

Serving with Care.

■ John 10:11

"I am the Good Shepherd.
The Good Shepherd risks
and lays down His [own]
life for the sheep." AMP



I have recently returned from a short trip to Africa and had the privilege of escorting my sister-in-law home from Canada after she was here for a few months on medical leave. My stay was very short (I was home in one week!) but in that time I was given the opportunity to sing and lead worship in their church as well as take a trip to the desert to meet new family... That's right; I said family. Over the course of many years, my brother & his wife have been able to meet and develop relationship with a nomadic tribe. This clan's leader has accepted them into their affections by honouring them with family status. Because they are family, I too am considered family and was able to meet. It was an overwhelming experience for me... and yes, I cried.

But all that they and other workers with them do is done at extreme, personal risk. One of their workers was telling me that he has already been imprisoned three times for simply taking Jesus to this community. (And, as a sidebar; I would not want to spend a single night in one of their prisons...) As I sat listening to him share about his passion for Jesus and for his people I felt as though I were listening to the apostle Paul. Paul was 'compelled by the love of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:14) and would go anywhere that the Lord led him to tell others what he had found in Jesus regardless of the cost.

I've come home with this question on my heart...

Would I do anything (not just be willing, but actually do something...) to show the love of Christ to someone who hasn't met Him yet?

As well as these...

- ◆ "Would I do it even if no one noticed?"
- ◆ "How much would I be willing to sacrifice?"
- ◆ "How much do I really care?"

1. There is a difference between a servant and a slave.

"I can simply do what I am asked to do, or I can take on the cause of the Master and start doing without being asked."

Read what Jesus had to say in John 10. Take time to write down the details in point form below, in answer to the various questions.

■ **John 10:11-18**

■ Then

What is the general context of this passage?

- Jesus has just healed a blind man on the Sabbath (John 9:14) and the Pharisees are enraged
- Jesus continues to dialogue with them, explaining that the only way to God is by believing in Him.
- He uses the analogy of a shepherd throughout most of John 10

■ What?

What is this passage saying?

- Jesus is the Good Shepherd
- A hired hand runs away when trouble comes
- God loves Jesus because He is willing to lay His life down for us

■ Now

What does this mean for us today?

- I need to imitate Christ, find out what it means to be a 'Good Shepherd'
- I must guard myself from simply doing a job. Obedience is better than disobedience, but God wants my heart to be in it.
- I must lay down my life for the sheep.

2. The Good Shepherd.

■ Reflect on **John 10:11-18** and then look up **Isaiah 40:10-11** and **Ezekiel 34:23**. Write down the characteristics of a 'good shepherd'.

- they will risk their very lives to rescue those that they serve (Jn. 10:11,15)
- they know the people that they serve (Jn. 10:14)
- they allow others to get to know them
- they are confident and strong (Is. 40:10)
- they reward those for their service & work ("Behold, I am coming soon, and I shall bring My wages and rewards with Me, to repay and render to each one just what his own actions and his own work merit." Rev. 22:12)
- they feed their flock (Is. 40:11, Ezek. 34:23)
- they take care of the young
- they give guidance & direction to parents

In a nutshell, the Good Shepherd:

- lives & dies for others
- cares & nourishes others
- will die for their salvation

3. The Foolish Shepherd.

■ **Reflect again on John 10:11-18 and then look up Zechariah 11:16-17. Write down the characteristics of a 'foolish shepherd'.**

- does not take ownership of the flock (Jn. 10:12)
- runs away in times of danger, leaving the flock vulnerable
- does not care about the sheep (Jn. 10:13)
- does not miss or visit those who are lost or perishing (Zech. 11:16)
- will not look for or help those that are young (children) & scattered
- will not feed his flock, but will use them to his own advantage
- will be punished by God!

Listen to how the Message Bible puts Zechariah 11:15-17:

God then said, "Dress up like a stupid shepherd. I'm going to install just such a shepherd in this land—a shepherd indifferent to victims, who ignores the lost, abandons the injured, and disdains decent citizens. He'll only be in it for what he can get out of it, using and abusing any and all.

*"Doom to you, useless shepherd, walking off and leaving the sheep!
A curse on your arm! A curse on your right eye!*

Your arm will hang limp and useless. Your right eye will go stone blind."

In a nutshell, the Hireling Spirit:

- doesn't care about others
- takes no ownership unless for his own gain
- won't die for a cause

4. Joseph had a great spirit!

Joseph is a great example of someone who didn't have a hireling spirit. Read Genesis 39:2-6, 20-23. Take note of what is said about him:

■ **Where had Joseph come from?**

- favourite son of Jacob
- jealous brothers sold him into slavery
- Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, bought him

■ **What do verses 2 & 21 say about Joseph?**

-the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man

■ **Take special note of what is said about Joseph in verses 6 & 23.**

The NIV says it this way: "...with Joseph in charge he (Potiphar) did not concern himself with anything... and in vs. 23, "the warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did".

This reflection on Joseph is so insightful! Joseph could have just been a slave and justifiably got stuck in a victim's mode; feeling sorry for himself and bitter toward those who had betrayed him.

When we are told that both Potiphar and the prison warden did not have to worry about things because Joseph was around, we are seeing the spirit of Joseph coming through. It was not an accident that he kept finding favour. He was not born with a halo on his head. Joseph simply exhibited what Jesus was referring to in John 10... living with the heart of a good shepherd; whether son or slave, he kept serving the cause of those over him without concerning himself with the opinions of others. Even though he was betrayed and misrepresented, the truth and purity of Joseph's motivations always brought him back to favour. (Makes me think of Circle Square Ranch's theme verse, 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.' Luke 2:52

What is said of Joseph also makes me think of what the David says in

Psalm 23:1

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

5. What will I do with this lesson?

■ **List an action plan for this week below:**

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)