like, and claiming that he is the Messiah. Hence the question. So their objection is not that he has not made himself clear. It may be that they are seeking more evidence for the charge of blasphemy.

It may also be that the early Johannine church community struggled with other Christen communities over the identity of Jesus.

10:25-26 Jesus is direct: I did works, you did not believe them. Because you are not my sheep. He is saying very clearly that no matter how clear he is, there are people who will not believe because there are people who do not belong to God.

Two calming passages:

10:28 I give them eternal life – it is life that is truly eternal, and it is unchangeable

10:29 Because the Father has given Jesus the sheep and no one can snatch away what God the Father has given.

There is an association of identity and equality of power and person.

10:30 "I and the Father are one."

10:31 The reaction is to want to stone Jesus to death.

10:32 Are you killing me because I healed someone?

10:33 The answer is no – because you equated yourself with God which is blasphemy.

10:34-37 Jesus response is cryptic and refers to Psalm 82:6 "You are gods." The whole point of the discussion is to asset that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

10:39 So they try to grab him and stone him again. He escapes because it is not his time yet.

10:40-41 Jesus going to the Jordan River moves him away from the Temple and the elites and back to the start of his ministry.

The Oxford Bible Commentary Notes¹⁰

10:1-21 The shepherd's care for his sheep is a common theme in the Synoptics (Mark 6:34¹¹; Matthew 9:36¹²) or sent into the midst of wolves (Mark 6:34; Luke 10:3¹³)

¹⁰ The Oxford Bible Commentary

¹¹ Mark 6:34 (NRSV) 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

¹² Matthew 9:36 (NRSV) 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

¹³ Luke 10:3 (NRSV) 3 Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

In these verses two main lines from the synoptic tradition are developed:

1. Jesus is identified with the shepherd (Mark 14:27)
2. Jesus takes active care of his sheep (Matthew and Luke)

But the perspective is different: Jesus speaks of the shepherds who do not fulfil their vocation, and alludes to the OT expectations of God becoming Israel's true shepherd. (Isa 40:11¹⁴; Jer 31:10¹⁵; Ezek 34:11-16¹⁶)

More clearly than in the Synoptics, Jesus himself takes the initiative to give his life for his flock. (Isa 53:5-8¹⁷; 1 Pet 2:24-25¹⁸)

10:1-3a The first parable contrasts the man who enters through the gate versus the one who climbs in over the wall.

¹⁴ Isaiah 40:11 (NRSV) "11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep."

¹⁵ Jeremiah 31:10 NRSV) "10 Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹⁶ Ezekiel 34:11-16 (NRSV) "¹¹ For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹² As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice."

¹⁷ Isaiah 53:5-8 (NRSV) "5 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people."

¹⁸ 1 Peter 2:24-25 (NRSV) ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,^[a] so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds^[b] you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

10:3b-6 The second parable is about a shepherd who knows his sheep by name and can therefore lead them out of the sheepfold; in contrast to the stranger they will not follow.

10:7-10 The obscure figure of speech is clarified by Jesus' self-identification with the gate. But he makes it difficult to understand because he does not say who is the gatekeeper, thief or bandit.

Jesus is the gate in two ways:

- 10:7-8 he is the gate through which the shepherds have to go to reach the sheep (the thieves and bandits, and possibly the Pharisees do not want this.)
- 10:9-10 He is the gate through which one can come in and go out to reach the pasture. (Here it is not the shepherd that goes in and out, but the sheep.)

This is similar to the later statement, John 14:6-7 (NRSV) 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know[a] my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

10:11-18 The shepherd opposes the thief, the bandit the stranger; and a second theme is that the hired hand runs away. Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd in contrast to the false teachers and prophets who have preceded him.

10:19-21 The Jews including the Pharisees are now divided into two groups: some believe Jesus has a demon; and some defend Jesus on the basis of his healings.

10:22-39 Jesus at the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah)

10:25 The audience wants Jesus to tell them who he is. Is he the Messiah? But this audience does not want to come to faith in Jesus. It wishes to accuse Jesus of blasphemy.

The evangelist may have linked the chapter 8, 9 and 10 with two themes: seeing (chapter 9) and listening (Chapter 10.) Those who refuse to hear or see, Chapter 9, are blind and living in sin. They are not among Jesus sheep.

10:31-39 Jesus is God's son (10:31-33) and the Jews hear this as blasphemy. And they want to stone and kill Jesus.

10:40-42 Jesus escapes across the Jordan, and this sets up a last comparison with JohnBap – he never did miracles so he could not have been the Messiah.

William Temple Notes¹⁹

10:1-6 Jesus is both the door (7-10) and the Shepherd (11-16)

10:7-10 Jesus is the door to the sheepfold – the Church. People must come in and out through Jesus to the Church. The pasture is the rest of the world.

Clergy often forget this. The root difference between clergy and lay religion is that lay people finds religion the strength for doing Christ's spirit work which unbelievers also do. The clergy's work is religion – they do not go out into the pasture very much. They tend to stay in the fold, the church, and do not seek the conflict of the pasture.

One of our chief needs is a clear differentiation between the religion of lay people and clergy.

The Lord is more concerned by the use of the door by the shepherd than by the sheep.

The role of the door is key to our evangelizing: I am not calling people to follow my traditions, or my manner of life. I am calling them to accept the Trust (Jesus Christ), the Way and what leads to Eternal Life.

¹⁹ William Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel

To come through the door means at least three things:

1. Come to the task in prayer
2. Refer all activities to the standard of the Mind of Christ
3. To accept that all that happens is the will of God

It means putting Christ in the forefront of our thought and self.

10:11-16 The secret of all pastoral work is that it is achieved through personal acquaintance.

10: 14 'I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,"

Both sides, the shepherd and the flock, the pastor and the layperson, need to know each other. The best pastoral relationships spring from frequent visits – through being in relationship.

10:17-21 The love of the Father for the Son is based on the self-giving quality of the Son, while this is in turn grounded in the love of the Father for the Son.

Jesus references laying down his own life four times:

14 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. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes[a] it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

10:22-31 The Feast of Dedication. Jesus has said before that he is the Christ. They now want him to confirm it, and confirm what kind of Messiah. Is he the one they have been waiting for, King David returns?

When Jesus points to his works, those signs of his in which power is subordinate to love – they cannot hear him. They are not his sheep. They do not recognize his voice as the shepherd.

10:32-39 The Jewish authorities fasten on to the saying that he is plainly a man and he is claiming to be God and they want to kill him.

Tom Wright Notes²⁰

10:1-10 Verses 10:1-5 is a parable with three layers of explanation:

The question that dominated Chapter 9 was is Jesus from God or not? Is he a prophet or not? Is he a Messiah or not? The Son of God whom God will set over mankind to judge?

Chapter 10 has the parable of the Good Shepherd and the Sheep. What is the connection?

The answer is that in the Bible the picture of the shepherd with his sheep is often used to refer to a king and his people (Ez 34¹). This is the image that Jesus chooses to explain his own claim to be the true king of Israel.

The false ones are the leaders of Israel.

You can tell the true king the same way you can tell the true shepherd: the one who has been sent by God you can tell by the response from your heart – when people hear his voice do they love and trust him and follow him?

²⁰ Tom Wright, John for Everyone Notes

The fact that people are hearing me and following me, notably the man born blind, is the sign that God has sent me.

The authorities response is blank stares. So Jesus goes further and explains that he is the gate or door. And that there is a promise of abundant life.

10:11-18 There is a dark note interwoven with the parable and the explanations. Jesus is facing death threats – and he declares that this is not just a dangerous possibility, it is his vocation.

Jesus is calling the original sheep of Israel and the God of Israel is interested in more than just the people of Israel. He is interested in redeeming all of mankind. The Jewish Messiah is to become the Lord, the shepherd, of all the world. The Gentiles are no longer the enemy they are the sheep who have not yet been brought into the sheepfold.

10:19-30 It was and is about the power and rule, about God's kingdom and the world's kingdoms. About God appointing a true king, into a space where there are already many kings and rulers. Jesus is not happening un a vacuum. He is being thrust into the crowded stage of world leadership where there is entrenched leaders anxious to strike down any one trying to stake a new claim.

So the crowd asks again, are you the true Messiah? And Jesus will not answer directly. He speaks of the shepherd and sheep and overs eternal safety to the sheep who recognize the shepherd.

The heart of Christian confidence about the future beyond death is not a matter of wishful thinking. It is built firmly on the union of Jesus with God the Father – one of the main themes of the Gospel (Incarnation). If you are not clear on Jesus relationship with God than you are often unclear on the certainty of Christian hope.

10:31-42 The authorities response is to hear blasphemy in Jesus words.

Jesus then quotes Psalm 82.

"I say, "You are gods,
children of the Most High, all of you;
7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince."

Jesus is saying follow God and you will be Gods so why are you bothered by what you hear me saying. This truly upends the conversation. Psalm 82 is no longer reflecting on the past. Jesus puts it in the present and the future. And the authorities want to kill him for blasphemy.

ⁱ Ezekiel 34 (NRSV)

Israel's False Shepherds

34 The word of the Lord came to me: ²Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. ⁶My

sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.

⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: ⁸ As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild animals, 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: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God, I am against the shepherds; and I will demand my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them.

God, the True Shepherd

¹¹ For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹² As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

¹⁷ As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats: ¹⁸ Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet? ¹⁹ And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?

²⁰ Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²² I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

²³ 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, the Lord, have spoken.

²⁵ I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. ²⁶ I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷ The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them. ²⁸ They shall no more be plunder for the nations, nor shall the animals of the land devour them; they shall live in safety, and no one shall make them afraid. ²⁹ I will provide for them a splendid vegetation so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the insults of the nations. ³⁰ They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. ³¹ You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture^[a] and I am your God, says the Lord God.

Footnotes:

- a. [Ezekiel 34:31](#) Gk OL: Heb *pasture, you are people*