

4-27-2023 - Recognizing Our Shepherd

John 10:1-5, 7b-10 - [Jesus said] "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. ... Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to 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 comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Some years ago, we had a fellow in town who claimed to be the Messiah and got people to trust him. Some even moved internationally to be close to him. Eventually he left town with all the money and another man's wife. His followers were shocked. But for those who had eyes to see, it was clear all along that he was a liar. Nothing about him was like Jesus—not his words or his actions.

Jesus warned us that people like this would come (see Luke 21:8). And so He told us how we could tell the difference between Jesus and these liars.

The first is by actions. No real shepherd climbs over the fence! No real Jesus does un-Jesus-like things—making a profit for himself off people, doing them harm, or just bending the rules. When we meet someone who claims to speak for God, we look at these things. Is the person honest? Kind? Merciful? Truthful? Obedient to the proper authority? If he doesn't act like Jesus, it's time to run.

The second way we know our Shepherd is by His voice. Does he talk like Jesus—does he say the things Jesus says in the ways Jesus says them? Or does he contradict Jesus—add to His teaching—take away things Jesus told us? This is why we read the Bible regularly, especially the Gospels. Read them to your children! You will soon develop an ear for His voice. Then, if somebody sounds "off" to you, he probably is.

Jesus says, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." How? By giving Himself into death for our sake, to rescue us out of the power of sin, death, and the devil. By rising from the dead, so that all of us who trust in Him will rise also and live forever with Him in joy and peace. We are His sheep, and He is our true Shepherd. What better shepherd could we have?

WE PRAY: Dear Father, thank You for giving us Your Son Jesus to be our Good Shepherd. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo.