

Small Group Questions

“The Beautiful Shepherd”

John 10:1-18

Previous message summary: Throughout the Old and New Testaments we see that the only one who opens the eyes of those born blind is God. In John chapter 9, God in the flesh, Jesus, opens the eyes of a blind man. With mud and a command to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, Jesus performs a miracle that changes this man’s life. The amazing miracle, however, leads to a variety of responses. The neighbors are curious and interested in the drama, but after a while, they lose interest and go back to their lives, unchanged. The Pharisees and religious leaders argue and deny that a miracle has taken place. The parents try to avoid the situation. They know that their son was born blind, and that now he sees, but because of their fear, the parents avoid the truth of what Jesus did by insisting that their son can answer for himself. The blind man, unlike the rest, understands that his life has been completely changed by the power of God, and he worships Jesus for who he is and what he has done.

What we learned: There are many responses to Jesus. Some are curious, some argue and deny his power, some stand on the sidelines and avoid him altogether. However, in the midst of those responses, some, like the blind man, will understand how he has changed them and they will fall on their knees in worship. They might not know much, but they know that they have been changed by the power and presence of Jesus.

Introduction

1. Besides being white and fluffy, what do you know about sheep? How would you describe sheep, and the way they behave, to someone who has never experienced sheep?
- a. If you were to rate animals on their level of intelligence (1 = lowest level of intelligence and 10 = highest level of intelligence), where would you rate sheep? Why?
- b. If someone were to refer to you as sheepish or sheep-like, would you view that as a compliment or an insult? Why?
- c. What imagery does the Bible use to describe God’s relationship with his people? Read Psalm 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; and Isaiah 53:6. What does this tell you about your relationship with God?

Discussion Questions

Read John 10:1-18

2. Jesus begins this section with the words, “Truly, truly.” What does this tell you about the importance of the statement that he makes?
 - a. What does Jesus call the one who does not use the door to enter the sheepfold? What kind of person is Jesus describing?
 - b. Who is the one who enters through the door of the sheepfold? What are the characteristics of the one who enters through the door? Read John 10:3-5.
 - c. Why is it important for the sheep to know the voice of the shepherd? What can happen when the sheep do not recognize the voice of the shepherd?
3. Did the people Jesus was talking to understand what Jesus was teaching them? Read John 10:6. Since they did not understand, what does Jesus do to make sure they understand his teaching? Read John 10:7.
 - a. In verse 7, what does Jesus say about himself? What is significant about Jesus saying “I am the door of the sheep”?

- b. What is the result of entering into the sheep fold through Jesus? Read John 10:9-10.
 - c. Who is the thief that is described in verse 10, and what is his goal? Did the thief try to kill, steal, and destroy your life before you surrendered to Jesus?
 - d. How do you see the thief kill, steal, and destroy the life of people that you know? When you see this happen, how should you respond?
4. Who does Jesus say he is in verse 11? How is God described in the Old Testament? Read Psalm 23:1-3; 80:1; Isaiah 40:11. What is Jesus saying about himself when he makes this statement?
 - a. What does Jesus say the good shepherd does for the sheep? Read John 10:11-15 & 17-18.
 - b. What is Jesus referring to when he says he lays down his life for the sheep? Have there been similar statements in the book of John? John 1:29; 3:14-15; 8:28.
 - c. Who is the hired hand that Jesus talks about? What does the hired hand do when the sheep are in danger?
 - d. How can you show love and devotion to Jesus because he is your good shepherd?
 5. What does Jesus say about sheep in another fold? Who might Jesus be talking about? Read John 10:16.
 - a. What is the characteristic of the other sheep that Jesus points out in verse 16?
 - b. Even though there are sheep from other folds, what does Jesus say about the unity of the sheep as they follow the shepherd? How many flocks? How many shepherds?
 6. How important is it for us to remember that all of Christ's sheep are part of one flock? How can you

and your small group work to create unity among Christians? Read Jesus' prayer in John 17:11.

Challenge: Jesus is the good shepherd who knows his sheep, cares for, and protects his sheep. As sheep, make it your desire to follow Jesus wherever he may lead you this week. He may lead you into an uncomfortable situation. He may lead you into a difficult conversation. He may lead you into the life of someone you don't know yet, because you are able to lead them to Jesus. Be a sheep who will follow when it's not easy and even when it doesn't make sense.

Action: Pray the following prayer every day this week. *"God, with your help, I will follow wherever you lead me. I will surrender my plans for life to your plans for my life knowing that you know me, care for me, and will provide for me. I give myself to you this week. Amen."*

Next Steps:

- I realize that Jesus is the only door to salvation (Jn 10:9; 14:6).
- I recognize that a sign of being part of Christ's flock is that I listen to his voice and follow where he leads.
- I want to know him and be known by him.