**Transcript**

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I Am Jesus – The Good Shepherd  
  
Intro - We're in the second week of a four-week series called "I Am Jesus." We're looking at four of the "I am" statements of Jesus.  
  
He made 7 different statements in the Gospel of John.  
Last week, we found out that he is the resurrection and the life. The resurrection is not just an event; it is a person.  
  
Today, we're going to look In John 10:11. Jesus said "I am the" good shepherd. Let's, say it again. "Who is Jesus?" He said, "I am the good shepherd."  
  
We are in John in our sermon series and in our bible study that started this past week – so good! If you couldn’t make it, come this week. You can jump right in! In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Who is this word? Jesus is the Word  
  
And He is the good shepherd. And what does a good shepherd do? The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He is the good shepherd; God is good. The gospel means "good news." It's good news that Jesus, the good shepherd, was willing to die for us in our place.  
And the fact that he said, "I'm the good shepherd" implies that there are others that are not good. He actually doesn't just imply it, but in verse 1 of John, chapter 10, here's what he said. He said, "I tell you the truth. Anyone who sneaks over the wall of the sheep pen, rather than going through the gate must surely be a thief and a robber. He was talking about our spiritual enemy.  
  
  
We have an enemy; his name is Satan. He is the prince of darkness. He hates God and he hates God's people. And his mission is to steal, kill and destroy everything that matters to the heart of God.  
  
And we have to admit there is a power of evil in this world destroying a lot of things that matter to God. A lot of people are sick, a lot of families are falling apart, a lot of marriages are in trouble, a lot of kids are making bad decisions. And I believe at the root of that is the thief and the robber.  
  
Jesus said very clearly here, the mission of our spiritual enemy. John 10:10: He said, "The thief's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose, though," he said, "is to give them a rich and a satisfying life."  
Jesus is the good shepherd. Who are we? We are the sheep. imagine this: The love of God through his son that he desires that you have a rich and a satisfying life. Other versions say that, "His desire is that you have life to the fullest." That's what he wants for you.  
He is the good shepherd; we are the sheep.  
  
Sheep, just for the record -- this is the animal  
mentioned more than any other animal in all of scripture -- it's the most commonly mentioned animal. About 200 times in the bible, you'll find sheep mentioned. Since we're talking about animals, dogs are mentioned 44 amazing times. Cats are mentioned exactly zero. I like cats – Mike just got me a cat jigsaw puzzle for Christmas. We had 2 cats while we were raising our kids that lived over 20 years so I am not hating on cats but we don’t find "cat" mentioned in the bible unless, you talk about a lion, who is in the cat family, and the bible says Satan roars around like a lion. So some people that don’t like cats say there is a direct connection between Satan and cats.  
  
we are sheep and unfortunately, that's not great news. Okay? Because sheep are some of the stupidest animals on planet earth. Think about that. Okay? You go to a circus, you'll see trained animals. You can see trained donkeys; you can see trained dogs; tigers etc. You never see a sheep in a circus because you can't train them…. because they are too stupid. The only way to make a sheep play dead it to shoot them, and that trick only works one time and then it's like "game over." they are incredibly stupid creatures. It’s a little offensive to call ourselves sheep  
  
So I just need to say with love, the love of Jesus, "You're stupid and so am I." And let me give you the four challenges of being a sheep. The first one is this: Sheep get lost easily. I think I have mentioned before, or maybe Mike mentioned whenever we stay at a hotel, I go the wrong way everytime when we come out of our room – the opposite. My sense of direction is terrible.  
Sheep get lost easily. I am quick and confident to say – oh its that way and I am usually wrong – I think I am right, but usually wrong.  
  
In the old testament, there's a verse in Isaiah 53 that says, "All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. It's incredibly common for a sheep to walk away from the shepherd's fenced in area and say, "hmm, I think I'll go this way. I think something over here may make me happy. I think this may make me happy. I don't know what to do. I can't seem to make a good decision." And the reality is that's where many of us are. We're really trying to find and figure out this life, but we seem to keep making bad decisions. It's because sheep without a shepherd get lost very very easily.  
  
The second thing is that sheep are defenseless. This is really interesting to me to think about. You can think about almost every animal has some form of defense.  
  
Even a cat can claws your eyes out and often their teeth are their protection. Many animals have fangs, some will have some kind of horns that they can just go and just nail you. Some can kick, some can fly away, some are really really fast. Some blend into the environment. Sheep can't do anything; they're totally defenseless.  
  
You attack a sheep and what can they do? They just say  
  
"baahh-kk-off." Bad joke.  
  
They are defenseless. And on our own, without the body of Christ, and without the armor of God,(Eph 6 – the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God) without the protection of the good shepherd, we are very vulnerable to the lies of the evil one.  
  
So many of us as sheep, we're believing the lies and we're living a life that leads to death and destruction, at least on the inside. Sheep are defenseless.  
  
Number three, sheep are very stubborn. Somebody, look at the person next to you and say, I think he's talking about you right now. That’s me for sure! Go ahead and just do that. Say, "You're kind of sheep-like. You're incredibly stubborn." Some of you, you're not going to say it. I'm talking to you; you're stubborn. I told you what to do and you're like because she said to do it, I’m not going to do it.  
  
I read that sheep, whenever they walk in between two rocks and they get lodged in, the sheep are too stupid to go in reverse. You'll never hear the "beep, beep, beep," and they just back out. There's no "beep" and back out. Instead, they just keep lodging themselves in, going forward, getting even more stuck. How many of you know somebody like that right now? Raise your hand. Do not point to them. We are stubborn, bluntly, we’re stupid.  
  
It's the person like, "I'm out of money. I'm out of money. I'm broke all the time. Let's go out to eat and talk about it." Or they have a Starbucks Venti in their hand. Stubborn – not changing and stupid. And that's what a lot of sheep are.  
  
Number four, sheep are filthy. That's not good news. You say but, "I've seen like white fluffy sheep on T.V, okay? It was probably power washed right before the show! They are filthy; they stink. They stinketh if you were here last week. Lazarus stunkith. Sheep don't have the ability to clean themselves, and they won't.  
  
Can you see it? And if I can say it very respectfully, that's the way we are in the eyes of God on our own. A lot of people say, I’m a good person, "Well, he's a good Person." "Well, she's a good person." Well, in the eyes of God, we're actually not good. In the eyes of a perfect God, we are very very dirty, filthy sinners, falling way way short of God's standards of perfection.  
  
We have to recognize that to understand - The bottom line is: Sheep need a shepherd. And we need a savior. We need Jesus, and without him, we are vulnerable to the lies of the evil one. That's why it's  
  
really really good news when Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. So good that I would lay down my life for the sheep."  
  
Let’s move and talk about four incredible qualities of the good shepherd. And I pray that God would help connect these to your heart, and we can apply them to the way we live every single day.  
  
The first one, is this: What does the good shepherd do? He guides. Everybody say, "The good shepherd guides." Say it aloud. "The good shepherd guides." Psalms 23, verse 3, David said, "The Lord is my shepherd." In verse 3, he said "He guides me along the right paths for his namesake." The Lord guides me. (talk about circling verbs in the bible)  
Do you ever find yourself with a big decision to make and you don't know what to do? When you seek the Lord, he will reveal himself to you and he will guide you.  
Verse 3 and 4 of John, chapter 10 says this: "The gate keeper opens the gate for the shepherd and the sheep" do what? This is so rich. "The sheep recognize his voice and come to him." He, the good shepherd, calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out.  
After he's gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of  
  
them and what do they do? The bible says, "And they follow him." Why? Because they know his voice. He's guides them. He guides them. And this is so powerful. The sheep know, they recognize the voice of the good shepherd.  
Now, some of you might say, "Well, I don't know the voice of God. I mean, are you talking about like God just speaks audibly to you, Kathy, Like, "This is God." And I am saying that God can absolutely speak audibly. But God also speaks through his word, and you can hear him everyday through his word. He can speak through circumstances, he can speak through people, he can speak through a prophetic message. God can speak in all different ways and the sheep who belong to him, they know his voice.  
And I'd say there's one of two reasons you don't know. And I'll tell this story to give you this example. Imagine if you walked into a room with 50 women and they're all talking because that's what we do is talk. Have you noticed that? We do. And we all understand each other, all at the same time. You walk in a room with 50 men, nobody's talking because they're all watching the game. Okay? we're talking about when you walk into a room and all the women are talking.  
  
And if your wife's in there, "Can you recognize her voice?" If you say, "No, I can't." Well, the reason is one of two things: Either, you don't know her, you have never met her, or you haven't spent enough time with her to know her voice. Mike could be blindfolded and find me by my voice. He not only knows me, but he has spent so much time with me that He can recognize and pick out my voice. If you don't recognize the voice of the good shepherd then possibly, maybe you either don't know him, or you haven't spent enough time with him to recognize his voice.  
  
Because the good news is our good shepherd, if you're one of his sheep, he calls you by name. He calls you by name. And this is one of the most beautiful pictures, to know that our God is a personal and a relational God. He calls you by name. When someone calls you by name, that changes everything.  
  
Our God is that personal. He wants to reveal himself to you and he calls you by name.  
  
if you have a difficult decision to make: should I take this job in another city or should I stay here? Should I keep dating this person or maybe not? Should we try to have more kids or not? Should we be a part of Joy Church or not? Here's what I always do when I'm making decisions.  
  
You can tell God, "You said, Jesus is the good shepherd. He's the  
  
guide; that's his job. My job is to follow. You show me and I will follow." And it takes all the pressure off. It puts the pressure on him to reveal his will and his direction to us. "You guide me and I will follow." Everybody say, "He guides." Say it again. "He guides."  
  
The second thing he does is he provides. Our God is a good God who provides. In fact, Psalm 23, verses 1, 2 and 3, David said this: He said, "The lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing." "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides quiet waters and he restores my soul." I love that picture. "He makes me lie down in green pastures."  
  
How often do you see a sheep lying down? Some of you probably will answer -, "Well, I don't even see a sheep very often never mind lying down." Good pointn fairly taken. But when you see sheep, you won't see them lying down very often because there's three things that have to be in place before they lie down. I learned a lot about sheep for this message.  
  
The first is they have to be: free from hunger, well fed or they will not lie down. They are herd animals and need to be free of friction with other sheep. They have to be getting along with their sheepmates or they will not lie down. They have to feel safe or they will not take a rest. They are timid and need to be free of predators and bad weather. Safe.  
  
But in the presence of the good shepherd, who leads them to green pastures, they are full because they've been in his presence, and he breaks up fights amongst them and helps them to get along. He protects them from the predators and storms.  
  
  
Some of us to be and to recognize we are in His prescense. We need the good shepherd to come into our home and help bring some healing and forgiveness in relationships. To help us get along with our families and friends.  
  
And when the good shepherd is present, the sheep are not afraid because he is their defender, and so they will rest and actually lie down.  
  
It goes on to say, "He leads me beside quiet waters." Why quiet waters? Because, if there's rushing waters, sheep won't drink the rushing water. Why? Because they often fall in and they become like a giant cotton ball, washing down the river until they drown so they won't do that. The good shepherd leads them beside the right kind of water so they can drink and Who is the “right kind of water”?  
  
Jesus, He is the living water, and once we drink of him, we will never thirst again. He quenches that inward thirst so that we can be at rest.  
And then the bible says, "He refreshes my soul." I love this. He is such a good provider. He doesn't just provide for us materially, he doesn't just provide for our bodies, but he provides for our souls. Some of you right now, you've got everything on the outside you need, but inwardly, your soul is not at rest. You might be a sheep without a shepherd. Because our good shepherd is so loving in his provision, he refreshes our souls. Inwardly, we can be at peace.  
  
And here is the amazing thing… when you are a sheep under the care of the good shepherd, all hell can be breaking loose in your life, and you can be at a place where all sorts of things are going wrong, and yet, you can have a supernatural peace that transcends your ability to understand.  
  
What is that? That is the presence of the good shepherd refreshing your soul. Your soul is at rest on the inside because you know the good shepherd cares for you. The good shepherd guides, and the good shepherd provides.  
  
The third thing is this: He also corrects. Everybody say, "My shepherd corrects."  
  
This may not be good news for you if you are the sheep that is wandering. It may not seem like good news right now, but it truly is good news because the shepherd loves you, the sheep, enough to correct you when you're wandering into danger.  
  
Job, he knew this well. In Job, chapter 5, verse 17 and 18, look at the words He said, "Blessed is the one whom God corrects." Can you imagine if you're being corrected and you're like, "Oh I'm blessed"? But, "That's how much God loves you. My God cares enough for me to actually keep me out of trouble."  
  
He continues - "Blessed is the one whom God corrects." " do not despise the discipline of the almighty. For he  
  
Wounds, but he also binds up. He injures but his hands also heal." Seems like an odd thing for our God to do to actually wound and then to bind up.  
I read one article about what some loving shepherds would do for a little lamb that would continue to wander off. It was very common for a little stupid lamb to leave the flock where he's vulnerable to wolves or to falling off a cliff or to getting in trouble. And the loving good shepherd would take his rod -- it's about a two-foot rod. It's a weapon.  
And what the loving shepherd would do, when the little lamb would keep wandering off and was going to be picked-off soon, is the loving shepherd would take the rod and would crack the little lamb's leg. Sounds very very cruel.  
  
But then what the good shepherd would do is, he would take that little lamb and put him up on his shoulder and take care of him and nurse him. And the good shepherd would then keep the little lamb close to him. The lamb would grow up and he would be totally and completely dependent on the shepherd. And the little lamb would learn the shepherd's  
  
voice, and the shepherd would pet him and bring him to the greatest places.  
And over a lifetime, that little lamb would become almost like a pet to the shepherd because he's been so cared for by the shepherd. And that one would never run off again because he learned to know the voice and trust the shepherd; it's the discipline of God.  
  
When your kids are growing up and you teach them about traffic or wood stoves or anything that is dangerous. When they are headed towards those things we don't have time to speak." We grab them and yank them away and don’t think about social services knocking on our door because we might pull their arm out of their socket. And they cry and tell us we are mean because their minds comprehend what a loving thing we are doing for them. Getting them quickly out of harms way because we care for them, and maybe potentially protecting them from getting hit by a car or burning themselves or electrocuting themselves or drowning.  
  
And there may be a time when our good and loving God lets us face the consequences of our own stupid decisions to keep us from making more stupid decisions that could cost us severely over time. – As a parent, and especially of grown children, I know how very hard it is to let our kids suffer the consequences of their stupid decisions. To not jump in and rescue them, because we love them and need them to learn.  
  
For sure no one sits around going, "Oh, I think God is disciplining me. This is going to be good.  
Mmm, give it to me good, God." Okay? Nobody does that. When I would discipline my teenagers, they never said, "Oh, praise the Lord, Mom said we are grounded! I hope she’ll take my phones away too." They don't do that.  
  
But here's what scripture says about it. Hebrews 12:11: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time," It hurts, doesn't it? It's painful. "Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness, of peace for those who have been trained by it." Our good shepherd is so loving that he loves us enough even to correct us, to keep us out of further harm.  
  
Everybody say, "He guides. He provides, he corrects, and he protects." Write that down. "He protects." This is what the bible says in Psalm 23, verses 4 through 6. David said this -- I love this -- "Even though I walk through  
  
the darkest valley, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Why? "Because my good shepherd is with me." "For you are with me." When he is with me, I have nothing to fear. When he is with me, I am at rest in my soul. When he is with me, I know he's working in all things to bring about good to those who love him and are called according his purpose. "I will fear no evil for you are with me. Your rod" -- it was a weapon to scare off or to harm the animals who would threaten the sheep -- "and your staff, they comfort me." The staff had a hook to rescue a fallen sheep out of danger or even to comfort the sheep, stroking it like you would a pet, saying, "Here, little sheep. I'm your good shepherd."  
  
Verse 5 says, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows." What does this mean? Well, sheep were stinky. And this is so gross - Flies were everywhere. And it wasn't uncommon for a fly to fly into the nose of a sheep, lay eggs and the larva would hatch. Some would not go south out the right end of the nose, but would go north. And these little larva would get inside the nasal and even up into the brain area and drive these sheep so crazy that they would bang their head up against the wall, even to the point of killing themselves.  
  
"You anoint my head with oil." It was like an insect  
  
repellant. The good shepherd says, "I'll even take care of what irritates you. That's how good I am."  
"My cup overflows."  
  
"My cup overflows."  
There's a tradition in Old Testament Palestine homes where you were allowed to stay at the table, and as a guest at the house of the host, as long as they filled your cup back up with wine. As long as it was full, you were welcome in the house. When they let it run empty, the heat was high and the pajamas were on. It's time to go home. And David says, "My cup overflows." In other words, I'm always welcome in the  
  
presence of the good shepherd; that's just how good he is, and just how much he loves me.  
  
Verse 6: "Surely your goodness and love will follow me, overtake me, all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." He protects me. He protects me. This doesn't mean that you'll never fall upon physical harm but this does mean, in the spiritual terms, that he has stored up for you an inheritance that will never spoil, perish or fade. And the good shepherd is the one who would lay down his life for the sheep.  
  
Worship team  
  
Jesus told a parable and said, "If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away" -- because they are prone to wander -- what will that shepherd do? "The shepherd will leave the 99 to pursue the one."  
  
May I say today that there may be someone here that this whole message is just for you. You're the one. You are the one.  
You are the sheep that needs the shepherd, and he is coming for you. He loves you that much.  
If you feel like, "Oh, man, this message, it's like it's for me. It's like God is speaking directly to me."  
Guess what? God is speaking directly to you. You're the one. You're the one. You are the one. He's coming for you. You are the one.  
  
I heard a story about Psalm 23.  
  
A drama professor was teaching his class  
  
and said, "I want all of you to read the 23rd Psalm." He said, "I'll go first." The drama professor was brilliant. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." He went through the whole thing; it was so brilliant, every student there applauded, "." He pointed to the front row and said, "I want you to do it," the shiest kid there, everybody knew he was a Christian but he was shy and scared to death.  
The young Christian kid stood up before the class, he was very nervous. And as he started to read, the imagery came to life and he remembered all that Jesus had done for him. "The lord is my shepherd. I shall not want," and he remembered how God had provided for him when he was in need and he started to the tremble. "He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides quiet waters," and he got overwhelmed with emotion. And he could barely get through it through the tears. And when he got through, no one clapped; everybody was crying. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.  
And the drama coach said, "Well, there you have it.  
  
He said - I know the Psalm but that guy, he knows the shepherd. That guy knows the shepherd."  
  
Maybe -- please, listen to me, please. Maybe you're the one. The good shepherd's coming for you. And he wants  
  
you to know him because he is good. And there is one that's not good, and the one that's not good wants to steal, kill and destroy. But our good shepherd came that you may have a rich and satisfying life. He loved you so much that he would lay down his life so you could know his love and you could have the freedom of following the good shepherd, revealing to you the perfect love of our good God.  
  
Father, I ask that your Spirit would speak to your church in a way that would transform our lives."  
As you pray today there are some of you right now, you say, I  
really -- I'm a sheep and I need the care of the shepherd." Some of you, you've got decisions to make. He will guide you. If you seek him, he will reveal himself to you. You need him as guide. We all do.  
Some of you right now, you feel like you're empty; he wants to be your provider, maybe materially, maybe spiritually, maybe even in your soul.  
Some of you, you recognize, I've done some things and I'm facing some stuff." And you may sense and see, "This is actually the goodness and mercy of God, who's disciplining me and bringing it even to good things."  
  
Some of you right now, you're worried all the time. You need to rest in the presence of the protection of the good shepherd.  
  
If you would say, "I really do believe God is speaking to me. I'm a sheep and I want to be even more under the care of the good shepherd" -- those of you who know you belong to him, you know you've been changed -- "and I want to even experience Him in a deeper way, the goodness of God through Jesus who says, "I am the good shepherd who lays down my life for the sheep."  
If today, you would say, "Yes, God is speaking to me. I want to be even more intimately under the care of the good shepherd," would you lift up your hands right now? Just lift them high, up all over the place.  
  
"God, thank you for the way your spirit works.  
  
Thank you for the way you reveal yourself and thank you for who Jesus is, the good shepherd. I pray, God, that you would guide and you would provide. And God, you would correct and you would protect."  
"God, I pray that we would be sheep that would know your voice and follow your lead and trust you, and be at rest in our souls. Because, we are sheep that need you, Jesus, the  
  
good shepherd in our lives."  
  
As you keep praying today, some of you would have to acknowledge, "I'm kind of wandering. I'm looking for something that would fulfill the emptiness in my life. I've messed up."  
Some of you may think, "Okay, if Jesus is coming for me, I've done so many things wrong, how could he ever love someone like me?" Jesus loves the sheep; the sheep are sinful. He still loves the sheep. He laid down his life for the sheep.  
He loves us so much that he did for us what we were incapable of doing for ourselves. He became sin for us, died and was raised to life so that anyone -- and that includes you -- it doesn't matter what you've done, where you've been, how much you have doubted -- anyone who calls on his name will be saved. He'll leave the 99 to go after the one.  
Some of you here in this room or watching online right now, you'd say, "That's me. I'm the one. I am a sheep and I need the shepherd." Today, you want to turn from your sins and to call on him. And when you do, he'll hear your prayer, he'll forgive your sins and he will make you brand new.  
If you say, "Yes, I'm outside the flock and today, I want to give my life to him. I trust Jesus and give my life to him."  
  
That's your prayer, would you lift your hands high right now? "Yes, that's my prayer." Lift them up and say, "Yes, I surrender my life to him."  
Yes, I need your forgiveness and I need your grace."  
  
Everybody praying together because no one prays alone here Heavenly Father, forgive me for my sins. Make me brand new. I believe Jesus died for me and he rose again so I can live for you.  
Fill me with your spirit so I can follow you for the rest of my life. Thank you for new life. Today, I give you mine. In Jesus name, I pray."