

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS!**

questions

Read **John 10:1-21**.

1. In order to understand the illustration that Jesus uses of the sheep and shepherd, we must put ourselves in the minds of those whom Jesus was addressing. Not only did the Jewish people know a lot about sheep and shepherds from everyday life, this image was also prominent in Old Testament Scripture. Read the following verses from the Old Testament and state the identity of the shepherd and the sheep as the people of Jesus' day would have understood it.

| | Who is the shepherd? | Who are the sheep? |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Psalm 23:1 - | The Lord | Me (personal shepherd) |
| Psalm 80:1-2 - | God | Israel |
| Isaiah 40:9-11 - | the Sovereign LORD | Zion, Jerusalem, Judah (Israel) |
| Ezekiel 34:11-13 - | Sovereign LORD | the scattered nation of Israel |

2. Not only was God the Shepherd of his people Israel, but he also gave the care of his people over to kings, prophets, priests. They, too, were to act as shepherds over God's flock. According to **Ezekiel 34:1-10**, how does God identify a bad shepherd and what will he do about it?

The bad shepherds feed themselves instead of the flock; feed and clothe themselves but let the flock starve; they don't tend the sick and injured; have not gone after those who have strayed or are lost; rules the flock harshly and brutally; abandoned them when in danger and left them to be attacked.

God says that destruction will be the end result for the bad shepherds; God considers them his enemies; he will hold them responsible; he will take away their right to feed the flock as well as themselves and he will personally rescue his flock.

3. God made a promise to his people who had been subjected to bad shepherding. What, generally, was the promise from **Ezekiel 34:11-16**?

God, himself, will be the good shepherd and do everything that the bad shepherds hadn't been doing. He will search and find his sheep and bring them to their homeland and take care of all their needs.

4. How, specifically, will God fulfill this promise according to **Ezekiel 34:23-24** and **Jeremiah 23:5-6**? He promises to place over his flock (Israel) one shepherd, a descendent from the line of David who will tend and take care of the flock. God will be there and the one shepherd will be a prince among them. In Jeremiah God says he will raise up a king from the line of David who will take care of the flock. His name will be The LORD is our Righteousness.

5. Based on these Old Testament Scriptures, what are at least two things Jesus was inferring that the crowd would have understood when he declared, "I am the good shepherd" (**10:11**)?

The crowd and religious leaders knew these scriptures well and so they would have understood Jesus to be saying that he was **the Shepherd (God)** and he was the **Good Shepherd** (the one whom God promised to send). They would have known that Jesus was inferring that he was the "prince", the "king", the Lord our Righteousness, the one who would save Israel.

- ♥ With your small group, mention all of the connections you see between **Ezekiel 34** and **John 10:1-21**. You will notice that Jesus promises in John 10 to do the opposite of what the bad shepherds are doing in Ez. 34.
 - ♥ If you were in the crowd when Jesus related this analogy of sheep and shepherd (10:1-15), what parts of the illustration would you probably have seen as positive? What parts could be seen as negative?
6. List the four main characters in Jesus' illustration found in **John 10:1-5**.
Thief or robber, shepherd, watchman, the sheep

The *watchman* or gatekeeper cannot be identified with any particular person; rather, the word illustrates Jesus, the good shepherd, coming at the right time and in the right way. *Thief* and *robber* are words for different kinds of false leaders. *Thief* implies **subtlety** and **trickery**; *robber* implies **violence** and **plundering**.

- ♥ **Chapter 10** of John opens with Jesus suddenly speaking of a thief and robber trying to get into the sheep pen. Jesus doesn't seem to identify the thief/robber, but since the original text did not have chapter breaks, who was Jesus probably talking about (9:40-41)?
The Pharisees and religious leaders
 - ♥ Who, today, would you identify as thieves and robbers trying to harm the flock?
7. Jesus paints a sharp contrast between the good shepherd and the bad shepherd. Fill in the chart below to discover their differences.

| Differences in: | The Bad Shepherd | The Good Shepherd |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Entering the sheep pen</i> 10:1-3 | does not enter by the gate but sneaks over the wall | enters through the gate (the legitimate way into the sheep pen) the watchman opens the gate for him |
| <i>Voice</i> 10:3-5 | has a stranger's voice and the sheep will run away from him | call his own sheep by name sheep know his voice and follow him |
| <i>Motives</i> 10:10 | steal, kill and destroy | give life to the full or in all it's fullness |
| <i>Actions</i> 10:11-13 | when danger comes, abandons the sheep and runs away; doesn't care about the sheep | when danger comes, lays down his life for his sheep; cares for the sheep because he owns them |

- ♥ Think back to the actions of the Pharisees and religious leaders in previous chapters (especially in **chapters 5 and 9**). How did their attitudes and actions confirm Jesus' statement that the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy?
The religious leaders tried to "destroy" and "steal" the miracles of Jesus by saying they were wrong because they were performed on the Sabbath. They ridiculed and kicked out of the synagogue those that Jesus healed. They tried to seize and kill Jesus.
 - ♥ Give an example of how a pastor, priest or church leader might display the traits of a bad shepherd.
8. Jesus considers himself the **good** shepherd. **Good** carries the connotation of *beautiful, useful, noble, wholesome, competent* and *morally good*. List some specific ways Jesus wants **you** to benefit from the Good Shepherd's care.
- 10:3-4 -**
Jesus wants me to listen to his voice; he will call me by my name (personal, close relationship); he will go ahead of me and lead me through life; I will follow him
- ♥ How do you recognize Jesus' voice when he speaks to you? How do you know an imposter's voice?
 - ♥ What does it mean that Jesus calls you by name? Is that important to you? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Are you following the Good Shepherd? Where do you struggle with wanting to follow your own path?

10:9-10 -

Jesus wants me to enter the sheep pen (become one of his flock) through him for he is the gate (or the way I "get in" or am "saved" (security). He wants me to be free (go in and out) and find provide what I need (find pasture.) In him, he wants me to live life to the full (satisfaction and fulfillment).

♥ What does Jesus mean when he says his sheep will be "saved" (10:9, 28)?

Saved from spiritual death and separation from God (because of my sins). Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, give me eternal life (the life that never ends) which begins now – and even though I will have a physical death, I will not die spiritually, but will live forever with my Shepherd.

♥ Do you look to Jesus as your sole provider, security and caretaker (10:9)? What are some things that compete with your trusting him?

♥ **John 10:10** has been translated *life to the full, living life to the full, having life more abundantly, life in all its fullness and far more life than before.* Describe what you think Jesus means.

Under his protection and by his gift, Jesus wants us experience the best life can offer. Jesus gives us a whole new meaning to living because he provides full satisfaction and perfect guidance. Life to the full is eternal life (that begins now) in the kingdom of God. It is the life of Eden before sin entered our world and John saw it in Revelation as a city coming down from God where we live with God. It is the life for which God created us.

♥ To what degree is this quality of life a reality to you? What qualities in your life might convince an unbeliever that you possess the full life Jesus gives? How might you experience this abundant life to a greater degree?

10:14-15 -

Jesus wants to know me and me know him as well as he and the Father know each other (intimacy). The Father and Son are so intimate that they are one being; this is what Jesus desires for he and me. He loves me so much that he is willing to die if it will save me and keep me safe.

♥ What are some examples of the way that Jesus knows you? How well do you know Jesus?

♥ How intimate (having a close, personal relationship) does Jesus expect to be with his sheep (10:15)? On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your intimacy with Jesus? How do you feel about Jesus' desire for intimacy with you?

♥ Why is it necessary for the Good Shepherd to lay down his life for his sheep (**Isaiah 53:6**)?

Because sheep go astray and leave their shepherd; they go their own way and become lost

What is the Shepherd's motivation (**1 John 3:16**)?

Love

♥ What claim is Jesus making when he says he has the authority to lay down his life and to take it up again (10:17-18)?

Anyone can choose to "lay down" their life, but only God has the power over resurrection (take it up again). Jesus was claiming to have the power of God.

♥ Why does Jesus stress that he lays down his life voluntarily (10:18)?

It will look like the mob or the Jews or Pilate killed him, but he is making it clear that they could not have done that unless he let them do it. He is the one who decided to give his life.

9. The Pharisees, religious leaders and the Jewish people considered themselves part of God's flock because they were descendents of Abraham and God's chosen people (**John 8:33, 39, 53**). In the verses below, how did Jesus redefine the flock of God?

John 10:7,9 -

Jesus says he is the gate (the way in) and there is no other way to get into the sheep pen; he saves whoever comes through him and they live life with and in him

John 3:16 -

Whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have the life that never ends

John 14:6 -

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Jesus.

Ephesians 3:12 -

We can approach God with freedom and confidence if we come through Jesus

♥ If you would like to be included in the flock of the Good Shepherd and experience all the benefits of flock life, what would you have to do to "get in"?

Come to God through Jesus by admitting we are sinners who cannot come on our own merits.

We accept Jesus' death in our place by inviting him into our life to become our Lord.

♥ Jesus says he is the gate or door to the sheep pen and the only way to God the Father. How would you respond to someone who says such a teaching is offensive because it is "narrow" and "exclusive"?

If there were more than one way to Father God other than Jesus, then Jesus made his great sacrificial death for nothing. Everyone could take the other, less costly, ways to having a relationship with God. To reject Jesus as the only way is to really reject Jesus entirely. Jesus' offer of salvation is not exclusive because he says that anyone can come. He excludes no one.

♥ Do you personally believe that Jesus is the "good" shepherd? How can a person say Jesus is a good shepherd when bad things happen to them?

10. Who are the *other sheep not of this pen* that Jesus speaks of in **10:16**, who will also be brought into the flock? (**Matthew 28:19**, **Romans 1:16** and **Revelation 7:9-10** may help you in your answer.)

Jesus disciples from all nations; anyone who believes regardless whether they are Jew or Gentile.

Jesus flock will consist of people from every nation, tribe, people and language across all of time.

I (we) are the sheep not of this pen that Jesus was talking about.

♥ What do you think Jesus means when he says that there will be *one flock and one shepherd* (**10:16**)? Is this a reality now? What are the implications of Jesus' statement for you and other Christians who belong to other denominations and churches?

The universal Body of Christ is everyone who enters through faith in Jesus regardless of church or denomination. Someday the Body of Christ will truly be one and we will spend eternity together.

GTBS is a good picture of the diversity that is in the "sheep pen."

♥ If you consider yourself a sheep belonging to the Good Shepherd, what will characterize your life (**10:27**)? Does it?

Listen to Jesus, know him well and follow him

♥ Why do you think Jesus' listeners respond as they do in **10:19-21**? How have you responded to Jesus?

Usually the ones who choose not to come to God through Jesus do so not because they do not know or understand, but because they do not want to admit they can't do it themselves or that they need Jesus or they do not want to change.

response

Respond to one of the following questions:

- ♥ From what you see in this chapter, what does it really mean to follow Jesus?
- ♥ What strikes you as being most significant about the shepherd's relationship to the sheep?
- ♥ List the things which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has done for you. Take time to thank and praise him.

Encounter with Jesus

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. Using **Psalm 23** as a setting for your encounter with Jesus, picture yourself with Jesus in green pastures or beside quiet waters. What are some things from this lesson that a shepherd does for his sheep that you would like Jesus to do for you? Write a prayer asking Jesus to be your Good Shepherd so that you may experience these things.

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and ask him to speak to you. Write down what you hear him say. Thank him for being the Good Shepherd who was willing to give his life for you, his lamb.

BELOW IS THE EXTRA SCRIPTURE FOR LESSON 10 THAT YOU CAN PRINT OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

NIV

Psalms 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

Psalms 80:1-2 Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth **2** before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us.

Isaiah 40:9-11 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" **10** See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. **11** He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Ezekiel 34:11-13 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. **12** As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **13** I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

Ezekiel 34:1-10 The word of the LORD came to me: **2** "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?' **3** You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. **4** You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. **5** So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. **6** My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. **7** "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: **8** As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, **9** therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: **10** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

NLT

Psalms 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I have everything I need.

Psalms 80:1-2 Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Israel like a flock. O God, enthroned above the cherubim, display your radiant glory **2** to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Show us your mighty power. Come to rescue us!

Isaiah 40:9-11 Messenger of good news, shout to Zion from the mountaintops! Shout louder to Jerusalem—do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah, "Your God is coming!" **10** Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in all his glorious power. He will rule with awesome strength. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. **11** He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

Ezekiel 34:11-13 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep. **12** I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. **13** I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers in all the places where people live.

Ezekiel 34:1-10 Then this message came to me from the LORD: **2** "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? **3** You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. **4** You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the broken bones. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with force and cruelty. **5** So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd. They are easy prey for any wild animal. **6** They have wandered through the mountains and hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them. **7** "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: **8** As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. Though you were my shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. **9** Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. **10** This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, along with their right to feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the sheep will no longer be their prey.

Ezekiel 34:11-16

“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. **12** As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. **13** I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. **14** I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. **15** I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. **16** I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ezekiel 34:23 I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. **24** I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. **6** In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Ephesians 3:12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence .

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. **10** And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Ezekiel 34:11-16

“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep. **12** I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. **13** I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers in all the places where people live. **14** Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in lush mountain pastures. **15** I myself will tend my sheep and cause them to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. **16** I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!

Ezekiel 34:23 And I will set one shepherd over them, even my servant David. He will feed them and be a shepherd to them. **24** And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among my people. I, the LORD, have spoken!

Jeremiah 23:5-6 “For the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will place a righteous Branch on King David’s throne. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. **6** And this is his name: ‘The LORD Is Our Righteousness.’ In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

Isaiah 53:6 All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

1John 3:16 We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Ephesians 3:12 Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come fearlessly into God’s presence, assured of his glad welcome.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 7:9 After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white and held palm branches in their hands. **10** And they were shouting with a mighty shout, “Salvation comes from our God on the throne and from the Lamb!”