

## Knowing Our Shepherd's Voice



Gary Wilkerson July 27, 2020

"The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep ... The sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:2-3, NLT).

We all need guidance for decisions in life, yet in a world as chaotic as ours, getting good guidance isn't always simple or easy. Jesus makes it clear that it's different for his children, however. "His sheep" know his voice and "come to him." The picture he gives is that of a good shepherd providing oversight and care for his own sheep.

Does that suffice for the hard decisions we all have to make? "Whom do I marry? What vocation do I pursue? What is my purpose in life?" Such questions are fraught with tension.

As our Shepherd cares and provides for us, our enemy, the devil seeks to steal from us. Satan is bent on destroying our precious faith and Jesus describes him as a thief who sneaks into a pen: "Anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ... The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:1, 10).

A hindrance every Christian encounters is the alluring gospel of a false teacher. Jesus teaches, "[My sheep] won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice" (10:5). Such "strangers" look, sound and dress the same as any good pastor but the gospel they preach gradually leads people away from Christ's rich, satisfying "good pasture" to the destruction of their souls.

It is essential that we learn the voice of our Good Shepherd and be able to distinguish it from the voices of false shepherds. And the only way to detect the counterfeit is to intimately know the original. This comes only by feeding on the meat of our Shepherd: "So faith comes by hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ" (Romans 10:17).

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