JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-21

INTRODUCTION & PRAYER

In this week’s passage, we will examine a couple of metaphors that Jesus used to describe Himself. Both metaphors—the gate and the good shepherd—speak to His role and character as the Savior sent by God for the salvation of human beings. Jesus is the only way to have a restored relationship with the Father, and our reconciliation required Jesus to lay His life down for us. Contrary to other teachers and leaders, Jesus will never leave or forsake His followers. He is the Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep and never stops loving them. Because Jesus laid down His life for us so that we might be saved, we live sacrificially as we point others to the sacrifice Christ made for us. As you work through this passage, start with prayer, asking God to help you know, love, and follow the voice of Jesus.

READ THE PASSAGE

Read the passage out loud with your household (if you have kids, let them participate):

• John 10:1-21

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE

Study the Passage by discussing these questions:

• What stood out or caught your attention in this passage?
• What does this passage teach you about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
• What does this passage teach you about people?

PASSAGE OUTLINE

Here is a helpful outline of the passage, with main points:

• Jesus is the gate that leads to abundant life. (John 10:7-10)
• Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11-13)
• Jesus is the good shepherd who knows His sheep. (John 10:14-18)
APPLY THE PASSAGE

Go a little deeper with these questions:

- How can we identify “thieves and robbers” that threaten the flock of God today?
- How would you describe the abundant life that comes through faith in Jesus?
- What are some good things that have the potential to make you stray from following Jesus?
- How should the fact that believers belong to the Shepherd affect the way we think, feel, and live?
- How does a diverse church display the glorious wisdom of God?
- What could you share from this passage to encourage someone else?

CHRIST CONNECTION

Read and discuss the big picture of this passage:
Jesus is the good shepherd, sent by the Father, to lay down His life for the sheep so that they might have life. Because of Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, we have abundant life in Him and through Him.

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE: CHRIST AS PROPITIATION

Because of God’s righteousness and holiness, humanity’s sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ’s death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God’s wrath against sin. Christ’s propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God’s great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

PRAYER POINTS

Pray together with those in your home for these and any other prayer requests.

- Thank God for His plan to provide Jesus as our propitiation, our atonement for sin.
- Pray that God would help you listen to the voice of Jesus each day.
- Pray that God would show you the areas of your life that need to be surrendered to the Good Shepherd.
- Pray for the physical and spiritual needs of your family and friends.
- Pray for those family members and friends that do not yet trust in Jesus as their savior.
- Pray for the leaders and the needs of our church, community, nation and world.
CHRIST CONNECTION FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Read aloud and discuss the big picture of this passage with your kids:
Jesus is the Good Shepherd. God sent Him to save sinners. Jesus gave up His life so His people could be forgiven and have life with God forever. Those who trust in Jesus are His sheep. They listen to Him, follow Him, and obey Him.

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES WITH PRESCHOOLERS

For Videos and Activity Sheets for preschoolers, visit hunterstreetsmallgroups.org.
- Use the password: “hsbcstudents”.

ACTIVITY IDEA

CHANT ACTIONS
- Guide your children to sit and pat their knees in rhythm while chanting with you: “We’re going to the sheep pen, We’re gonna be safe there. Uh oh! A thief! Run away!” On the last line, point and act scared, then guide kids to pat their knees frantically as if running away. After a moment, return to a normal rhythm and repeat, exchanging the word thief for wolf or other dangers. Finish by replacing the last line with: “Finally! The gate! Come on in.”

- Say: Whew, I’m glad we made it to safety! There were a lot of dangers along the way. Sheep need shepherds to protect them and guide them safely home. Jesus taught that He is the Good Shepherd. He protects God’s people and guides them safely home to God’s kingdom. What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom.

PRETEND TO CARE FOR PETS
- Set out a variety of toy animals, blocks, washcloths, paper shreds, and play dishes for children to play out caring for pets. Preschoolers may build fences or barns for the animals with blocks, “bathe” them with washcloths, and “feed” them with paper shreds on dishes. Talk about how to care for animals well while children play.

- Say: If you have pets, talk of all the ways you care for them. Or if you have a baby in your house, use that as an example. If you don’t have either, talk about the things that have to be done to care for something or someone who can’t care for themselves. A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep. He makes sure they have food and water, and he keeps them safe and clean. In our Bible story today, Jesus said He is the Good Shepherd. Listen to the story to find out who is Jesus’ sheep.
CHRIST CONNECTION FOR KIDS

Read aloud and discuss the big picture of this passage with your kids:
Jesus is the Good Shepherd. God sent Him to rescue sinners. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep so they could have forgiveness and eternal life. When we trust in Jesus, we are His sheep who listen to, follow, and obey Him.

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES WITH KIDS

For Videos and Activity Sheets for younger and older kids, visit hunterstreetsmallgroups.org.

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ACTIVITY IDEAS

MODEL SHEEP AND SHEPHERDS

• Give each family member a lump of clay (you can also use play dough if needed). Invite each family member to make a sheep or a shepherd. As your family works on their models, try to make a list of the differences you all think of between a sheep and a shepherd. Once you’ve made your list, open your Bible and read Psalm 23 out loud (you can also look up “The Good Shepherd” in the Jesus Storybook Bible).

• Say: Psalm 23 is in the Old Testament. King David wrote this psalm, telling of God’s care for His people as a shepherd. In John 10, Jesus tells the people that He is the Good Shepherd who cares for His people. God sent Him to rescue sinners. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep so they could have forgiveness and eternal life. When we trust in Jesus, we are His sheep who listen to, follow, and obey Him.

* If using clay, encourage your kids to display their sheep and shepherds where your family can see them this week as a reminder to thank God for sending Jesus to be the Good Shepherd.

I KNOW THAT VOICE!

• Select one family member to stand in front of the rest of you. He or she will close their eyes or wear a blindfold, to make sure they can’t see who’s talking. Silently pick a different family member (or see note below for other options) and have that family member say, “Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for His people.” The blindfolded family member will have to guess who spoke. You may give them 2-3 chances if they guess wrong the first time. If you choose to have friends and family record themselves ahead of time, you may also choose to play the recordings and have everyone guess who was speaking as a group.

• Say: Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice and know Him. We can hear God’s words to us when we read the Bible. That is the ultimate way that God speaks to us today. When we read God’s Word, we learn more about Him and how He wants us to live. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for His people. If you have faith that Jesus died for your sins and rose again on the third day, you are part of His flock, and the Bible is God’s voice speaking to you.

* Note: this game is designed for multiple people and works best with slightly larger groups. If you only have 1 or 2 kids, you might consider reaching out to friends or family members to have them text you a video or voice recording saying the main lesson point: “Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for His people.”
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS
For additional resources for students, visit hunterstreetsmallgroups.org.
  • Use the password: “hsbcstudents”.

FURTHER STUDY FOR FAMILIES WITH STUDENTS

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE: CHRIST AS PROPITIATION
Because of God’s righteousness and holiness, humanity’s sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ’s death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God’s wrath against sin. Christ’s propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God’s great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

DEEPER DISCUSSION

HEAD
  • Why does Jesus stress that He is “the” gate, and not just “a” gate?
  • What does it mean that Jesus offers abundant life?

HEART
  • How does the love of the Good Shepherd lead to faithful and obedient sheep?
  • Why is it important that we rightly emphasize God’s gracious and fatherly love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Jesus dies for us?

HANDS
  • How can we, as sheep, join the Good Shepherd in His mission of taking care of His sheep?
  • Who are some wayward sheep in your life who need to draw closer to the Good Shepherd? How can you help with that in the weeks ahead?

FAMILY CHALLENGE
Grab a laptop or phone that plays music, then have each person pick a familiar song to play for the rest of the family. As each song plays, the first person to guess the name of the artist receives a point. The person who has the most points after all of the songs are playing wins! After the game, discuss how you were able to recognize the voice of an artist, then talk about how Jesus knew His Father’s voice and how we can know it too.