

The Good Shepherd

(Companion Paper to the Sermon Delivered May 21st, 2017 by James Moriello at Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI)

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own” (John 10:14, NKJV).

We begin by placing our text in its context. *“Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 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. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own” (John 10:7-14).* We shall now take our text, the words of Christ, just as we have them. First, *“I am the good shepherd”*. Second, *“and I know My sheep”*. Third, *“and am known by My own”*.

First, *“I am the good shepherd”*. The Good Shepherd provides. Jesus begins, *“I am”*, and so He is. Did He not call Himself *“I AM...the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last”* (John 8:58; Revelation 1:11)? As God, Jesus *“is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20). Has the Psalmist not said, *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want”* (Psalm 23:1)? Our God, the Good Shepherd, does provide, and will provide, for our every need. The Good Shepherd nurtures. *“He makes me to lie down in green pastures”* (Psalm 23:2a). *“He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom”* (Isaiah 40:11). When our earthly parents held us tight when we were young, did we not feel safe? How much more so when our heavenly Father does the same! Pray, and you

shall know this to be true. Have any of you known nurturing love of this kind? Well then, accept the embrace of the Savior, *“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7). The Good Shepherd guides. *“He leads me beside still waters”* (Psalm 23:2b). The Good Shepherd protects. Jesus protects us from the wolves of the world, and the serpent of old. *“The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep”* (John 10:11). This is how far Jesus was willing to go for you! Do you see Him lifted up, on that hill over there, that you, sheep and sinner, might go free (John 3:14)! As the Shulamite says to her beloved, so the longing soul says to Christ: *“Tell me, O you whom I love, Where you feed your flock, Where you make it rest at noon”* (Song of Solomon 1:7). Christ replies to you: *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). *“I am the good shepherd”*.

The second phrase in our text reads: *“and I know My sheep”*. *“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy”* (Psalm 33:18). *“The LORD knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever”* (Psalm 37:18). God knows His sheep in their time of trouble. *“The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him”* (Nahum 1:7). God knows His sheep as they go about their daily business. Consider the personal way in which Jesus related to Nathanael, who asked Jesus, *“How do you know me?”* To which the Lord replied, *“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you”* (John 1:48). God knows His sheep by name. *“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out”* (John 10:3). God knows His sheep which love Him. *“But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him”* (1 Corinthians 8:3). God knows His sheep and accomplishes their hope. Though we fall short at times, *“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God still stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His””* (2 Timothy 2:19).

The third phrase in our text reads, *“and am known by My own”*. Bear with me as I read an extended passage of Scripture from John’s Gospel. *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also*

in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves”” (John 14:1-11). If you know God the Son, then you know the Father. If you know Christ, then you know the way to heaven.

Are you a wandering sheep? For you, I have good news! The Good Shepherd seeks out lost sheep like you, and all of heaven rejoices when one sinner repents, turning to God, believing that Christ’s death and resurrection made the way of salvation (Luke 15:4-7). Were you once in the fold, but recently you have been astray? Come then, return then, *“to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls”* (1 Peter 2:25). *“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”* (Hebrews 13:20-21).