



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 10:1-6

"The Shepherd of the Sheep"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading for this morning is John chapter 10 verse 1 through verse 6. And while you're finding John 10 let me say that this chapter really belongs to chapter 9, and is a continuation of it. And for the Scripture reading, I'm going to read the last verse, verse 41, and then the first six verses of chapter 10. But let us remember, particularly since I was unable to be here with you last Sunday, that in the preceding chapter we have had the healing of the blind man, the man who was blind from his birth. The Lord Jesus healed him physically and then as a result of the experiences of the blind man with the people, with his neighbors, with his parents, and particularly with the Pharisees, he was brought by the Lord Jesus to the place where he confessed, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped him. It's a remarkable picture of a physical healing, which led on to his spiritual healing and also to his being cast out of the synagogue by the Jews.

Now we saw also that that was more than just a religious thing, it was not only religious but it was also social and in every other way he became an outcast in the community. At the end of the 9th chapter Jesus says, "If ye were blind," speaking to the Pharisees and Jews, "ye should ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore

your sin remaineth. Verily, verily, I say unto you." Now, never in the New Testament does verily, verily introduce a new section. So this is something that is intended by John to follow along as a continuation of chapter 9. "Verily, verily," you are to think of now the blind man being thrown out of the synagogue, having been healed by the Lord Jesus both spiritually and physically.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable (Now the word parable in this instance is not the common word translated parable in the synoptic gospels but is a word that means something like a proverb or even better it suggests a veiled symbolic utterance, almost like an allegory. So this parable, or this symbolic utterance, this symbolic speech Jesus gave to them.) But they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Message] Martin Luther was fond of comparing Psalm 23 to a nightingale, which is small among the birds of homely plumage. But with what a thrilling melody is poured forth by its beautiful notes. This great and most remarkable chapter is the New Testament counterpart of Psalm 23. "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want." You notice in the chapter that note, it appears over and over again. In the 9th verse we read, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and

find pasture." And then in verse 11, another of the great I am statements, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." In verse 26 we read, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

William Alan Knight wrote a book called *Our Syrian Guest*. It was a commentary on Psalm 23, and someone made a comment to him after reading it, "It has shown me the shepherd as a Savior, and the Savior as a shepherd." Well that really is the sentiment that should come to us when we read John 10 for the first time. It should show us the shepherd as a Savior and the Savior as the Shepherd.

There are two discourses in John chapter 10, and we are looking in the next two Sundays after this at the three scenes that are found in the first of these discourses which concludes with verse 21. The shepherd's life was a life very much like our lives in that there was a morning, a noon day, and then an afternoon and evening. Different things were done in the morning than those that were done around noon and from those things that were done in the evening. And there are three scenes in this shepherd scene in John chapter 10. And they correspond to the morning scene. One can almost see the shepherd coming to the sheep fold and calling the sheep to go out to the pasture. And so we are looking at a morning scene, but there is a noon day seen, and then there is an evening scene, and we will be looking at those later on as we conclude this particular part of John.

Now it is most important for us if we are to understand John chapter 10 to know that it is very intimately connected with John chapter 9 and the healing of the blind man. As I mentioned in the reading of the Scripture, the expression, "Verily, verily," one of the things that is characteristic of John never occurs at the beginning of any discourse or at the beginning of anything that is new in the gospel. So what we are to learn from this is

that chapter 10 is related very closely to chapter 9. It's a continuation of it. In fact, it is a symbolic picture of what we have in chapter 9.

Now, in chapter 9 we have the blind man who is healed. He was blind from his birth. He's remarkably healed. Then we have controversy between the blind man and the Pharisees. And finally the blind man is thrown out of the synagogue. But Jesus finds him and unveils himself to him fully, and it is climaxed by his confession, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. So when we read John 10 we are to think of that particular action. For example, in John chapter 10 we read of false shepherd in verse 1. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." In verse 5 we read, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him."

Now these strangers and robbers that he refers to in this symbolic picture, these are references to the cruel actions of the Jews in chapter 9 towards the blind man. In John 9: 22 we read, " These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." These are men who seek to come in some other way, so we are think then when we read of the thieves and robbers, of the Jewish men who sought to keep the blind man from coming to Jesus Christ.

In John chapter 9 we notice the remarkable response of the blind man, and that of course is designed to represent the response of the sheep, referred in chapter 10 and verse 3 and 4. "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." So the response of the sheep is like the response of the blind man in John chapter 9. And the care of the shepherd for the sheep, referred to in chapter 10, is like the care of the Lord Jesus for the blind man for when he was thrown out of the synagogue, according to John 9:34 we immediately read, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had

found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?" and brought him to faith in himself. So what we have then in chapter 10 is an allegorical or symbolic picture of the event of chapter 9 with further suggestions as to the meaning of what had happened.

Now, it's helpful for us in reading John chapter 10 to understand something about an eastern sheep fold. Many of you, no doubt, are like me. You grew up in the city and not in the country, and probably you don't have a whole lot of information about how people live out on the farms. I certainly don't still. Although, of course, being as old as I am I do have some more experience than I did in the early days. But I grew up in the cities. I didn't know anything about sheep or flocks or a shepherd or anything like that. And if you had asked me what a sheep fold was I wouldn't have any idea what a sheepfold was at all.

In many of the ancient towns and villages of the land of Palestine, out on the hills round about were many wild beasts in those days. And so when the shepherds took their flocks out on the fields and in the pastures, and on the sides of the hills, they had to protect those sheep. And then of course at night time when the wild beasts were out, it was very helpful for them to have a place of protection. And so they would usually build a sheepfold in one of the towns or villages, which would be something like a common sheep fold. That is three or four or five of the shepherds of the town would bring their flocks into the same sheepfold. It was like a town or a city sheepfold. They would come to the gate and the porter would allow them to drive their flocks into the sheepfold. And then the porter would remain there as a guard during the night. There was no door, strictly speaking, but just a way in. That was called the door. And often the porter would lie down, himself, in the opening in order to protect the sheep from any of the wild beasts. Around this particular enclosure there would be a wooden fence of eight to ten feet high, so that the animals would be unable to climb the fence or at least find it difficult to do so. In this way he protected the flock.

Then in the morning when the shepherds were to take their flocks out into the pastures they would come and the porter would allow them in. And then they would call their sheep out, and they would do that vocally. They would call them, give their particular calls for the particular sheep, and the sheep would voluntarily separate themselves from the flock. And when the shepherd had all of his sheep he would lead them off, and then the next shepherd would call his sheep and so on. That was the sheepfold.

Now, this is of course a very significant thing, because this chapter is no doubt written against the background of the Old Testament. Now, in the Old Testament it is specifically stated that the Lord God is the shepherd of Israel. Not only do we have passages like Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." But we have many places in the Old Testament in which the shepherd of the sheep is identified as the Lord. In Genesis chapter 49, the Lord is identified as the shepherd of Israel. In Psalm 80 reference is made to the fact that the Lord is the Shepherd of Israel. In Psalm 80 and verse 1 we read, "Give ear oh shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." That's one of the beautiful pictures of the Old Testament, the Lord God as the shepherd of the flock.

But of course, in the light of the apostasy that often takes place when the under-shepherd depart from the word of God, we're not surprising in the Old Testament some of the strongest passages in the word of God are directed towards the false shepherds. That is prophets and teachers and priests who pose as authorities over the people of God, but who nevertheless have departed from the word of God. Listen to Jeremiah for example, "Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and have not visited them. Behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries, whither I have driven them and will

bring them again to their folds, and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed. Neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord." So God was very disturbed when the Old Testament shepherds did not shepherd the flock.

In fact, in the Old Testament as is true in New Testament times, the shepherds instead of feeding the flock demanded that the flock feed them and engaged primarily in the ministry of seeing how they could be profited from their relationship with the sheep. So some of the strongest language of the Old Testament is direct to those false shepherds of the flock of God. And in fact one of the great prophecies of the Old Testament, in the prophecy of Ezekiel is with reference to the day to come when God will appoint one shepherd whose name is David over the flock of God. The reference, of course, is to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So here in chapter 10 of the Book of John, the Lord Jesus speaks of himself as the shepherd. That's remarkable too because in the Old Testament the shepherd is the Lord God of Israel. In the New Testament the shepherd is the Lord Jesus. And of course, we are expected to make the identification. It is the Lord Jesus who is the covenant keeping God of the nation Israel. He's the one who calls. He's the one leads. He's the one guides the flock of God. That's really the allegorical or symbolic declaration that Jesus makes in these opening five or six verses of chapter 10.

I think we are justified, however, in making an attempt at the identification of the meaning of his terms in the light of this context. If this is truly a veiled symbolic utterance, translated parable in the Authorized Version, or proverb, or allegory, then we are justified, I think, in asking ourselves what is meant by the various features in this little brief symbolic allegory. And I'd like to suggest some identification to you, not authoritatively in the sense that I'm absolutely certain that every one of these is correct. I'm almost certain but not exactly certain, absolutely certain.

Let me begin by suggesting to you that the sheepfold is Judaism. Now the Lord Jesus came, remember, with a ministry to the nation Israel. Let me remind you of something that he himself said in Matthew chapter 15 and verse 24. He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Lord Jesus said when he was here, that he did not come to the Gentiles; he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That was the purpose of his coming, to minister to them. Now, of course, he did not refuse the Gentiles. And he knew, of course, as the Scriptures teach, that Israel's salvation is designed to be the mediation of the salvation of the Gentiles; the means to the salvation of the Gentiles. And so when Gentiles come they are acceptable. But his purpose was to be sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The Apostle Paul confirms that for in the 15th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and in verse 8 he says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision of the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; first of all, ministry to the nation Israel. Then he says, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. So I suggest to you that the sheepfold in our Lord's parable or our Lord's allegory is a reference to Judaism. "He came unto his own and his own received him not," however, John tells us in the first chapter of his book. Who are the thieves and the robbers?

Well we've already anticipated that. They are the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees. That is indicated by the intimidation that they carry out with reference to the people of the day. They wanted to be sure that people did not confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah promised by the Old Testament. That, they felt, was their work. Now, of course, being men who were not prepared to receive him, being opposed to the truth of God, they had therefore assumed unlawfully authority over the sheep of God. They were illegal rulers over Israel, because they themselves were not expecting the Messiah in true faith themselves. Therefore they were hindrances to the true preaching of the gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that some people might say, but they were good men, they were religious men. Yes, they were good men, and they were religious men judged by

human standards. But we are not to judge by human standards. We are to judge by divine standards.

Saint Augustine writing at the end of the 4th and the first part of the 5th century, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, has something to say about that right here. He says, "There are many who according to the custom of this life are called good people, good men, good women, innocent, and observers as it were of what is commanded in the law, paying respect to their parents, abstaining from adultery, doing no murder, committing no theft, giving no false witness against anyone, and observing all else what the law requires, yet are not Christian. Pagans may say then, 'We live well.' If they enter not by the door," Augustine says, "what good will that do them whereof they boast. Their goodness is a goodness according to a human standard. Goodness according to the divine standard is to respond to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, acknowledging our sin, for it is truly sin, and to receive him as the Messiah." So the thief and the robbers of this parable represent those false shepherds of the flock.

The door, the door is the way by which the shepherd enters into to be among the sheep. Well, the door is the Messianic office according to the Old Testament. The Old Testament set out the qualifications of the Messiah who was to come, pointed out identifying the things that he would do, he would raise the dead. He would open the eyes of the blind. He would heal the lepers. He would heal the sick. The Lord Jesus when he came performed those very signs in token of the fact that he was the Messiah. That was God's way of identifying the Messiah as set out in the Old Testament. And it is through him, through him as the door, the Messianic office, that one enters in order to have authority over the sheep. The Lord Jesus came as the Messianic king and by virtue of fulfilling that office he became the door, the one who had authority over the sheep. The lawful way to authority over the sheep is through the Messianic office. Now, if the Pharisees had recognized him and bowed to his authority, then they would have been faithful under shepherds of the Lord Jesus.

Who is the shepherd? Well we have no question about that. Later the Lord Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd." The good shepherd is the Lord Jesus, and when Ezekiel says, "The time is coming when I am going to appoint one shepherd over the sheep of God; he refers to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Who is the porter? It's interesting that we read in verse 3, "To him the porter openeth." It's almost as if the porter has some authority over the door and entrance into the flock, almost as if he's a way by which the Messiah must enter to carry on his ministry among the sheep. Well I suggest to you that the porter in our Lord's allegory is John the Baptist. He's the one who came as the ambassador of the Messiah, the ambassador of the king. He's the one who pointed out the Messiah. He said, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." He spoke about someone who should come after him, who really had been before him, the latchet of whose shoes he was unworthy to loose. He pointed out the Lord Jesus Christ. He must increase. I must decrease. I am only his ambassador, just as Malachi prophesied in the last of the prophets of the Old Testament. He preached, "Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ."

As far as the sheep are concerned, they are the elect among Israel. Now we read in John 1, 10, 11, 12, and 13 words like this, "He came unto his own and his own received him now. But as many as received him to them gave he authority to become the children of God. Even to them that believe on his name that were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They are the sheep. In John chapter 6 and verse 37 the Lord Jesus himself said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The sheep are those that are given by the Father to the Son. Verse 65, "Therefore said unto you, that no man can come to me except it were given to him of my father." So the sheep were the elect from the nation Israel given to the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 8 and verse 47 Jesus said, "He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not

of God." The one who is of God hears the words of God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." So they are the elect of the nation Israel. In chapter 10 in verse 26 later on Jesus will say, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." You see, Jesus makes a division in mankind. There are those who are his sheep and those who are not his sheep. Those who are his sheep hear his voice. Those who believe not believe not because they are not his sheep. These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what is the calling? The hearing, the leading? Well, that of course is the severance of the elect from the nation as a whole. He invites by his words, and the invitation is to attach themselves to him to enter the kingdom as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He came preaching the gospel and by virtue of the preaching of the gospel the Holy Spirit moved in Israel and brought elect individuals in that nation to the Lord Jesus Christ. One of them was this blind man who was thrown out of the synagogue and ultimately found his way into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The casting out of chapter 9 verse 34, when he was cast out by the Pharisees is spoken of in chapter 10 as the leading out by the Lord Jesus. It all depends on how you look at it, you see. When he was thrown out of the synagogue, looking at it from their standpoint he was tossed out of the synagogue, but it was the greatest thing that ever happened to him. Because actually what was really happening was Jesus was leading him out of unbelieving Judaism into relationship to himself, personal salvation. Nothing could be greater than an experience like that.

Now notice, he does not call the sheep in general, he calls his own sheep. That's stated more than once. "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." Verse 4, And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." He doesn't call all the sheep in the same way. An invitation is given to all, but the voice of the shepherd is special for his elect sheep.

Now it would be nice to go back into the gospel records and talk about the incidents in our Lord's life in which he called various ones. He called Matthew, the publican. And then he called Philip. He called Nathaniel. He called Simon. He often called them by their name. "Your name is Simon, but you shall be called Peter," and so on. And then there was that man, that little short fellow who lived down in Jericho. What was his name? Zacheus. Remember, word came that Jesus was coming through. He evidently knew something about the Lord Jesus so he made haste to see him when he came. Word had come, Jesus is coming. He rushed out, and he was short a little short fellow. Everybody was short in those days. He must have been really short. And so he rushed up to see him. The crowds were there, and he couldn't see a thing. But he was a man who was like most Americans, able to get things done. And so he saw a sycamore tree nearby, and he hastily climbed the sycamore tree. And you can see him peering down. Mind you, he was an important man. He was a publican, and he was a very wealthy man. And he climbed the tree and he was looking. And as Jesus walked down the street of Jericho he looked up and he said, "Zacheus, come down. I'm going to abide in your house today." And later on through the experience he said, "Zacheus, today salvation has come to your house, because you too are a son of Abraham." And then he concludes with, "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Zacheus was one of the sheep and the Lord Jesus had called him, and Zacheus had responded to him. And he had called him by his own name.

Now, of course, when we put this in its historical context, that's the meaning. He is calling out of the nation Israel, for he was sent to them, his elect Israelites. As Paul says, "Not all who are of Israel are Israel." For even in the nation Israel there were some who were elect, and there were some who were lost. Isaac, well, he was called. Ishmael, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," not in Ishmael. "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated," the Bible says. Difficult words for us to understand, but nevertheless in the word of God.

Well what about today? In this very chapter we have indication of what may be happening today, for in the 16th verse later on Jesus will say, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold." In other words, there are other sheep that do not belong to Judaism. And he says, "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Or one flock and one shepherd. In other words, the ministry that the Lord Jesus began by calling among Israel for the elect among Israel will further expand to a calling of Gentiles as well. And there will be one flock, one people of God made up of both Israelites and Gentiles. So the practical application is obvious. That is what the Lord is doing today. Many Gentiles have come into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He has called them by name suggesting acquaintance and affection. Isn't it great to be called by name?

Now, I know what you are thinking, perhaps. You are thinking, well maybe someday when you go to your room and you get down on your knees and you say, "Lord, I'm a sinner." And I hear that there's a gospel for sinners, that Christ has died for sinners, and forgiveness of sins is offered. And I would like to have Jesus Christ as my Savior, that you might expect a voice to come down from the ceiling, "Louis." Well, it's not that way. In fact, if it did, there might be some other Louis, you see. But it's something even deeper than that. The man who has come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and has acknowledged in his presence his own sin and Jesus' Saviorhood and has cast himself upon him casting aside all trust in his human works, in his religion, his good works, his education, his culture, and everything else. There is given to him through the Holy Spirit a deep sense of relationship to the Lord God. That's what it means to be called to the Lord Jesus and to hear his voice and to come to know his voice. That is the experience of all believers. We are called by name, personal name, personal acquaintance. Every Christian has a personal relationship with the Lord.

I always think about the census taker who went to Brooklyn, I think it was, and was taking the census. And he was in a part of the town where individuals had large

families. And he came to a family, which obviously was one with a large number of children. A woman was bending over a washtub. And he said, "Madam, I'm here from the census department. I'm taking the census. How many children have you?" She said, "Well, let me see. There's Mary, and Ella, and Delia, and Susie, and Emmy, and Tommy, and Albert, and Eddie, and Charlie, and Frank." "Madam," interrupted the census man, "if you could just give me the number." "Number," she said indignantly, "I want you to understand we ain't got to numbering them yet. We haven't run out of names."

[Laughter]

Well in the prison they give you a number, because the relationship's not very personal. But in the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ it is a personal relationship. That's so beautifully illustrated in the way in which ancient times those shepherds called their sheep. H.V. Morton tells in one of his books of how three or four shepherds brought their flocks to a cave at night. And they put their sheep in the cave to protect them. And then the shepherds lay down themselves and slept in the entrance to the cave. In the morning, when it was time to leave, each of the shepherds went out a little bit of distance from the cave and called their flock. And they would call. And at first there was no movement. And a call again, and finally one little sheep came out and came by the shepherd, and then two or three more, and then four or five more. And finally of his were by him and having counted them he went on out on the hills in order to pastor the sheep. And that's the way in which it was done. They were called by name, and he led them out.

In the east it was different from in the west. In the city of Edinburgh you can still see shepherds even though it is in that large city, out near Arthur's Seat, which is a little small mountain right in the center of Edinburgh near the Salisbury Crags, and not too far away is Holy Root Palace. There's this large park, and out there there are still flocks of sheep. And you see the flocks, and you will see a shepherd. He will have also a little crook in his hand, often, and a shepherd's doctrine of original sin with him. But in the

west the sheep precede the shepherd. He always follows along after the sheep. In the east it was the reverse. They led out their flock, and the flock followed them. That, it seems to me, is more biblical. That is what our Lord is talking about when he says the sheep here his voice. He calleth his own sheep. He leadeth them out. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." So he goes before us, and therefore all of the experiences that the sheep has, the shepherd has before them.

That's one of the great things that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has all of the experiences of life to which we, the sheep are exposed. Sometimes we tend to think that he doesn't understand things like the experiences we have. But not only does the Lord Jesus understand our experiences, he has actually entered in to them. And furthermore, in the temptations of life, if you think that because the Lord Jesus was a completely sinless Savior that he doesn't understand what it is to be tempted by the sin nature that is in us, the sin principle that dwells in all of us, even after we are Christian. Reflect upon this, the Lord Jesus knew the same kind of temptation, not from within, but from without.

All temptation is the same, the temptation to turn away from the will of God. Whether it comes from without, the world and Satan, or whether it comes from within, the essence is the same, to turn aside from the will of God. But you and I are so weak that when temptation comes to us and rises to a small intensity, we fall, but Jesus does not. Some of us who are stronger reach a level like this. Still others stronger reach a level like this. If some of us are like Mr. Pryer, well we reach this level up here. Rarely do we ever reach that kind of level. But the Lord Jesus not only reaches that level and this level and this level, but he has gone on to the highest intensity of testing possible. So he knows all of the testing at the five percent level, the ten percent level, the fifty percent level, on to infinity. That is why he is able to enter into all of our testings. And not only able to enter into them and know them intimately, but having overcome, he knows how

to overcome, being the infinite eternal shepherd of the flock of God. What a tremendous shepherd we have.

So if it's some problem that has to do with infancy, well he went before us there. If it's some problem that has to do with youth, he not only was the babe of Bethlehem, but he goes before us in the nurturing home of Nazareth sanctifying early toil and obedience to parents. He obeyed his parents. And as young children, if you find that a temptation, remember the Lord Jesus was faced with the same testing and he overcame. Is it hours of weariness and faintness and poverty? He goes before us an exhausted traveler to the well of Jacob in Samaria weary with his journey. Is it temptation? Well in the wilderness of Judea and particularly in the awful depth of the olive groves of Gethsemane he knows temptation to its greatest degree. If it's the fear of death, the Lord Jesus has entered into death, into the region of Hades, uncrowning the king of terrors, trampling his diadem in the dust, and now is at the right hand of the throne of God to lead all of his saints through the experiences of all of this life. What a magnificent thing it is to have a shepherd like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Around Christmas time you hear *The Messiah* and you remember those words in the 40th of Isaiah. "He shall lead his flock like a shepherd." What a magnificent thing to be called out by him, and to have him put us forth and then to go forth before us for the remainder of these days and on into the days of eternity. One of the great pictures of the Bible in the 7th chapter of the Book of Revelation is the lamb who is still leading his flock to living waters. And notice that they are plural, for all throughout eternity it shall be one water after another to which he shall lead his flock. We have a magnificent future before us to form part of God's great elect.

Now notice one other thing, they refused strangers. "And a stranger will they not follow." That is when we hear the voice of Paul Tillich we don't respond. I read the story of a man from Scotland. He must have been a shepherd. He was visiting Jerusalem and he was by the wall of the city of Jerusalem and he saw a shepherd coming with his

sheep. He thought he would ask the shepherd if he would engage in a little bit of an experiment. He approached the shepherd, he said, "Would you do this as an experiment?" Would you change clothes with me and then let me call the sheep?" And so the shepherd agreed to do it. They changed cloths, and then he came out, and he called the sheep. The sheep didn't come. And then the true shepherd in the clothes of the Scottish traveler called the sheep and they came to him.

Now, we read here, a stranger will they not follow. So when Paul Tillich calls out we don't respond. When Moltmann calls out we don't respond. When Bultmann calls out we don't respond. When William Barclay calls out we don't respond. When Wolfhart Pannenberg calls out we don't respond. When Gerhart von Rott, we don't respond. When Eichrot, Jako, Kumal, all the great scholars of the present day who are not members of the body so far as we can tell, when they call out as shepherds of the sheep, the true sheep do not respond. They do not follow the voice of a stranger.

Now that is a problem for me, because there are some people who do not seem to be able to distinguish the voice of our Lord from the voice of strangers. Isn't it a remarkable thing? You probably know some Christians, professing Christians like that. They hear something and they immediately run after it as if it were something great until they discover that's not quite as great as it was, and they come back. And then a new voice is heard and they rush after them. That makes me wonder, because the true sheep do not follow the voice of a stranger. They don't run after Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy. They don't run after Ellen G. White. They don't run after Rutherford. They don't run after the false voices, they follow our Lord Jesus Christ. They hear his voice. They know him. They follow him. That should be a word of admonitions to us.

Well, our time is up, I must stop. I just want to say two things. For those who already know the shepherd, well it's wonderful to get to know him better. For we read in verse 3, "He calls his sheep by name and leads them out." And then he says in verse 4, "And the sheep follow him for they know his voice." They've come to know him by

acquaintance with him." The knowledge of him leads to obedience to him, because it leads the recognition of his voice that comes through fellowship with him in the word of God. For those who do not know him yet, well you need to hear his voice as he himself as said in chapter 5, verse 25 of this gospel. "The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And so I give you the voice of the Son of God in his own words, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." You were the sheep going astray, but now he says to the true sheep, "You have turned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls."

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you do not have eternal life. You do not belong to him. Your destiny is different from the destiny of the sheep, but the shepherd has died for sheep, for sinners. Come unto him. "Come unto me all ye that labor and I will give you rest and peace," is the word of the shepherd. And if deep down within there is some response that is the sign of the work of the Holy Spirit by which the shepherd's voice has come to be known to you, and you'll respond. And you'll come to know him. And you will follow him. Perhaps you say, "I'm afraid." Why, he knows that. Come. "I'm vial." Why, he knows you're vial. He says in the word of God, we all are like that. Perhaps you say I am unworthy, well we are unworthy. The word of God says, "Ye are my flock, the flock of my pasture. But you are men, and I am the Lord your God, saith the Lord God." He knows that we are just men. "I am changeable." Ah, but he is unchanging. "I am faithless." Ah, but he never does fail to be faithful to his flock. That's why we have a Savior Shepherd. Come and you'll learn to exalt, "Dissolved by Thy goodness I fall to the ground and weep to the praise of the mercy that I've found." Come to the true shepherd who has given his life for the sheep. Don't leave the auditorium without that. Don't leave without knowing the voice of the shepherd. Come to him; receive him as your own Savior. Establish the relationship that is eternal. May God help you to come.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this magnificent unfolding of the work of the true shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh what a magnificent gift you have given to us, our Father. The one shepherd to always be our shepherd forevermore. We thank Thee and praise Thee for his voice, which Thou hast caused us to hear. Oh Father, if there are some here who have not responded at this...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]