

The Good Shepherd  
John 10:1-41  
Bethany Assembly of God  
2/11/2024

**Central Proposition: You should follow the Good Shepherd.**

**Introduction**

Shepherding was a common occupation in the Ancient Near East, and many of Israel's patriarchs and leaders were shepherds at some point in their lives. Today, we come to a famous use of this image when Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd. This is the last scene in the middle section of John's Gospel known as the festival cycle. Most of the stories from John 5-10 involve Jesus using imagery from a Jewish Sabbath or feast to claim something about Himself. Now, we find Jesus still in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Dedication, which was 3 months later. The Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah, is a celebration of the rededication of the Temple during the Maccabean period, after it had been desecrated by the Romans. Judas Maccabeus retook the temple on December 24, 164 B.C. and cleansed it. That's the background for the festival of Hanukkah that the Jews have been celebrating ever since. Because many of the priests and leaders were corrupt at the time these events occurred, Ezekiel 34 became part of the regular readings in the Synagogues during Hanukkah. See Ezekiel 34:2-4. It's against this backdrop that John wants us to read Jesus' claims to be the Good Shepherd. God promised to shepherd His people with a ruler like David and Jesus is claiming to be that leader, and even more, to be the Lord who had come to Shepherd His true people.

**1. Enter by the only Gate.** See John 10:7-10.

Flocks of sheep faced all kinds of dangers in the wilderness. The terrain was treacherous, flash floods were a threat at some times of the year, wild animals lurked, ready to pick off sheep that strayed, and thieves were a threat as well. Sheep could be brought into a ravine that was closed in on three sides to provide protection against weather and attack. Then, stones could be stacked on the fourth side, leaving just a gateway for the sheep to get through. The Shepherd would call His sheep in through the doorway and might even lay in the gateway at night so that whatever wanted to get to the sheep would have to go through the shepherd first. This is the imagery Jesus invites us to consider concerning Him. He is the gate, learn to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and don't go through any door that isn't guarded by Jesus.

**2. Have confidence in the Shepherd who gives up and takes up.** See John 10:1-18.

Jesus' care extends beyond the basics of protection; He lays His life down for the sheep. In this way, He is incomparable to any other Shepherd. He is uniquely the Good Shepherd. He came to give up His life for us and He took it up again in victory over death and over thieves.

**3. Don't be afraid.** See John 10:19-38.

At Hanukkah, Jesus was in the Temple courtyard and people began to ask Him to tell them directly if He was the Christ, the expected Messiah. While Jesus does not say, "I am the Messiah," He stated, "I and the Father are one." We follow Him because He is Sovereign and life could not be taken from Him but His life was given to

us. And because His life could not be taken from Him, no one can take away the life that He gives. As long as you remain in Him, nothing and no one can steal you away.