

GOOD SHEPHERD

John 9:35 - 10:21

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Jesus

Key-location: Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Jesus was rejected by: the Pharisees after he healed the blind man (Jn 9:16); the Jews who said Jesus was dominated by a demon (Jn 10:19-20).
- Shepherd, Good Shepherd (Jn 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16).
- Sheep: sheep as animals (Jn 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13); sheep as followers of Jesus (Jn 10:7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 26, 27).

Key-attitudes:

- Confrontation and arguments.
- Jesus' confidence in the words he spoke.
- Most of the people's confusion in not knowing if Jesus were of God or of the devil.

Initial-situation:

It was the third year of Jesus' ministry. During the first half of that year, Jesus went on three retreats seeking to be alone with his disciples. During the second half of the year, Jesus made three trips to Jerusalem. The first trip was for the Feast of the Tabernacles where Jesus made the following claims: he is Living Water; he is the Light of the World; his followers would know the truth and the truth would set them free; his followers would never die; God is his Father. Those claims resulted in confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. The Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus, but he slipped away from the temple grounds.

Jesus remained in Jerusalem after the Feast of the Tabernacles. On the Sabbath day, Jesus healed a man who had been born blind.

The Pharisees argued that Jesus could not be from God, because he healed on the Sabbath.

The man who had been healed of blindness told the Pharisees, "No one has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. Jesus couldn't do anything if he didn't come from God."

The leaders replied, "You were born and brought up in sin; how dare you lecture us!" And they expelled him from the synagogue (Jn 9:13-34).

Jesus heard what happened. He found the man and he worshiped Jesus.

Jesus said, "I came into this world, so that the blind will see and those who make a pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Some Pharisees overheard him and asked, "What? Are you calling us blind?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty of sin; but since you claim you can see, you're accountable for every sin" (Jn 9:35-41).

Initial-problem:

Jesus heard that the Pharisees expelled the healed blind man from the synagogue and said, "I came into this world, so that the blind will see and those who make a pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Final-situation:

The Jews were again divided. Many argued that Jesus was demon-possessed and raving mad. Others argued that God enabled him to perform miracles.

BIBLE STORY

Man Jesus Heals of Blindness Is Expelled from the Synagogue

Jesus heard that the Pharisees expelled the healed blind man from the synagogue and said, "I came into this world, so that the blind will see and those who make a pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

Some Pharisees overheard Jesus and asked, "What? Are you calling us blind?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty of sin; but since you claim you can see, you're accountable for every sin" (Jn 9:35-41).

The Good Shepherd and His Flock

Jesus continued, "I tell you the truth, only thieves and robbers climb over the fence of a sheep pen instead of entering through the gate. The shepherd enters through the gate. The sheep respond to his voice. The shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. He leads his sheep out and walks ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. They'll never follow a stranger. In fact, they'll run from the stranger because they don't recognize a stranger's voice.

"I am the gate for the sheep. All those others are thieves and robbers, but the sheep don't listen to them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be saved. He'll come in and go out, and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives up his life for his sheep. The hired worker isn't like the shepherd. The hired worker doesn't own the sheep. The hired worker sees the wolf coming and he runs off and abandons the sheep. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the flock. A hired worker runs away because the sheep mean nothing to him.

"I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep; my sheep know me. In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I give up my life for the sheep.

"I have other sheep in addition to those in this sheep pen. I must bring them together also. They too will respond to my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd.

“My Father loves me because I give up my life, and I’m free to take it up again. No one takes my life from me, but I give it up of my own free will. I have authority to give it up and authority to take it up again. This authority I received from my Father” (Jn 10:1-18).

After hearing Jesus’ words, the Jews were again divided. Many said, “He’s demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

Others argued, “These aren’t the words of a demon-possessed man. Can a demon give sight to the blind?” (Jn 10:19-21).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is the relationship between sheep and their shepherd comparable to that between Jesus and his followers?
2. What does Jesus mean by comparing himself to a gate for the sheepfold?
3. How is Jesus different from the thieves and robbers?
4. Who was Jesus characterizing as hired hands?
5. Why were Jesus’ listeners provoked and divided?
6. With so many conflicting life-options (cults, different religions, materialism, recreational drugs) seeking our attention, how do we discern truth from lies or misconceptions?
7. How can you discern if a religious leader is similar to those Jesus called hired workers (who don’t care about the sheep) or if he is a shepherd who is willing to sacrifice for his flock?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **As a shepherd, Jesus’ work has many aspects:**
 - He is the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11).
 - He is the Gate through which, if anyone enters, he will be protected (Jn 10:9).
 - He is the Shepherd who knows each sheep by name (Jn 10:3, 14-15).
 - He is the Shepherd who leads, going ahead to show the road that the sheep should follow (Jn 10:4).
 - He is the Shepherd who secures and protects his sheep. No one can snatch a sheep out of his hand (Jn 10:27-28).

- He is the Great Shepherd of the flock. He became the Great Shepherd because of his death. The Great Shepherd's goal is to equip each person for doing God's will (Heb 13:20-21).
 - He is the Head Shepherd, who will return to distribute crowns of rewards to faithful under-shepherds who serve him (1 Pet 5:4).
2. **Jesus is both the Shepherd of the sheep and the Gate to the sheepfold.** Only through Jesus can people enter Jesus' sheepfold, becoming a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven (Jn 10:1-2, 9). Jesus is the only gate, the only way of access to God.
 3. **Jesus offers eternal life with abounding generosity.** In contrast to the thief who takes life, Jesus gives life with abounding generosity (Jn 10:10). See Matthew 25:29; Luke 6:38; Revelation 7:17.
 4. **There are three types of spiritual leaders:**
 - Shepherd (Jn 10:10-11). He loves the sheep and is willing to give his life to protect them.
 - Hired hand (mercenary) (Jn 10:12). The hired hand only works for money. He does good things for the sheep, taking them to water and food. He won't abuse them; however, he doesn't take risks to protect them. When a wolf comes, he won't risk his life by standing between the sheep and the wolf. Although the hired hand doesn't abuse the sheep, he allows the wolf or thief to attack them.
 - Wolf or thief (Jn 10:8, 12). The wolf or thief is a false prophet who will attack and abuse the sheep for his own advantage.
 5. **Jesus accepted the cross and resurrection as God's plan.** No one could have killed Jesus without his consent. He declared he would lay down his life, only to take it up again (Jn 10:17-18).
 6. **Jesus and God the Father are one.** The Son's power was no other than the Father's; the Son's works were the works of the Father (Jn 10:29). The Jews understood Jesus' claim to be one with God. The Gospel of John emphasizes that Jesus was one with the Father (Jn 1:1; 8:24, 29; 10:29, 38; 14:9-10; 17:11, 21).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

Group 1	Group 2
I am the <u>good shepherd</u> .	The good shepherd <u>lays down his life</u> for the sheep.
The <u>hired hand</u> is not the shepherd who owns the sheep.	So when he sees the wolf coming, he <u>abandons the sheep</u> and runs away.
The hired hand abandons the sheep and runs away.	Then the wolf <u>attacks</u> the flock and <u>scatters</u> it.
The hired hand runs away <u>because</u>	He is a hired hand and <u>cares nothing</u> for the sheep.
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Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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" (John 10:11-13 NIV).	