

## JOHN 10:14-18

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHEPHERD

*I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*

If you have a job—lumberyard worker, ranch hand, hospital nurse, school teacher, etc.-- what are the expectations? There are several ways to answer that question. ONE It can be answered from the perspective of the boss / the owner. The worker needs to be industrious, reliable, willing to follow directions, etc. TWO. It can be answered from the perspective of the worker. I need to do my job up to the requirements of the boss, I need to listen, I need to receive wages. THREE. It can be answered from the perspective of the third parties involved—the customers at the lumberyard, the patients at the hospital, the students at school. The worker needs to be kind, helpful, accurate. Today we consider the expectations for The Shepherd—not just any shepherd, but THE Savior and Shepherd. This text talks about the expectations from the perspective of the boss, the worker, and the sheep—God the Father, God the Son, and all the sinners of this world.

Jesus, God the Son, had just healed a man born blind. Jesus had made some clay out of dirt using the moisture from His mouth, applied it to the man's eyes, and told him to go, wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did and came back seeing! The miracle, astounding as it was, did not sit well with the Pharisees, particularly because Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath Day, the day of rest. Ultimately Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, pointing out to them that they in their leadership position were really blind leaders because they thought they had no sin, that they were like sheep-thieves climbing over the wall of the sheepfold, the sheep pen, to get the sheep under their control, whereas Jesus Himself was the proper door and the only voice for the sheep. Finally He told them that they were like hired hands merely looking after someone else's sheep, mostly concerned about THEMSELVES; whereas Jesus was the Good Shepherd who would give His life for the sheep-sinners.

Concerning the boss's perspective--the owner, God the Father in heaven--Jesus tells us *This command I have received from My Father.* Jesus was sent by the Father to care for sinners. Jesus did not take this feat upon Himself in some grand, high-handed fashion, seeking to show Himself really great--"I can fix this. I can take care of it." He came under the Father's direction. Their relationship is very close. *As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father.* The Father knows Him and He knows the Father. Not just "know" in the sense of being aware of somebody. A person may say, "Sure I know Joe Green," meaning I know of Joe Green. He's well known in my part of the state. Versus a person says, "Sure, I know Joe Green--we worked together, we went to school together, he lived a few doors down, he dated my sister," meaning I know him very well. The Father and the Son are not just name-recognition acquaintances, but personally understand each other. In fact the text says, *My Father loves Me.* The Father's relationship with the Son is not just boss and worker. The Father in all godly wisdom and love sent Him, wanted Him to rescue sinners. The Father was on Jesus' side.

From the perspective of Jesus-the-Shepherd: The worker was not in disagreement with the expectations of the Boss—to rescue and save sheep/sinners. *I know My sheep,* He says. Jesus doesn't just "know of" us, He knows us inside and out. Psalm 145:4 says, "He counts the number of the stars; He knows them all by name." He knows each individual star—just a physical object. He also knows you. Isaiah 43:1-2, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine." The Savior knows you! Not because of how great you are, not for how much better you are than the others. He is concerned about you. He knows the things you know you should not have done, and those you don't know. He knows your record—whether hidden from public view, or not. To do His job to rescue you, He came in love from the Father.

He came to lay down His life for you--voluntarily. No one took His life from Him. He gave it up. Nor did He just toss it down, or carelessly drop it, He laid it down of His own accord, as a sacrifice for you. I know you have heard it so many times, it really doesn't sink in any more. But what would you willingly lay down for someone else in dire need? Your vehicle of which you are so proud? The entirety of your savings and investments? Your house, your herd, your ranch, your health, your own life. You might be willing to do it for near and dear ones, but would you do it for known rebels and convicts? Jesus did it for you.

***No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*** How many bosses would expect the worker to give up his life for the job? "Don't kill yourself, get out of there! Get out of the way!" Yet, as the Father expected, Jesus the God-man gave the most precious treasure. His own life. Nor did the boss forbid Him to lay-down His life. He wanted and authorized Him to do so! It's what the mission entailed. When Jesus says, "I have the "power" to lay it down and the "power" to take it up again," the word translated power means both power and authority. To us those can be very different things. A sheriff may have the authority to throw someone in jail, but may not have the power actually to do it. On the other hand, a gangster might have the power to rob the bank, but does not have the authority to do so. However, in real terms, in God's terms, the two go hand in hand. If God gives someone the power to part the Red Sea, as He did with Moses, Moses had the authority to do it. Or the other way around, if God gives someone the authority to tell another their sins are forgiven in Christ, they have the power in His name, not theirs, to do so. Jesus had the power and authority to lay down life to satisfy the Father's justice against sinners, and Jesus had the power and the authority to take it up again. He came on His Father's mission to save you. ***Therefore, My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*** Look what He did for you!

Jesus, the worker and Shepherd, also says, ***And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*** Jesus did not just come to serve the Jewish people, but the Gentiles also, the "nations." We say in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Christian Church." The Holy Christian Church is the group of all believers of all time. It is an invisible group in the sense that only God knows who they are. He knows the heart. Those who see Jesus as their Savior from sin are in the Holy Christian Church—it does not matter skin color, language, nation, even church affiliation. Jesus came for all, died for all, and rose for all. However, those who reject Jesus as Savior are not in the Holy Christian Church, are not of His flock. The Lord directs us on this earth—as we gather in the visible Christian gatherings, groups, congregations, like St. Luke's, or Christian denominations, church bodies, and synods—to avoid all which is contrary to the Bible, that which does not come from God, that which is false. And we do, though there be many believers within their midst. Jesus came to gather all His sheep into One Holy Christian Church, one flock, to hear His voice, the voice of the one and only Shepherd. All Christians will be together in one in heaven.

We have spoken about God the Father's expectations of His "worker" Jesus. We have spoken of God the Son's own expectations of His job as Shepherd and Savior. Let's talk about the expectations, or shall we say "needs," of the sinners. We need help. Has the Shepherd been kind? Beyond degree. Has He been helpful? To every extreme. Has He been accurate? Without fault, blemish, and sin. Consider the passage, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might become rich!" (II Corinthians 8:9). For His sake through His suffering and death, you are granted a pardon—or rather, pardon, upon pardon, upon pardon. Can you imagine a real criminal being granted a real pardon? In spite of the real crime, in spite of the harsh sentence applied and not served, a pardon is granted. Free to go! That is your pardon also. "Father, pardon please, for Jesus sake." And because of His Son, who was not pardoned but carried all your guilt, you need not fear! Your lousy record is cleared, your efforts to survive in this world of sin are directed by His hand, your impossible battle with the cancer of sin, death, and decay, will be resolved on Judgment Day. The dread of being outcast into the pangs of hell, dispersed. Jesus the Shepherd lives! He is the perfect Shepherd. He will take you to your Father's side, forgiven and righteous!

One more question: What are the expectations for rescued and saved sinners? Answer: Live for Jesus, your Shepherd and Savior! How can you not love Him who loved you first? How can you not thank Him for His gift to you? Strive hard with the Holy Spirit's leading to be devoted to your best and only Savior sent from the Father! Stop cursing and swearing by His Name, stop losing your temper, stop being lazy, stop hating, stop being dishonest! Let the New Man of faith, that is implanted in you by the Word, take the lead. Drown the Old Adam daily, as he has been drowned in Holy Baptism! The Father has sent the Shepherd for you! You are blessed!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---