

John Chapter 10 v 1 - 18

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[0 : 00] Let's continue to rejoice in him, our Savior and our Lord. Let us pray together.

We thank you, our Father and our God, that you are the one who calls us to come to you, that you're the God who calls us to come and know you, to know your love, to know your forgiveness, to know your life, and yes, Lord, to know your joy. For we thank you that you are the God of joy, that you are the one who gives joy, that you're the one who delights and rejoices in good things, and you're the one who has given to us a joy which is like no other. It's not a joy which is based upon things always going right in our lives. It's not a joy that's based upon feeling good about ourselves or getting our own way. It's a joy which is based upon you and your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A joy that comes from knowing that, oh Lord, that you love us. You love us in spite of our failings, our sins, our shortcomings. You love us in spite of the fact, oh Lord, that we keep getting it wrong.

Yours is an unconditional love. But we thank you that especially that we can rejoice, and our source of joy is found in that love which you've demonstrated and proven in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that in his life, and especially in his death, that Lord Jesus, you see the greatness and the extent and the power of your love, that you loved us to such a degree.

You were willing to leave heaven and to come into this world, to live amongst the muck and the mire and the suffering and the difficulty of life as we know it, and that more than that, you were willing to go and suffer and die in our place. Sin has separated us from God. Sin has cut us off from that love.

[1 : 59] Sin, our selfishness, our pride, our greed, our rebellion, our hatred, all those things, Lord, which are locked away in our heart that spill out from time to time. Lord, they've cut us off from you because you're good and holy and perfect and true. We thank you that the punishment we deserve, the guilt that is ours, Lord Jesus, you took upon the cross, that you could win for us full forgiveness, full pardon. Thank you that, Lord, in you, Jesus, we find that we stand before God as our judge, and you declare us as forgiven, pardoned, innocent, set free. We know this isn't because we're good, but it's because you're good. We thank you that the proof of the reality that, Lord Jesus, you are the Son of God and that you've done everything for us in the cross, the proof of that is that you rose again from the dead. You're the risen king. Death couldn't hold you. Death couldn't keep you. You triumphed over it, and you've given to those of us who put our faith in you newness of life now and eternal life forever. Thank you that we don't need to fear death. We don't need to fear life.

We don't need to fear anything because, oh Lord, we know that we are your children. We are your people. We are precious and loved in your sight, and because of your love for us, Lord, that means that all your power works for us too. There's no situation, oh Lord, in which you have not got your hand upon.

There's no circumstance in our lives where you don't know what's going on, and more than that, you are working in and through that situation for our good. Even those sad times, even those hard times, Lord, you don't disappear. You're not a fair weather God who's only there for the interesting bits.

We thank you that as we come this morning, we come, each one of us, as those who need you, who need you, Lord, to touch our lives, who need you to speak to us, who need you to reassure us of your love.

For those of us who know your love and have experienced it through the week, we want to come again, oh Lord, and say, give us more, Lord. Give us more of your presence, more of your spirit, more of your truth. We want, Lord, to live in the week ahead, in the confidence of who you are and who we are in you. For those of us who've never known that love, never known that forgiveness, never known that wonderful power of life, then, Lord, we need you especially to come and speak to us and make yourself known to us. We need to, Lord, you to unblock our ears and to soften our hearts, to deal with that pride and that stubbornness that keeps you out. We pray that you would do that, that you would make us to know the reality of who you are, and Lord, in such an inescapable way that we cannot help but turn to you and receive from you the blessings of forgiveness in life.

[4 : 50] We thank you, oh Lord, for the weekend that we've enjoyed as well, and for the young people, Lord, that have been here. We thank you for the ministry that we've heard from Daniel and from Paul. We pray again, oh Lord, that as Daniel comes and speaks to us in a little while, that you would speak to our hearts and encourage us and send us on our way, rejoicing in you, trusting in you, obeying you. For we ask these things, our God and Father, in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Sing together. Sing together.

He■■■ these things, touching the Father. Sing together. Sing together. Sing together. ho que■■■■ in you, Sing together.

A new day dawning It's time to sing your song again Whatever may pass And whatever lies before me Let me be singing When the evening comes Bless the Lord Bless the Lord, oh my soul Lord, oh my soul Worship His holy name Sing like never before Oh my soul I'll worship Your holy name For which in love And your snow to anger Your name is great

And your heart is high For all your goodness I will keep on singing Ten thousand reasons For my heart to find Bless the Lord, oh my soul Lord, oh my soul Worship His holy name Sing like never before Oh my soul Oh my soul I'll worship Your holy name On that day When my strength is failing The end draws near and my time has come Still my soul will sing Your praise unending

[8 : 22] Ten thousand years To share this miel Agil puddle with that Then Lord, oh my love Sing like never before, oh my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

I'll worship your holy name. Yes, I'll worship your holy name.

Amen. John 10, and we're going to read the first 18 verses.

These are the verses that Daniel is going to be drawing our thoughts towards in a few moments' time. So John 10, beginning at verse 1, very start.

Here's Jesus speaking to his disciples. Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs him by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

[10 : 17] The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger.

In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd.

[11 : 20] The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.

Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd.

I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold.

I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice. And there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my father.

[12 : 17] We're going to come to prayer again and ask for God's help, particularly remembering those who are going to be leaving us.

Not just the young people from September Bible School, but also, as we've heard, Emily and Marnie off at university in a week or two.

And also, of course, for Caleb and Elizabeth as they begin their training and their work with UCF. And we're going to remember Ben and Liz as well, because they're going to go back to Stoke.

And they've got a bit of deputation work to do. And then Ben, in doing that, is also going to be pastoring the church there in Stoke. So they really do need our prayers, the church in Stoke, I mean, of course.

Let's pray together. Let's come to God. We know that he hears. He listens to us when we pray, not just in church, but wherever we are, 24-7. He listens to his children. And he answers us.

[13 : 17] Amen. We thank you, our God and Father, that there is no one like you, no one who compares with you, no one comes close to you.

You are so out there beyond everything and everyone. You are indeed so supreme and awesome.

And yet, O Lord, we thank you for this incredible truth that you are not like the great men and women of this world who have very little time for the ordinary people.

But you are the God who has time for everyone. You are the God who, because you are God, is able to be involved in and interested in and concerned with every single person and every single life.

There's not one of us here you don't know about. Not one of us here you don't care about. Not one of us here that you do not wish to bless and do good to. And we thank you, O Lord, that so often, Lord, the reason we miss out on so many of the blessings and the good things you have for us is because we do not ask.

[14 : 24] Yourself, the Lord Jesus, you said you do not have because you do not ask. And you encourage us, O Lord, to ask and to knock and to seek.

We thank you for that promise that those who ask receive. Those who knock, the door is open. Those who seek, find. And so we come to you in prayer. We come together. Lord, all of us who are believers, all of us who are your children, we come with one heart and with, in one sense, one voice to pray, Lord, that you would be at work to bless.

Bless, Lord, those who've been here over the weekend as they return to their churches, as they return to their workplaces, as they return to their schools and colleges, universities. We praise you and thank you, O Lord, for the work you've done in their lives and for the plans that you have for them.

And we pray for each one, Lord, as they go back. They might go back with that encouragement, with that strengthening of their faith, with that desire and longing to see you at work in their lives and through their lives, into the lives of those that they meet with and talk with and share with and serve.

We pray that you would keep them close to yourself and cause their walk with you to be stronger and deeper. And we pray again, O Lord, that not only would you bless them, but, Lord, you would make them a blessing, that there may be those who are their friends or colleagues or classmates who may come to know you and trust in you through the life of Jesus lived in them.

[15 : 52] We thank you for the work that's going on with UCCCF in the universities as they begin again, another term. We pray especially for Caleb and for Elizabeth.

We thank you, O Lord, for them and their desire to serve and to work for you in this coming year as relay workers. We pray you'd help them as they train and as they learn, as they prepare. We pray that you would equip them, Lord, for all that they need to be a great help and support, a Lord, to Christian unions in Cardiff and in Carlisle and Lancaster.

We pray that, Lord, you would help them with their finances and provide all their needs. We pray again that they might walk closely with you and know, Lord, you're working in them, growing and maturing them in their own faith and making them a blessing to others.

We thank you for the way that you've blessed Marnie with her A-level results. And we pray that you'd be with her now as she goes to university in Carlisle.

Help her, Lord, in that big change in her life. And pray, Lord, that she may make good friends, Christian friends as well, and that she may be a blessing and that she may learn and study.

[16 : 59] We pray, too, for Emily. Thank you, Lord, for this year that she's had off in preparation for seeking you as she goes to Durham to prepare for teacher training. Lord, again, be with her there.

Help her as she gets back into university life. Help her as she studies. Help her, again, to be a blessing and to be blessed in that preparation for working.

And we thank you, Lord, for all those who are returning to school, young and old alike. And we pray that as some of them go up to bigger schools, some of them change classes, some of them, Lord, know just to return to the same school.

We pray that in all of their lives they may be helped by you in their education, in their learning, but especially in their maturing. Help them in their faith as they go back to schools where often things which are contrary to your truth are taught.

Help them to stand firm. Help them, Lord, to be encouraged. We pray for ourselves again as your people. Lord, we need you. We need your word. We need your truth.

[18 : 01] We need your spirit. We need your help. And we ask particularly now as Daniel comes and speaks to us that, Lord, you would speak to us through him in such a way that we cannot help but understand and cannot help, oh, Lord, but follow and trust and live for you.

So receive our praise. Receive our thanks. And hear us as we ask these things. We know you do and we know, oh, Lord, that you will answer us as you see fit in the right way.

Amen. Amen. Amen. ölm rawd■ The Lord my shepherd I'm not one, He makes me live in precious grief.

He's divine, the still, still waters, He's the best, restores my soul.

And I will trust in His will, and I will trust in His will, for your endless blessing follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

[19 : 35] He guides my ways in righteousness, and He anoints my head with oil.

And my cup is open, close with joy, and His song is pure divine.

And I will trust in His will, and I will trust in His will, for your endless blessing follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

And though I form the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one.

For you are with me, and you're broad and sad, I'm not what I need to know.

[20 : 50] And I will trust in His will, and I will trust in His will, for your endless blessing follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

For your endless blessing follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

He says, I am the good shepherd. You see it there in John 10, 14. I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.

He says, I. Not to be confused with anybody else. This is Jesus speaking, Jesus who is the Son of God, Jesus who is the Son of God, Jesus who is the Messiah, Jesus who is the Word of God, Jesus who lived in this world and died here.

The focus is upon Him. He is saying, He is making this great claim. He says, I am. He says, I am. And by taking that expression and using those words, he's taking the very same words that God Himself used when He spoke with Moses.

[22 : 39] Remember the story where Moses sees this burning bush and he's captivated by it because the bush is not consumed. And he draws near and God then is commissioning Moses to rescue the people and bring them out from slavery in Egypt.

And Moses isn't very sure. And so he then says, you know, well, who do I say has sent me? And God says, just say, I am has sent you. The one who always is.

The one you cannot go any further back from. And Jesus is using the same words to say, I am. It's a great claim to be the eternal God.

The one who always was and is and will be. The one who never degrades or disintegrates or extinguishes. The one who has no shelf life or half life.

He just is. It's a great claim of Jesus then to be God. And those who heard Him knew that's what He meant.

[23 : 45] Because when you get down to verse 33, a bit further than where we read, they're stoning Him. And they say, we are not stoning you for any good work. They replied, for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.

So when Jesus said, I am, they knew exactly what He meant. Well, He says, I am the good shepherd. Not a good shepherd, but the.

And He makes a contrast in the passage between thieves and bad shepherds. And He's saying, I am the ultimate, the true, the only one. So this morning we're going to ask, what makes Jesus the good shepherd?

Why does He describe Himself in this way? What does He want us to grasp by the fact that He gives Himself this title and speaks of Himself in this way?

Now when you compare this I am, remember this is one of a whole series that Jesus talks in these terms. Now all the others are impersonal things.

[24 : 53] So Jesus says, I am the light of the world. I am life, resurrection and life. I am bread. I am the vine.

Whereas this one, He says, I am the true shepherd, the good shepherd. This one is about a relationship. You see, this one reveals to us His heart.

He wants us to understand that He is a shepherd and we are sheep. And that He is our shepherd and we are those sheep.

And He wants us to feel it. It's not just a truth that He wants us to grasp with our minds about something of His glory and something of His work. But He wants us to actually feel something of His loving care towards us as He describes Himself in this way.

This is how we relate to Him. This is how He relates to us. Now over this weekend we've been talking about, at the Bible School, about standing firm, of keeping going, of not giving up.

[26 : 01] And we looked at reasons why we must keep going in the Christian life. We looked at how we keep going when all the disappointments and the hardships come in life. We looked at how we keep going in this virtual world that we now live in.

Well, today, this morning, we're turning it round and we're shifting the focus away from our responsibilities onto what He has done to keep us.

So this morning we're talking about how we are held firm. held firm by the good shepherd. Because ultimately, our confidence that we will keep standing and last the journey is not in ourselves, but in Him and the fact that we are held by Him.

held firm by the good shepherd. So what makes Him a good shepherd who will hold us to the end? Three things. First of all, He knows us.

Now, to fully grasp this image that Jesus is using, to grasp the truth that He's trying to press upon us, that He is the good shepherd, we have to know a bit about ancient Near Eastern shepherds, because they're different from the ones that we have today.

[27 : 16] I heard a shepherd speak a few weeks ago when I was on holiday down in Cornwall, but He doesn't sleep out with His sheep. He goes home at night time and there's risks involved with that.

They wander around. Sometimes He says they wander on to the A30, whereas the ancient Near Eastern shepherd was with their sheep all the time, 24-7.

And they built up then a lifetime of a shared experience with their sheep. They were there when they were born. They would beware with them to the very end of their days.

They knew Him. And He heard His voice. The chapter does begin with a description of a town, a sheepfold, where a shepherd may come and leave his sheep while he's in town.

And you imagine there's sheep of lots of different shepherds in this fold, and the gatekeeper is there looking after them. Well, when the shepherd comes, he just calls, and they know His voice and the ones that belong to Him follow out because He knows them.

[28 : 24] And out in the country then at night, He would lead them into the fold, a fold of bush and sticks or perhaps a cave or a stone, and then He would be the gate and lie across that entrance.

You see, He would know them and He would feed them and He would lead them and He would protect them. And sometimes He'd have to tap an unruly sheep on the ear with a crook, but He would do so for its care.

And He'd know them by name. Spotty face, crooked horn, crumpled ear, or maybe just sheepy one, two, three.

But He knew them. And He knew that they were stupid and hapless and stubborn, and they would wander off, and sometimes they would wander even into fire, and they could easily be frightened and get themselves into danger.

We could sum it up like this. Shepherds smell like sheep because they were with them. Their lives were intertwined with their flocks.

[29 : 38] And this is the imagery then that is behind Jesus' words. When Jesus comes and says, I am the good shepherd. That's what He wants us to understand, an intimacy that He knows the sheep whom He cares for.

He is the shepherd that smells like sheep. And of course, He draws a contrast between the thief and the shepherd in the first ten verses.

But the shepherd is the one that can be trusted because He knows them. They belong to Him, and He's lived with them and cared for them. And we have here actually two I am's, because Jesus also says, I am the gate, but they're very closely related, because I am the gate is really just another way of saying, I am the shepherd.

I'm the one that lies across at night and cares for them. And all of this is trying to underline to us the closeness of the relationship that exists between Jesus and His sheep.

So what does this mean for us? Well, it means a couple of things. It means He knows what we're like. You know, the Bible is quite straight with us.

[30 : 59] It calls us sheep. So Jesus knows that we're stupid and hapless. And that's how we're being described.

That's how we are spiritually. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, because that's by their nature. They need a shepherd to care for them.

And we are spiritually hapless and stupid. Now, if you're not convinced about this, just do this little test with me. Think about yourself 10 years ago.

As you think back 10 years, how do you think about yourself 10 years ago? Imagine that if most of us are honest, as we look back 10 years ago, we think, hmm, I wasn't, you know, I've grown up a bit since then.

I'm more mature now. You know, back then, I was a bit silly in some areas. You know, and if you go back 20 years, probably even more, there's things that would embarrass you. Well, let's move the clock on 10 years.

[32 : 03] How, in 10 years' time, how are you going to think about yourself today? You'll probably think the same, won't you? So we always think that we're just on that edge of leaving foolishness behind.

But every time we look back, we say, actually, no, we're not. And when we get a bit of perspective on life, we actually have to say, no, I am pretty immature. I am foolish. I am silly. You see, we are sheep.

We are spiritually hapless and stupid. And we need a shepherd. And Jesus is the good shepherd. And he knows what sheep are like.

And he loves us. And he cares for us. And he comes to protect us. And he comes to feed us. And, of course, he uses the same imagery in that story that we shared with the children, didn't we, of the lost sheep.

And he's the good shepherd that goes in search of that lost sheep. And that's why he came to seek and to save those who are lost. And he finds them.

[33 : 07] And even the sheep who've been found, and he's drawn into his family, he still needs constant watching. But he knows what we are like.

And he knows our proneness to wander. He knows our proneness of our hearts to go cold. And yet he still says, I am the good shepherd. I care for you. But it also means something else.

And that means he knows who belong to him. Look at verses 14 and 15. And just let these words blow your mind. I'm the good shepherd.

I know my sheep. And my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

How close a relationship is there between Jesus and his sheep? What's the comparison that he uses? The comparison is his own relationship with his Father.

[34 : 13] He's saying there is a bond between Christ and his people, which is the same bond that exists between God the Father and God the Son.

Because God is one God, but three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And he says that, and you know, they have existed forever as a united trinity in fellowship and love and care for one another.

And he's saying the same relationship that then exists between the Father and the Son now exists between the Son and his people. Isn't that not incredible? That's the power of the love that he has for us.

He's stressing to us the closeness of the relationship that now exists between his people and himself. And we must never think that Jesus is somehow distant and far away and he's up there in heaven and here we are having to live in this world.

He says, no, I'm the good shepherd and I know my sheep in the same way as my Father knows me. And just like a shepherd would count his sheep in every night to make sure none of them have got lost or wandered.

[35 : 33] So Christ is looking over the world and counting in his sheep and making sure he knows where each one is. he's always watching out.

He's always caring and feeding and protecting. He even knows who we are before we do. Before we come to know him personally in that saving way because he says in verse 16, I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold.

I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. He's talking about the great work of the gospel that this relationship isn't just for people from a Jewish background but that people from all nations will hear the voice of Jesus and will come to know him and will be counted as part of his flock.

The identifying mark of course is that they hear his voice and respond. So what makes Jesus a good shepherd?

He knows us personally and intimately. Is that not incredible truth this morning? Does that not make your heart rejoice and to be glad to be a Christian?

[36 : 52] Does that not make you just love the Lord Jesus all the more to think of how he relates to you? He knows us.

Secondly he dies for us. Being a shepherd was not easy work. It was often reserved for the youngest son of the family and it was dangerous.

You were out there in the cold and in the heat and with the wild animals but shepherds would very rarely die because their call was to actually to live for their sheep not to die for their sheep.

If they died they would cease to be any use to their sheep. So Jesus charged then and Jesus statement about himself is unique where he says I am the good shepherd and I have come to lay down my life for the sheep.

I have come to die and it's here right the way through this passage it's in verse 11 the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. It's there in verse 15 just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

[38 : 05] It's there in verses 17 and 18 the reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

This command I received from my father. As one commentator said this is this pushes the metaphor the imagery the picture of the good shepherd it pushes it to the very wall to the very maximum as Jesus is saying he's come to die for his sheep.

And we learn a few things about his death that again just underline for us the closeness of the relationship and how he's holding us and protecting us and saving us.

his death is voluntary. He lays down his life for the sheep. I lay down my life only to take it up and no one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not some accident or tragedy. It was planned right back the Bible tells us before the creation of the world when the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit met as it were in great council and came up with a great plan of salvation then this was the intention this was always the plan and the idea.

[39 : 40] So Peter can say on the day of Pentecost when he's preaching and explaining what has happened he says this man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge and you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to the cross that's Acts 2 23 this was because of the whole purpose that Jesus was born he was called Jesus because he would save his people from their sins and as you read in any of the gospels about Jesus' life and ministry very quickly whether it's Matthew or Mark or Luke and John they are moving you on through the events of his life to tell you about his death he didn't have to but he chose to the father and the son were of one mind there wasn't any coercion involved the son said I'll willingly go and give my life that these poor hapless sheep might belong to us and be our people and we can enjoy them forever why is this so important why is it so important that this is voluntary it's important because he was doing this out of love his heart was in it the man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep he says in verse 13 but that was not the case of the Lord Jesus Christ and you must never get in your mind that somehow he's being pushed into this by people or circumstances or by his father no his heart was entirely in it you think about there's lots of things in life isn't it that you have to do and you do them because you have to but there's other things in life that you love to do even if they're hard you love to do them there's a joy and a buzz that comes from them and even though this is the most incredible and the most difficult thing that Jesus ever did the most painful and awful he did it because he willingly wanted to save people he did it out of love he loved his sheep so if you're one of his sheep this morning then he loves you he wants you to see that he is the good shepherd he really does love for you love for you for the depth of dying for you his death we're told not only is voluntary but it's a sacrifice it's vicarious it is giving his life for the sheep we have the idea of a substitute here he is dying instead of us he's not just dying on their behalf but the idea is that he is dying in their place we the sheep deserve to die because of our sin because of our rebellion because of our idolatry because of our failure in so many ways but instead he comes and in our place he dies taking the punishment upon his own shoulders and upon his own soul and absorbing and paying the wrath of God he's done everything necessary as the prophet Isaiah says we all like sheep have gone astray but he has laid on him the iniquity of us all and that means we are then set free from all the consequences of sin because

Jesus has paid he has laid down his life as a sacrifice for our sins this is the great truth at the very heart of the Bible this is the great gospel message Christ died for our sins there it is five words one hand Christ died for our sins that is what it is all about that's what makes him a good shepherd and it's specific he dies for his sheep he knows those who are his he has as it were the names of all the people that he is dying for graven on his hands he didn't die just an indiscriminate death some people try to teach that that Jesus his death was somehow for all people in the same way that's not true he wasn't an indiscriminate death it was an effective specific death for a group of people that he intended to have as his own it has to be that way because he was taking their liabilities he was actually paying for their sins he wasn't just making salvation possible he was actually accomplishing something if you teach that

Jesus' death is for all broad wide open actually you're teaching that Jesus didn't get anybody to heaven he just made it possible and then you're bringing the focus back to man and you're saying it's up to man it's man who has to Spurgeon pictures it as a big wide bridge but it only goes halfway across and you have to jump the rest of the way you're limiting the effectiveness and this passage is teaching us that Jesus' death was not limited in its effectiveness but it actually works it really saves people it's a narrower bridge but it goes all the way over Jesus really does save his people and keep them he's not just a potential good shepherd he actually is one who really does save and lay down his life for his sheep now you may be saying but how do I know how do I know if he's mine how do I know if his death was for me that was a question of me growing up in a Christian home accepting these things to be true but how could I know if it was true for me well there's a test here he says that his sheep listen to his voice when he calls them they come to him are you listening to his voice have you heard him call to you through the preaching of his words through the pages of the Bible have you heard that call that has gripped your heart and says come to me and be forgiven and saved that's how you know that's why you come because the call comes and you listen and you respond and the sheep know his voice and they hear and they come but the point is that the good shepherd loves his sheep he loves his sheep enough to die for his sheep and don't be in any doubt today that you are loved and if your thoughts of whether you really are loved and whether God really does care then go back to the events of Calvary to where Jesus died go back and think about how the good shepherd laid down his life he did it for you with your name written on his heart that's the love that God has for sinners that's the most incredible thing isn't it this is the Bible's message this is the good news that's what holds us firm thirdly not only does he know us and die for us but thirdly he cares for us you see when you start to put all this imagery together of the shepherd the shepherd who knows and the shepherd who dies there's only one conclusion that you can come to and that is that he cares and this is where the imagery of the door helps to reinforce that he says

I'm the I'm the door apparently an Old Testament scholar was travelling in the east and met a shepherd and the shepherd showed him the fold where the sheep go and the scholar said where's the door and the shepherd said I'm the door I lie down no sheep goes out no wolf comes in they're safe I protect them and it's the same with Jesus he's saying to us I'm the door I'm the one that cares I'm the one that protects you I'm the one that lies across the doorway protecting you from all that would come in to destroy you now that doesn't mean don't take that to mean that there'll never be hardships or trials or disappointments or scary things that will come but those things are never outside of his loving care that's the devil the lie that the devil wants us to keep happening isn't it when bad things happen he wants us ah therefore does God really love you

Jesus saying that's the wrong way to think those things aren't outside of my loving care those things are actually inside my loving care I'm taking you through those things for your good so it changes the whole way you think about those those scary things and those disappointments and those hard things that come because the good shepherd never loses sight of his sheep and as it were you know isn't it when somebody's been in hospital or has needs then people put a care plan together don't they the professionals a care plan of what you need well Jesus puts a care plan together for us exactly what we need and often on that care plan is actually they need a bit of testing here and they need a bit of hardship here because their faith in me needs to be really proven do they really believe what I say do they really trust me and love me through all circumstances this is the care plan that I need he says to give my sheep to bring them to full maturity but we're never outside his loving care he holds us in his hands just look on a bit further look to verses 27 to 30 let me just read to you

[50 : 42] John 10 27 my sheep listen to my voice so what a reassuring picture he gives he says he's holding us tight by his hands you know it's the picture of a parent with a small child isn't it when they're coming near the road and they grab hold of the child's hand and hold them tight or if you're a dog walker you know you put them on the lead to keep them safe nothing can snatch us from his hand let's turn it around the other way who would dare you know if we're being held by Jesus who would dare if the shepherd king has got us who's going to get in there to snatch us or take us we're entirely safe no one can get in can we who would you rather have holding your hand through life than the good shepherd himself now it's very interesting he says you're in my hand and then he says you're in the father's hand we're in both we're held by the father and we're held by the son it's talking about how the whole

God the father son and holy spirit are all working together to hold us and to keep us and to show us that we are safe and that he really does care for us and even in the darkest and most difficult days that we go through in this life we're still safe in the hands of the good shepherd so how are we to respond how are we to respond to this good shepherd who knows and dies and cares and cares well we're to follow him this is what's going to hold us this is what's going to keep us is his love for us ultimately it's not going to be our determination yes there is a call and we've been thinking about this weekend of how we must stand firm but ultimately what keeps us to the end is his grace and his kindness and his loving heart and so how should we respond well we need to follow him and we need to follow him comprehensively that's completely give him all don't hold back and say well

Jesus you can you can have these areas of my life but that's out of bounds doesn't make sense does it when you think that he's the good shepherd give it all to him follow him in everything when he comes have that spirit that says and every time you come to hear the word of God that says whatever Lord I'm willing I'm up for it I'll be obedient to what you call me to do comprehensively unconditionally sometimes shepherds could be rough with their sheep they could grab them by their legs imagine being a sheep and suddenly you're just you know meandering along and suddenly the shepherd comes and grabs you by the by the legs and turfs you up and whoa you think what's going on but a sheep doesn't really understand but a shepherd knows there's some danger or some need to grab hold and take them on this rough journey well our understanding is limited too we can only see things from life's perspective and we're meandering along suddenly we hit some some challenge or difficulty and we go god what's going on why is this happening and he says well you probably don't understand but just trust me don't ask all the awkward questions just trust me

I know what I'm doing the great shepherd knows what we need calls us to follow him and trust him unconditionally and it needs to be personal too you see back where we started he says he's a shepherd he wants that personal relationship between us and him he wants us to be his friends he's given his heart he's been to the cross because he loves us and he wants to have our hearts in return he wants a relationship with us he wants us to enjoy fellowship and communion and friendship and to walk with him in the same way as he walks with his father that's why he died and rose again that we might be his sheep be his people in the fullest and the completest and the most wonderful way that's what will hold you today tomorrow going to university being a relay worker being retired on holiday back to work back to school sorry if I've missed you just fill in the blank whatever he will hold you are you not glad that

Jesus is the good shepherd the one who knows us and dies for us and cares for us let's pray father in heaven we thank you so much this morning that these words are true that Jesus spoke that he is the good shepherd and lord keep us from looking elsewhere keep us from following others help us to be wholehearted for him who is so wholehearted for us thank you that he knows us you know us you know what we're like you know us as your own dear people that you've died for us to have us as your own to pay for our sins and that you care for us lord write this truth upon us may it as we reflect on it may it deepen our relationship with you the good shepherd may we grasp that we are being held yes you call us to stand firm you call us to keep going but help us to see that we're safe in your hands that it's all of your love and grace and kindness how we worship you and praise you this morning that Jesus is the good shepherd we praise you in his name amen well