

“The Good Shepherd”

By Joel Freeman

John 10: 8-21

Prayer: God, fill me up, let the words that come out of my mouth be yours. Change my words to those you would have me say. This I pray. Amen.

I am not a shepherd. I have never been to Israel. So I looked up a video about good shepherds. I found a video by Expedition Bible by Sourceflix written by Joel Kramer. Hey, Joel did it, it can't be all bad.

The first people the Angels told about Jesus were- shepherds.

Abraham was- a shepherd.

Isaac was- a shepherd.

Jacob was- a shepherd.

Moses was- a shepherd.

David was- a shepherd.

So Jesus wanted to be a shepherd, following his ancestors.

Jesus is the great shepherd.

Sheep follow the voice of their shepherd.

I watched another video, where a farmer teaches people how to call in the sheep. They try and try. No sheep. He does it once and they flood into the barn. Nobody but that farmer could call his sheep. Sheep are weak. They need to follow the voice of their shepherd to stay alive. The shepherd knows where the best pasture (food), the best wells (water), and sheep pens (protection) are.

Spiritually, we are God's sheep, following the good shepherd by listening to his voice. What voice do we put in our lives? What idols lead us astray?

The video showed wells in Israel, deep wells with stone troughs. The shepherd fills buckets to fill water troughs for the sheep to drink. No shepherd, no water. Water tends to mean the Holy Spirit. Whoever drinks of the Living Water will never thirst. Jesus is the way to the Living Water, the way to the Holy Spirit. We baptize in the water and the Spirit. Jesus gives us the water we need.

The shepherd doesn't only feed and water, he also protects. The video showed wolves that roam Israel looking for lost sheep. Gazelles are swift and alert, but wolves will still catch them for their meal. What chance does a sheep have against a wolf?

Wolves are afraid of- people. Sheep are protected by their human shepherd. We are protected from our enemy when in the presence of our shepherd.

Night time is really dangerous. Humans can't see well in the dark. Sheep are dumb and wander off. A good shepherd builds a sheep pen out of stone. He leaves an opening to let the sheep into and out of the pen. The shepherd becomes the door or gate to the pen. The shepherd brings his sheep in and places himself between the sheep and the wolf. He keeps the sheep in so they don't wander off. In the morning he moves and leads the sheep to good pasture.

If the sheep stay close to the shepherd they have life, when they wander off, life becomes very dangerous. In the video, he records a sheep leaving the herd. The sheep even looks back at the herd and then runs away faster. The penalty for a sheep without a shepherd is death unless the shepherd realizes the sheep has gone, looks for it and finds it before the wolf.

Sin is choosing our own way. Why follow the shepherd? We can do what we want. What consequences? Sin is what separates us from God and the penalty is death. Not because God wants that. He loves us and searches for us. We place ourselves where the wolf can get us.

Argument from an atheist. Do you really have freedom to follow God? Christians use hell like a loaded pistol. Gun to head- do you love me? If you don't, hell. If you do, Heaven.

I see it as a consequence of the decisions we make. Follow the good shepherd, we get food, water, and protection. When we don't, when we go our own way. Maybe to greener pastures, maybe to an oasis of water and grass. The wolves will find you.

Don't touch the hot stove!- I touched it, got burned. Don't run into the road. Make sure you look both ways. My uncles used to yell at us everyday. One day that uncle ran faster than I could of guessed to grab a toddler running into the road before the car came by. We have choices and those choices have consequences, good and bad.

The lost sheep is hopeless. How do you treat a lost sheep? A lost kid? Do we yell and discipline them? Or do we hug them so they will choose to follow us back? Jesus says whoever follows me will cross over from death to life.

Shepherds have tactics to train a sheep to follow him. But in the end, a sheep has to choose to follow the shepherd or to wander off. Choose between life and death.

Ezekiel 34: 1-16

A good shepherd will lay his life down for his sheep. A hired hand will run away. Come follow me. Choose the narrow gate. The wide gate leads to destruction, but small is the gate to life and only if you find it. No one comes to the father except through Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life.

Thank you.