

I am the Good Shepherd. John 10:11-21

Introduction:

When we write a letter or email we usually have a purpose in mind.

When the Apostle John set out to write his account of the life and ministry of Jesus, he too had a purpose in mind. He tells us in John 20:30-31. (Read these verses)

As part of John's purpose, he includes seven "I am" statements which Jesus made about himself which help readers to know who Jesus is. You might remember them: *I am the bread of life, I am the light of the world, I am the gate, I am the resurrection and the life and I am the way the truth and the life.* Today we read Jesus' claim: *I am the good shepherd.* Let's think about Jesus' claim:

JESUS THE **GOOD** SHEPHERD:

Jesus was claiming to be the *good* shepherd in contrast to the *bad* shepherds of Israel. These *bad shepherds* were the Pharisees and other religious leaders like them whom Jesus had criticised earlier in this Chapter. He described them as *thieves and robbers, who kill, steal and destroy* God's people. (John 10:8-10) They were supposed to lead, teach & care for God's people, but they did not.

What were the qualities of the **good** shepherd?

In Australia, those who raise sheep on their properties do so very differently from shepherds in the Middle East. Here we have hundreds or thousands of sheep but in the Middle East they had a few, at most 100. Here sheep are driven, by dogs or people on horses, quad runners or motor bikes. There the sheep were led by

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the shepherd. This passage spells out several aspects of being the **good** shepherd:

1. The good shepherd *lays down his life* for the sheep. Jesus says this three times (verses 15, 17 & 18). This shows his commitment to his sheep whom he loved. We know that Jesus laid down his life on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.
2. The good shepherd protects his sheep, whereas the hired worker runs away and abandons the mob when they are attacked or are in danger. Jesus protects his 'sheep' and generously, graciously, gives them Eternal Life. (verses 12-13 and 28) Those who are not Jesus' sheep are not given this gift.
3. The good shepherd in the Middle East, with so few sheep, knew his sheep by name and they knew him. Jesus knows his 'sheep' and they know Him, *just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.* (verses 14-15)
4. The good shepherd is persistent in finding the lost sheep. Jesus seeks out those who are 'lost' to bring them into His mob. This includes Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). (verse 16)
5. The good shepherd leads and guides his sheep. Jesus does this with his 'sheep'. (verse 8) Here we remember the need for prayer.
6. The good shepherd owns his sheep. Jesus has authority and ownership of his people. (verse 27, 30) He is in fact "The Lord" of Psalm 23, *The Lord is my shepherd.*

Those who first heard Jesus' claim to be the **good** shepherd were divided. (Read verses 19-21) There was a lot of woolly thinking then about Jesus as there is today.

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JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS 'SHEEP'

Today, Christians are Jesus' sheep. What do they look like?

1. Jesus' sheep follow Him, having trusted in his death on their behalf.
2. Jesus' sheep will be led & guided by Him, in answer to prayer.
3. Jesus' sheep will listen to His voice. We do this when we read the Bible. We will not listen to those who undermine the truth of the Bible or twist God's Word to sound ridiculous.
4. Jesus' sheep will trust Him and have confidence in Him to keep them for Eternity.
5. Jesus' sheep will know Him and grow in that knowledge of Him.
6. Jesus' sheep will belong to Jesus' mob and not isolate themselves from other Christians. Church will be important for them.
7. Jesus' sheep will tell others about Him. There are plenty of lost and wild sheep who need rounding up!

Here are some questions worth thinking about:

Are you certain that you are one of Jesus' sheep? You can be certain.

If you are not one of Jesus' sheep, then you need to talk with someone who is and find out how to become one.

If you are one of Jesus' sheep, how are you going in living for Him?

Which of these qualities I've just listed need some attention in 2018?

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Conclusion:

We've heard today about Jesus the **good** shepherd to whom we need to stay close.

We also need to be 'undershepherds', caring for one another and reaching out to rescue the sheep who are lost; where we live, work and relax. We also need to reach out to the lost in outback Australia and overseas through Missionaries who have gone there on our behalf.

We can do this by praying for them, supporting them financially and taking an interest in the progress of their work.

May God help us all to more fully comprehend what it means for Jesus to be our good shepherd and may He also help us to grow as His sheep, possessing more and more of the qualities He expects of us.