

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

LOOK FOR THE SIGNS [JOHN, PART 2] · JOHN 10:1-42 · SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me—just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father—and I lay down My life for the sheep." (John 10:14-15)

Jesus the Gate-Shepherd Who Guards His Own (10:7-10)

- The gate versus the robbers
- The provision of the gate: safety
- The goal of the gate: full life

Jesus the Good Shepherd Who Lays Down His Life (10:11-13, 15-18)

- The Good Shepherd versus the hired hand (10:11-13)
- Different sense of abandon
- Different sense of care
- Ezekiel 34:1-16 on failed human shepherds and God the good shepherd
- Jesus' way of laying down His life: authority (10:15-18)

Jesus the Good Shepherd Who Knows His Own Intimately (10:14, 3-5)

- The good shepherd and sheep: a knowing relationship
- The nature of the relationship: Speaking and listening
- The practice of the relationship: leading and following

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who has been a guide or helper for you in your life? What did that person do or say that helped you or provided guidance when you needed it?
2. This week we continue our preaching series, "Look for the Signs," by exploring John 10:1-42. Begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak through His Word, and

then, whether you're on your own or with a group, read that passage aloud.

3. Today we look at Jesus' parallel statements "*I am the gate*" (John 10:7) and "*I am the good shepherd*" (10:11). In Jesus' day, animals were often kept in a courtyard attached to a home or main building and enclosed by a wall. Sheep were led into the courtyard through a gate which kept them secure and safe. What sort of contrast does Jesus make between Himself as the gate and the thieves and robbers in verses 7-10?
4. How does Jesus' statement in verse 10 shed light on His purpose as the gate?
5. As He continues, Jesus changes the image somewhat, describing Himself as "*the good shepherd*" (10:11, 14). The Hebrew Bible is rich with images of good shepherds. What do the following passages say about some 'good shepherds' in the history of Israel and what made them 'good'? Exodus 3:1-6; 1 Samuel 16:11-13; and Psalm 78:70-72.
6. Jesus contrasts the good shepherd and the hired hand in verses 11-13. What are the main differences? What does this tell you about who Jesus is?
7. Jesus twice mentions the idea of the good shepherd as one who "*lays down his life for the sheep*" (10:11 and 17). What do you think Jesus meant by this?
8. To conclude your study, read Psalm 23 aloud. This is a powerful picture of the Lord as our shepherd. Consider one specific area of your life where you need Jesus to be your shepherd? Talk with Him about that. If you are in a small group, discuss this with one another and pray for one another about these things.

DIG DEEPER

- **Exploring Faith**—Jesus says there are different sorts of guides we can take for our life, whether Him or others. Jesus says not all of these guides are necessarily good. Who are the guides in your life? What might it look like for Jesus to become a guide for you?
- **Growing in Faith**—When Jesus calls Himself "*the gate*" and "*the good shepherd*," He draws upon a long history in God's people. This week spend some time reading either Psalm 23 or Ezekiel 34 (or both), while considering this question: what does it mean that Jesus is a good shepherd for me right now in my life?
- **Centered in Faith**—Although it may sound strange to us, a relationship exists between a shepherd and sheep. The sheep grow familiar with the shepherd's voice. Jesus says, "*I know my sheep and the sheep know Me*" (10:14), and also, "*the sheep listen to his voice*" (10:3). What do you think it looks like for us, as Jesus' sheep, to grow into that sort of intimate relationship with Him, our good shepherd?