



Jesus is the Good Shepherd

John 10



Jesus said, "I am the good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me." (John 10:14) Jesus is a Shepherd to all who believe in Him. He lovingly cares for us - not because we deserve it, but because He is so good.

Day #1: Good Shepherd

Sheep are famous for wandering off and getting lost. Any shepherd might get frustrated or angry with a sheep that mindlessly walks away from him. But Jesus is the **Good** Shepherd. He is good because He came to find lost people and bring them home to God.

✝ *The Son of Man (Jesus) came to look for the lost and save them. - Luke 19:10*

We strayed away from God when we chose to sin. Our sin separates us from the safety of God's presence (Psalm 5:4). Not only is Jesus **not angry** with us for our willful behavior, but He even took on our sin in order to win us back.

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him. - Isaiah 53:6 The Message

What a good and loving shepherd Jesus is! He never sinned; His relationship with His heavenly Father was perfect. He did not deserve punishment, yet He willingly suffered to take away our sin. What word could describe this better than "good"?

* Find a stuffed animal and place it across your shoulders. This is a picture of a shepherd carrying a lost sheep back to safety.

Do you know a "sheep" who is lost? Pray for him or her to repent and believe the truth of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Day #2: Bread and Water

Parent: *Pour a nice cool glass of water and give it to your child.*

One way that a shepherd takes care of his sheep is by finding good clean water for them. Like any creature, sheep need fresh water everyday. But left to themselves, they might drink dirty or polluted water. The shepherd leads them to fresh water or digs a well for them.

A shepherd also leads his sheep to good food. He leads them past the dry rocky ground, away from poisonous plants, to fields of green grass. He wants their bodies to be healthy and strong.

In the same way, Jesus wants our souls to be healthy and strong. He gives us everything we need to be satisfied in our heart and mind.

✝ *Then Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to Me will ever go hungry. And no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty. - John 6:35*

Jesus feeds our minds with truth; He fills our hearts with joy; He pours His Spirit into all who believe in Him (John 7:39). Your Shepherd wants you to live the most exciting, adventuresome life possible.

Jesus said, "I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way." (John 10:10)

* Do you want the full life that Jesus offers? Ask Him daily to lead you on the path that He has laid out for you.

Day #3: The Predator

What is your favorite meal? Every animal has a favorite meal. What does a monkey eat? What does a Panda bear eat? Do you know what a coyote likes to eat? Sheep! A tender sheep is a coyote's favorite meal.

Sheep are defenseless. They have no way to protect themselves. They don't have sharp teeth or razor-like claws. Out in the open fields, surrounded by wilderness, a sheep might be attacked by a wolf, a mountain lion, or a bear at any moment. That's why

Day #3 continued:

one of the shepherd's jobs is to protect his sheep. A shepherd in Bible days would risk his own life to fight off a wild animal.

Likewise, Jesus, our good Shepherd, protects us. We are not threatened by mountain lions or wolves. Our enemy is the devil.



Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. - 1 Peter 5:8 NLT

The devil wants to deceive us. He wants to lure us into sin, which separates us from God (Psalm 5:4). He searches for those people who have wandered away from the care of the Shepherd.

On our own, just like the sheep, we are too weak for our enemy. But our Shepherd is **much** stronger than our enemy! Jesus is immeasurably more powerful than the devil! When we trust Jesus, follow Him, and obey His voice, our enemy cannot harm us.



Imagine that you are a sheep. (Young kids, act like a sheep!) Is there anywhere you would try to wander without your shepherd to protect you? Abide in Jesus, the protector of your heart and mind.

Day #4: Listen to His Voice

When you hear the voice of a close friend or family member on the telephone, do you have to ask who it is? Or do you recognize the sound of their voice?

Sheep know the voice of their own shepherd. Sometimes several shepherds must share a sheep pen. All the sheep from different flocks spend the night together in one pen. You might imagine that the shepherds could never figure out which sheep belong to which shepherd. But in the morning, each sheep follows the voice of its own shepherd out to the hillside.



My sheep listen to My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. - John 10:27

We are the sheep that Jesus is speaking about; we should know His voice. We should recognize when Jesus is speaking to us, because His voice is different than any other. We should be familiar with what He says and how He says it.

It may be rare to hear Jesus' voice out loud, but His voice is often like a whisper into our spirit. By

Day #4 continued:

His Holy Spirit, He lets us know what's right and what's wrong; He speaks only truth (John 16:8-13). He encourages us - and never discourages us (Acts 9:31). Often, He reminds us of Bible verses (John 14:26). When Jesus speaks to you, He will never speak against Scripture.

God spoke to Moses through a burning bush (Exodus 3), to Elijah in the wind (1 Kings 19:12), and to Paul in visions (Acts 16:9). He whispered to young Samuel in the middle of the night (1 Samuel 3:4,6). If your trust is in Him, He will speak to you also.



The next time you are at the park, listen to how many children shout for their mom. Yet every mom knows the voice of her own child, because she has heard it so often and she cares so much about her child. Ask God to make you this familiar with Jesus' voice.

Day #5: Strange Voices

You have certainly heard the saying, "Never talk to strangers." Why is this such good advice? Strangers don't love you or care about you. They don't want what's best for you. They may even try to harm you. Sheep have a natural instinct that keeps them away from strangers.



His sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don't recognize a stranger's voice. - John 10:4b-5

Sheep naturally fear a stranger's voice while they trust the shepherd. The shepherd has gained their trust by his caring actions. The shepherd wants only what's best for them.

Our Shepherd, Jesus, wants what is best for us. Unlike an ordinary shepherd, Jesus is all-knowing and all-powerful. We can trust Him even more than a sheep trusts its shepherd. Our Shepherd never makes a mistake. Nothing can happen to us outside of His will. We can trust Him completely, and we should flee from anyone who is against Him.



What "voices" do you hear in your daily life? (TV, radio, friends, teachers, parents, classmates, team members)

Do you realize when a voice is trying to lead you away from God? That voice should sound like an alarm in your ears. Run away from that voice and cling to the Shepherd who is completely trustworthy (James 4:7).