

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

MEMORY VERSE: *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).*

“Christ is both the door and the shepherd. He enters in by Himself. It is through His own sacrifice that He becomes the shepherd of the sheep.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 478.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 476–484. (At the bottom of this page)

1. THE THIEF AND THE SHEPHERD

Sun, Jun 8

a. How did Jesus distinguish between the thief and the shepherd, and what spiritual lesson was He illustrating? John 10:1, 2.

John 10:1, 2

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. **2** But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

“Christ applied these prophecies [referring to the Messiah’s pastoral mission, as found in Isaiah 40:9–11; Psalm 23:1, and Ezekiel 34:23, 16, 25, 28] to Himself, and He showed the contrast between His own character and that of the leaders in Israel. The Pharisees had just driven one from the fold, because he dared to bear witness to the power of Christ. They had cut off a soul whom the True Shepherd was drawing to Himself. In this they had shown themselves ignorant of the work committed to them, and unworthy of their trust as shepherds of the flock. Jesus now set before them the contrast between them and the Good Shepherd, and He pointed to Himself as the real keeper of the Lord’s flock.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 477.

“Christ loves us because we are helpless and dependent.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 248.

b. What relationship exists between the sheep and their shepherd? John 10:3, 4. What will the sheep do before a stranger? John 10:5.

John 10:3, 4

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. **4** And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

John 10:5

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

a. How did Jesus reveal His own contrast to the Pharisees? John 10:7–10.**John 10:7–10**

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. **8** All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. **9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. **10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

“Christ is the door to the fold of God. Through this door all His children, from the earliest times, have found entrance. In Jesus, as shown in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelation of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples, and in the miracles wrought for the sons of men, they have beheld ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29), and through Him they are brought within the fold of His grace. Many have come presenting other objects for the faith of the world; ceremonies and systems have been devised by which men hope to receive justification and peace with God, and thus find entrance to His fold. But the only door is Christ, and all who have interposed something to take the place of Christ, all who have tried to enter the fold in some other way, are thieves and robbers.

“The Pharisees had not entered by the door. They had climbed into the fold by another way than Christ, and they were not fulfilling the work of the true shepherd. The priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, destroyed the living pastures, and defiled the wellsprings of the water of life. Faithfully do the words of inspiration describe those false shepherds: ‘The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away. . . . but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.’ Ezekiel 34:4.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 477, 478.

b. How is the true shepherd different from the hireling? John 10:11–13.**John 10:11–13**

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. **12** But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. **13** The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

“There are wanted, not merely men who can sermonize, but those who have an experimental knowledge of the mystery of godliness, and who can meet the urgent needs of the people—those who realize the importance of their position as servants of Jesus, and will cheerfully take up the cross that He has taught them how to bear.

“It is highly important that a pastor mingle much with his people, and thus become acquainted with the different phases of human nature. He should study the workings of the mind, that he may adapt his teachings to the intellect of his hearers. He will thus learn that grand charity which is possessed only by those who study closely the nature and needs of men.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 191.

a. What other characteristic of the good shepherd did Jesus manifest? John 10:14, 15.**John 10:14, 15**

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. **15** As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine Shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. ‘Ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.’ Jesus says, ‘I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.’ ‘I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.’ Ezekiel 34:31; Isaiah 43:1; 49:16.

“Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep.

“Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, ‘Follow Me,’ and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, ‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me’ (John 10:27). He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 479, 480.

b. For what other sheep did Jesus show concern? John 10:16.**John 10:16**

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

“Jesus thought upon the souls all over the earth who were misled by false shepherds. Those whom He longed to gather as the sheep of His pasture were scattered among wolves, and He said, ‘Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.’ (John 10:16, R.V.).”—*Ibid.*, p. 483.

“God has jewels in all the churches, and it is not for us to make sweeping denunciation of the professed religious world, but in humility and love, present to all the truth as it is in Jesus. Let men see piety and devotion, let them behold Christlikeness of character, and they will be drawn to the truth.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1184.

a. What divine power did Jesus declare that He possessed? John 10:17, 18.**John 10:17, 18**

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. **18** No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

“ ‘Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again’ (John 10:17). That is, My Father has so loved you, that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your substitute and surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father.

“ ‘I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again’ (John 10:17, 18). While as a member of the human family He was mortal, as God He was the fountain of life for the world. He could have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but voluntarily He laid down His life, that He might bring life and immortality to light. He bore the sin of the world, endured its curse, yielded up His life as a sacrifice, that men might not eternally die. ‘Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.’ Isaiah 53:4–6.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 483, 484.

b. What is it that leads people to follow Christ? John 10:27; 1 John 4:10, 19.

John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

1 John 4:10

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:19

We love him, because he first loved us.

“It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour’s matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary’s cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 480.

“We consider His life on earth, His sacrifice for us, His work in heaven as our advocate, and the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him, and we can only exclaim, O the height and depth of the love of Christ!”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 334.

5. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Thu, Jun 12

a. What assurance does Jesus give to His sheep? John 10:28, 29.

John 10:28, 29

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. **29** My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.

“Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to

bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. ‘And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.’ The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 480, 483.

b. Upon what does our spiritual security and assurance of salvation rest? Romans 8:31–39.

Romans 8:31–39

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? **33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. **34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. **37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. **38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, **39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 552, 553.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jun 13

- 1. Explain the difference in conduct between a shepherd and a thief.**
- 2. Through what other symbol did Jesus identify Himself?**
- 3. How do true shepherds behave with their sheep?**
- 4. Why do the sheep follow the shepherd and not a stranger?**
- 5. Explain how we are to be assured of salvation.**

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 476–484.

“I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” “I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.” John 10:11, 14, 15. (DA 476.1)

Again Jesus found access to the minds of His hearers by the pathway of their familiar associations. He had likened the Spirit’s influence to the cool, refreshing water. He had

represented Himself as the light, the source of life and gladness to nature and to man. Now in a beautiful pastoral picture He represents His relation to those that believe on Him. No picture was more familiar to His hearers than this, and Christ's words linked it forever with Himself. Never could the disciples look on the shepherds tending their flocks without recalling the Saviour's lesson. They would see Christ in each faithful shepherd. They would see themselves in each helpless and dependent flock. **(DA 476.2)**

This figure the prophet Isaiah had applied to the Messiah's mission, in the comforting words, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! ... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." Isaiah 40:9-11. David had sung, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1. And the Holy Spirit through Ezekiel had declared: "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them." "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." "And I will make with them a covenant of peace." "And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen; ... but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid." Ezekiel 34:23, 16, 25, 28. **(DA 476.3)**

Christ applied these prophecies to Himself, and He showed the contrast between His own character and that of the leaders in Israel. The Pharisees had just driven one from the fold, because he dared to bear witness to the power of Christ. They had cut off a soul whom the True Shepherd was drawing to Himself. In this they had shown themselves ignorant of the work committed to them, and unworthy of their trust as shepherds of the flock. Jesus now set before them the contrast between them and the Good Shepherd, and He pointed to Himself as the real keeper of the Lord's flock. Before doing this, however, He speaks of Himself under another figure. **(DA 477.1)**

He said, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." (John 10:1). The Pharisees did not discern that these words were spoken against them. When they reasoned in their hearts as to the meaning, Jesus told them plainly, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:9, 10. **(DA 477.2)**

Christ is the door to the fold of God. Through this door all His children, from the earliest times, have found entrance. In Jesus, as shown in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelation of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples, and in the miracles wrought for the sons of men, they have beheld "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and through Him they are brought within the fold of His grace. Many have come presenting other objects for the faith of the world; ceremonies and systems have been devised by which men hope to receive justification and peace with God, and thus find entrance to His fold. But the only door is Christ, and all who have interposed something to take the place of Christ, all who have tried to enter the fold in some other way, are thieves and robbers. **(DA 477.3)**

The Pharisees had not entered by the door. They had climbed into the fold by another way than Christ, and they were not fulfilling the work of the true shepherd. The priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, destroyed the living pastures, and defiled the wellsprings of the water of

life. Faithfully do the words of inspiration describe those false shepherds: “The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; ... but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.” Ezekiel 34:4. **(DA 478.1)**

In all ages, philosophers and teachers have been presenting to the world theories by which to satisfy the soul’s need. Every heathen nation has had its great teachers and religious systems offering some other means of redemption than Christ, turning the eyes of men away from the Father’s face, and filling their hearts with fear of Him who has given them only blessing. The trend of their work is to rob God of that which is His own, both by creation and by redemption. And these false teachers rob man as well. Millions of human beings are bound down under false religions, in the bondage of slavish fear, of stolid indifference, toiling like beasts of burden, bereft of hope or joy or aspiration here, and with only a dull fear of the hereafter. It is the gospel of the grace of God alone that can uplift the soul. The contemplation of the love of God manifested in His Son will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else can. Christ came that He might re-create the image of God in man; and whoever turns men away from Christ is turning them away from the source of true development; he is defrauding them of the hope and purpose and glory of life. He is a thief and a robber. **(DA 478.2)**

“He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” Christ is both the door and the shepherd. He enters in by Himself. It is through His own sacrifice that He becomes the shepherd of the sheep. “To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice.” John 10:2. **(DA 478.3)**

Of all creatures the sheep is one of the most timid and helpless, and in the East the shepherd’s care for his flock is untiring and incessant. Anciently as now there was little security outside of the walled towns. Marauders from the roving border tribes, or beasts of prey from their hiding places in the rocks, lay in wait to plunder the flocks. The shepherd watched his charge, knowing that it was at the peril of his own life. Jacob, who kept the flocks of Laban in the pasture grounds of Haran, describing his own unwearied labor, said, “In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.” Genesis 31:40. And it was while guarding his father’s sheep that the boy David, single-handed, encountered the lion and the bear, and rescued from their teeth the stolen lamb. **(DA 478.4)**

As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside; as he watches them on the mountains through the lonely night, shielding from robbers, caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, his life comes to be one with theirs. A strong and tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, the shepherd knows every sheep. Every one has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd’s call. **(DA 479.1)**

As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine Shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. “Ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.” Ezekiel 34:31. Jesus says, “I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.” Isaiah 43:1. “I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” Isaiah 49:16. **(DA 479.2)**

Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times

given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep. **(DA 479.3)**

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, "Follow Me," and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27. He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth. **(DA 480.1)**

"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.... And the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He depends not upon force or fear; but going before, he calls them. They know his voice, and obey the call. So does the Saviour-Shepherd with His sheep. The Scripture says, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Through the prophet, Jesus declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." He compels none to follow Him. "I drew them," He says, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Psalm 77:20; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4. **(DA 480.2)**

It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholders. They hear His voice, and they follow Him. **(DA 480.3)**

As the shepherd goes before his sheep, himself first encountering the perils of the way, so does Jesus with His people. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." John 10:4. The way to heaven is consecrated by the Saviour's footprints. The path may be steep and rugged, but Jesus has traveled that way; His feet have pressed down the cruel thorns, to make the pathway easier for us. Every burden that we are called to bear He Himself has borne. **(DA 480.4)**

Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10:28. The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast. **(DA 480.5)**

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed;

but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” Isaiah 54:10. **(DA 483.1) 4 I**

However much a shepherd may love his sheep, he loves his sons and daughters more. Jesus is not only our shepherd; He is our “everlasting Father.” And He says, “I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.” John 10:14, 15, R. V. What a statement is this!—the only-begotten Son, He who is in the bosom of the Father, He whom God has declared to be “the Man that is My fellow” (Zechariah 13:7),—the communion between Him and the eternal God is taken to represent the communion between Christ and His children on the earth! **(DA 483.2)**

Because we are the gift of His Father, and the reward of His work, Jesus loves us. He loves us as His children. Reader, He loves you. Heaven itself can bestow nothing greater, nothing better. Therefore trust. **(DA 483.3)**

Jesus thought upon the souls all over the earth who were misled by false shepherds. Those whom He longed to gather as the sheep of His pasture were scattered among wolves, and He said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.” John 10:16, R. V. **(DA 483.4)**

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, My Father has so loved you, that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your substitute and surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father. **(DA 483.5)**

“I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” John 10:17, 18. While as a member of the human family He was mortal, as God He was the fountain of life for the world. He could have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but voluntarily He laid down His life, that He might bring life and immortality to light. He bore the sin of the world, endured its curse, yielded up His life as a sacrifice, that men might not eternally die. “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:4-6. **(DA 484.1)**