

I AM: Jesus is the Door and the Good Shepherd: Lesson Summary

As we consider the 7 I Am statements of Jesus, it's important to understand the gravity of what Jesus is saying. These statements were never meant to be simple word pictures or analogies, but instead, bold declarations that Jesus is God. As we consider Jesus' declaration that He is the Door and the Good Shepherd we must first consider God's references to these truths in the Old Testament. The Bible mentions the terms sheep or shepherd approximately 247 times. However, there is only one Good Shepherd who guides and secures His flock.

Jesus combines two I Am statements in *John 10:1-9* and it's important to consider both. Jesus first declares that He is the door through which the sheep enter. In doing so, Jesus is referencing *Psalms 118:19-20*. In this passage the Psalmist is crying out for the gates of righteousness to be opened in order that he may enter into the presence of God. The Psalmist recognizes that there is a righteousness that is beyond himself. The very righteousness of God is necessary for us to commune with Him. Jesus, in declaring He is the door, is promising that He is that righteousness. Because Christ lay down His life, we are robed in His righteousness. And, in His righteousness we can approach our Heavenly Father. This statement flows naturally into Jesus next declaration that He is the Good Shepherd.

It's important to remember that Jesus' audience at this point is the religious leaders. They have been called to care for God's people, to guide God's people, and to protect God's people. However, they have failed in every way. They have been bad shepherds. *Jeremiah 23:1-6* and *Ezekiel 34:1-16* provide a clear description of what bad shepherds look like. When Jesus declares that He is the Good Shepherd, He's acknowledging that the pharisees have been modeling the characteristics of bad shepherds. The Good Shepherd is referenced in *Isaiah 40:11*, *Numbers 27:15-17*, and *Micah 5:4-5*. Jesus declares that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep, remains with the sheep, knows His sheep and they know Him, gathers the sheep from all folds, and leads His sheep. It's interesting that Jesus talks about gathering sheep from another fold. This statement would be controversial to His audience because it would mean that God plans to draw people to Himself from beyond Jewish heritage. Jesus isn't simply another who has come to gather God's people, He is the door through which the people come to God. He's the Good Shepherd to whom His sheep respond. He's the Good Shepherd that God promised would come to deliver His people. Jesus exposes the failures of the religious leaders while revealing Himself to be the God of deliverance. Their response to His words should not surprise us. *John 10:31* tells us that "the Jews picked up stones again to stone Him." The intensity of their response should lead us to see the gravity of His words.

One pastor said it this way, "*Jesus comes not to pile burdens on but to relieve them and carry them Himself. Jesus comes not to scatter the sheep, but to gather them. Jesus comes not to devour the sheep but to defend them. Jesus comes to seek out, rescue, heal, and feed the sheep. He will do so because He loves the sheep and they belong to Him. This is proven and accomplished by Him giving up His life for His sheep.*" Jesus is the Door and the Good Shepherd. Have you come to the Father through the Door of righteousness? Are you listening to the Good Shepherd as He calls you by name to enter in? God has provided a way for us to be restored to the Father as we enter through the righteousness of Christ and the guiding hand of our Shepherd.

Discussion:

- 1) The pharisees caused division among the sheep by standing over others in judgement. What are some ways that you might be causing division in your relationships as a result of your pride or judgement?
- 2) The bad shepherd places a burden of guilt upon the sheep while Jesus takes our burdens by His grace. What are some burdens you've been carrying that you should surrender to Jesus? In what ways are you believing that you need to do more to satisfy Jesus?
- 3) What are some of the most encouraging truths you experience when you think of the fact that Jesus declares He is the Good Shepherd? Reread *John 10:10-18*