We have been studying The Great “I AM” statements of Jesus that are recorded in the Gospel of John. Thus far in this series we have looked at three of those Great “I AM” statements:

“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”
“I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE”
“I AM THE DOOR”

Tonight we are going to go back to the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John and look at another “I AM” statement Jesus made in that chapter, and that is “I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.”

Let's look at John 10:11-21 (NKJV)

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes 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 command I have received from My Father.”

19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.

20 And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”

21 Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

I n t r o d u c t i o n

It should come as no great surprise to us that Jesus identifies Himself as **The Good Shepherd**.

Remember those beautiful words of David in **Psalm 23**?

“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside the still waters.” (Psalm 23:1,2 NKJV)

A less familiar picture of Jesus as a **Shepherd** comes to us from:

**Isaiah 40:11** (NKJV) “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather His lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”
Jesus used the “Shepherd - sheep” analogy in His teachings in the Gospels.

*In Luke 15 Jesus told “The Parable of The Lost Sheep.” It was the story of ninety-nine sheep whose loving, compassionate shepherd went into the wilderness to find his one lost sheep.

*In Matthew 9:36 we are told that when giant multitudes of people showed up with their sick and diseased loved ones, Jesus was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd.

*And in Matthew 25 Jesus used the analogy of a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats to describe how He will separate the saved from the lost.

And so now here in John chapter 10 Jesus says, “I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.”

In this 10th chapter of John we see two very contrasting portraits:

(N E X T  P A G E)
First, let’s look at……

I. The **CONDEMNATION** of **BAD SHEPHERDS**

1. In every profession you will find **good and bad**.

   - There are **GOOD COPS** and **BAD COPS**
   - There are **GOOD TEACHERS** and **BAD TEACHERS**
   - There are **GOOD PREACHERS** and **BAD PREACHERS**
   - There are **GOOD DOCTORS** and **BAD DOCTORS**

2. The same is true when it comes to **shepherds**. There are **GOOD SHEPHERDS** and there are **BAD SHEPHERDS**.

3. In the Old Testament we see God raise up one prophet after another to pass judgment on Israel’s **“bad shepherds.”** Sometimes these “bad shepherds” were ungodly Kings who forsook God and led the children of Israel into idolatry. Sometimes these “**bad shepherds**” were High Priests who failed to provide spiritual guidance to the children of Israel.
4. In this 10th chapter of John Jesus condemned “the bad shepherds” of His day in the sharpest of terms.

*In verse 1 Jesus describes these “bad shepherds” as “thieves and robbers” who tried to get into the sheepfold another way than “The Door.”
(Remember: Jesus is “The Door.”)

*In verse 8 Jesus again describes these “bad shepherds” as “thieves and robbers” who try to steal, kill and destroy the Good Shepherd’s sheep with their false teachings.

*And then in verses 12,13 Jesus describes these “bad shepherds” as “hirelings” who don’t care about the spiritual welfare of the sheep and would abandon them to the “wolves.”

5. In Jesus’ day, the Scribes and Pharisees were the bad shepherds. They were more concerned about preserving their legalistic traditions and maintaining their own spiritual image than they were with the spiritual welfare of “the sheep of Israel.”

6. There are many “bad shepherds” today. How many sheep today are starving for true gospel preaching but are being fed a watered-down, sugar-coated, feel-good religion message instead?
7. How many Churches are being led by “bad elders” and “bad deacons” who are not “spiritual minded”.... men who are more concerned about pushing their own personal agenda than looking after the “spiritual welfare” of the sheep in their flock?

8. Just as Jesus condemned “the bad shepherds” of His day, He will have nothing but condemnation for “the bad shepherds” of our day as well.

Well let's turn our thoughts away from The Bad Shepherds and focus our attention on what this section of scripture is all about.

Let's look at:

II. The CHARACTER of THE GOOD SHEPHERD

v. 11 a “I AM the Good Shepherd.”

1. When we think of “a good student” or “a good golfer” or a “good cook” we think of someone who is above average.

2. When Jesus says, “I AM the Good Shepherd” He does not mean, “I am an above average shepherd.”
3. Jesus is identifying Himself as “The Shepherd” Ezekiel had prophesied would come. (Ezekiel 34:11-31) Jesus is distinguishing Himself as “The True Shepherd” of Israel as opposed to “the bad shepherds,” “the impostors” who had portrayed themselves as Israel's shepherds.

4. When Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd” He is exposing the Scribes and Pharisees for what they really are: They are Israel's **FOES not their FRIENDS.** They are **HIRELINGS not SHEPHERDS.**

5. The word Jesus uses for “good” when describing Himself as “The Good Shepherd” has an interesting meaning.

The word “good” here is “kalos” which means: “BEAUTIFUL, MAGNIFICENT or of the highest moral CHARACTER.”

6. So when Jesus says, “I AM the Good Shepherd” He is saying, “I AM the BEAUTIFUL Shepherd.” “I AM the MAGNIFICENT Shepherd.” “I AM the Shepherd of highest MORAL CHARACTER.”
The Character Traits of The Good Shepherd

(A) The Good Shepherd WARNS His sheep about false shepherds.

v. 1 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and robber.”

Satan knows he cannot destroy the Church for Christ Himself said, “not even the gates of hell could prevail against His Church.” (Matthew 16:18) But Satan will do everything in his power to do harm to the Good Shepherd’s sheep, and one of the ways he does that is by sending false shepherds who look like and sound like real shepherds into the “flock” to teach things that contradict the words of the Good Shepherd.

As our Good Shepherd Jesus has warned us about these false shepherds. He has warned us time and time again in the Gospels to beware of those who try to “feed us” the poison of false teachings.

(B) The Good Shepherd CARES for His Sheep

v. 3 “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear His voice; and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.” (“voice” not an audible voice, but rather the word of God)

v.14 “I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”
Do you see the emphasis on the personal relationship Jesus, The Good Shepherd has with “us” His sheep. He cares for each and every one of us personally. He knows us by name. Jesus knows our various personalities. He knows the personal needs of each and every one of us. He knows when we are hurting...........when we are lonely......when we are afraid.......when we are discouraged......when we are sad.

Jesus knows your weaknesses and vulnerabilities. He knows what burdens you are carrying. He knows what worries are troubling you. He knows when you need loving discipline and correction; and when you need hope and re-assurance.

The Good Shepherd WARNS His sheep about false shepherds. The Good Shepherd CARES for His sheep.

(C) The Good Shepherd is willing to LAY DOWN HIS OWN LIFE for His sheep.

It is interesting to note that this is the last public address of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John. Jesus is at that point in His ministry where He has now “set His face towards Jerusalem” and the sacrifice He will make on the cross. This adds rich meaning to what Jesus says in.....

vs. 15-18 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes 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 command I have received from My Father.”
Shepherds were very brave and courageous men. They literally risked their lives for the sheep each and every day. They would go up against lions and wolves and thieves and do whatever was necessary to save and protect their sheep, even if it meant giving up their own lives.

Jesus our “Good Shepherd” literally “laid down His life” for us. He fought Satan, “the roaring lion” and won! He fought “the enemy of death” and won.

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CONCLUSION

Several years ago, author Lynn Anderson wrote a wonderful book on Christian leadership called, “They Smell Like Sheep.” In the book he shares this interesting story.

“Several years ago in Palestine, my wife Carolyn and I rode a tour bus through Israel’s countryside nearly mesmerized as the tour guide explained the scenery, the history, and the lifestyle. In his description, he included a heart-warming portrayal of the ancient shepherd/sheep relationship. He told us how the shepherd loves his sheep and how he cares for them; and that a shepherd is not harsh with sheep and doesn’t drive them, but rather lovingly leads them.

Right in the middle of the tour guide's touching speech about shepherds and their sheep, the attention of everyone on the bus was suddenly diverted to something that was going on along side the road. There was an angry man throwing rocks at a bunch of sheep and whacking them with sticks and siccing the sheep dog on them.
The guide had the bus driver stop and he got off and started yelling at the man. He said, I was spinning a charming story about the gentle ways of the shepherd and here you are mistreating the sheep and throwing rocks at them and whacking them with sticks. The stranger said, “Man, you got me all wrong. I’m not a shepherd, I am a butcher.”

There’s a lot of people in this world who we may think are “shepherds” when the truth is they are “butchers.”

May we listen only to the voice of our Good Shepherd! May it be our aim, our purpose in life to love our Shepherd as He has loved us, His sheep!