



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Saturday, March 18 | John 10: 1–19

Shepherding was the chosen profession of the ancient Hebrews. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons, Moses, and the Hebrew slaves in Egypt were all shepherds by trade. It was a nomadic, secluded lifestyle. By today's standards, the task may seem mundane.

In ancient times, shepherding was an engaging, consuming profession. It required devotion and attention to detail. A shepherd knew the sheep of his flock intimately. A shepherd would give his sheep names that described or characterized them individually. The sheep became accustomed to the shepherd's voice and would only follow its unique sound.

In His story, Jesus draws a sharp contrast between the shepherd and those who do not genuinely care for the sheep. He first warns of the bandits who climb the walls of the sheepfold. They slaughter the sheep and throw the bodies over the wall to partners who steal the dead carcasses away.

Jesus also warns of the hired hand who the shepherd employs to assist with a larger herd. Because the hired hand has no personal investment in the welfare of the flock, they can't be trusted to defend the flock when danger approaches.

But the Good Shepherd has genuine sympathy and compassion for His sheep. He guides them safely to green meadows and protects them from danger. His single purpose is to care for their wellbeing. He gathers all of His sheep into one flock and cares for them with His own life.

- In what area of your life do you need to know God's compassion?
- What dangers are you facing?
- What voices are you following?
Where might they lead you?

PRAYER: Father, help me to discern the voice of Jesus and give me the courage to follow where He leads.

Written by Jay Clark