



SERVE - TITHE - ENGAGE

PRACTICE - SHARE



# *the Good Shepherd*

Sometimes a sheep is particularly stubborn and will ignore the calling of the shepherd, wander away from the flock or put themselves in harm's way for what seems like better grazing. When sheep behave like this, the shepherd must respond accordingly. For example, a sheep might continue to wander off and put themselves at risk of attack by a predator. She won't listen to the calling of the shepherd or respond when he prods her with his staff, encouraging her to stay with the other sheep. Eventually, this sheep will lead others in the flock to follow her. This causes trouble for the whole flock, as they become divided and some of the herd follows their peer into peril. This is when the shepherd responds. He will break their legs. This obviously hurts the sheep. It seems like the shepherd is causing them harm. It is what the shepherd does next that makes all the difference. He takes the sheep upon his shoulders and carries her where ever the flock goes. He binds her broken legs and is overly attentive to her wounds and her needs in general. He must bring her food and water, say with her day and night. During this time of healing, the sheep is never without the shepherd. He is constantly talking to her, soothing her, and by the time her legs are healed the sheep is closer to the shepherd than ever before. She trust him more and leads the other sheep in following, instead of leading them away. The sheep lives out the life that the shepherd prepared for her.

We also know that sheep get lost easily. They might wander away on accident, just trying to get that next blade of grass and before they know it they are away from the flock. Often the sheep will find himself in a tight situation, where they have followed their desire for the next mouthful to a place when they cannot get back from, like the overhang of a cliff or a steep stream bank. They get themselves into these situations and can't get out.



**"I AM THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD,  
AND I KNOW MINE AND  
MINE KNOW ME,  
JUST AS THE FATHER  
KNOWS ME AND I  
KNOW THE FATHER;  
AND I WILL LAY DOWN  
MY LIFE FOR THE  
SHEEP.  
I HAVE OTHER SHEEP  
THAT DO NOT BELONG  
TO THIS FOLD.  
THESE ALSO I MUST  
LEAD, AND THEY WILL  
HEAR MY VOICE,  
AND THERE WILL BE  
ONE FLOCK, ONE  
SHEPHERD."**

**JOHN 10: 13-18**

The shepherd, when he realizes that one of his heard is missing, will go to find it. When he finds it, he will help it out and lead it back to the flock. However there are times when the sheep is scared or stubborn and won't let the shepherd help him. He'll bite and him, fight back or resist the shepherd attempts. This can go on for days, the sheep won't let itself get rescued. When this is the case, the shepherd won't leave but he will wait until the sheep is so exhausted that it can no longer resist. It is at this point that shepherd will go to the perilous place that the sheep has put themselves in and carry it out. He will take them back to the flock and care for it until it is well and strong enough to join the herd. We are sheep. We wander away from the Good Shepherd and the life he has planned for us. We put ourselves in positions that are harmful in many ways – spiritually, mentally, physically, etc. and lead others away as well. This can be hard to hear, but it is true. It is part of our fallenness. But Jesus doesn't leave us there. He comes to get us, where ever we have wandered, and for our own good, breaks our legs. It hurts and it might not seem like he loves us. But if we stay with him and allow us to heal us, we grow closer to him than ever and are able to live out the unimaginable life he has planned for us. How often does it feel like the Lord isn't with us? Like he's left us in a difficult situation or can't hear us calling out to him? Take a look at that situation. Is it possible that you are struggling and won't actually let him help you? He is waiting there for you to stop and allow him to help you. The exhaustion of the struggle makes it feel like he is far, but Jesus is just there waiting for you to let him take you in his arms, bring you back to wholeness and to the flock. We remain stuck until we allow Jesus to come in and bring us back into the life he has prepared for us. Jesus will work in our lives to whatever degree we allow him. Here the speaker can share about a time that he or she felt broken or like God was not there and what happened when they allowed the Lord to heal them or pick them up.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and cares for us. He wants us to be with him and does everything he can, makes every sacrifice to keep us close to him. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep.