

## ***John 10:1-10***

Jesus said: “Amen, Amen, I say to you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the Shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for Him, and the sheep hear His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run away from him because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.”

Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but the Pharisees did not realize what He was trying to tell them.

So again, Jesus said to them;

“Amen, Amen, I say to you, I am the Gate for the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the Gate. Whoever enters by Me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.”

***The Gospel of the Lord.***

## Reflection Questions

**Question of the Week-** How is God calling you to be a shepherd to those in your care?

- 1) The shepherd calls the sheep by name and they know His voice (vv. 3-4). Mary Magdalene did *not recognize Jesus by sight*, but she recognized Him through **His voice** as her Lord when He spoke her name. How is Christ's voice in your life a continual reminder of who He is for you and who you are to Him? How do you distinguish His voice from the other "voices" (e.g. media, popular culture. .etc.) that clamor for your attention? Do you notice that the more you tune in to His voice, the easier it is to tune out other voices that are not related to His call for your life?
- 2) Jesus uses this parable to make His point to the Pharisees. Those who have ears to "hear" the shepherd will understand. This parable reminds us of Ezekiel 34:11, 15-16 where God is angry with those shepherds who are exploiting the sheep and feeding themselves. To stop the exploitation, God Himself steps in and plays the role of Shepherd. The Pharisees apparently do not have "ears to hear" the voice of the shepherd. How are we like this at times? In what ways, (and why) do/can we tune Him out in order to follow other voices (other paths)?
- 3) In verse 7, Jesus says "I AM (ego eimi- another term for "God" the Living God who created the universe) 'I AM the Gate for the sheep'. The Pharisees would have been very aware of how Jesus was using the term "I AM" (e.g. to equate Himself with God) and this would have enraged them. The concept of a 'human being' equating Himself with God would have been intolerable to the Pharisees. In our modern times, which people (or groups of people) are still highly offended by the idea of Jesus being God? Why?
- 4) In more rural poorer communities the "Gate" for the sheepfold was simply an opening (not a physical 'gate' with hinges etc.). Since it was simply an opening and there was no physical 'gate' present, the Shepherd would lay his own body across the gateway so that no sheep could get out during the night and no "thieves or bandits" could come in. With this analogy in mind. How does Jesus protect us **from ourselves** (e.g. help us not to wander where we should not go) and at the same time protect us from evil (thieves and robbers who come to steal and to threaten)?

- 5) “All who come before Me (Jesus) are thieves and bandits” (vs. 8) By using these two terms, is John not being redundant here, but instead is making a point. “Thieves” are people who sneak around to steal what they want when no one is watching (usually breaking into homes). “Bandits” are people who aggressively, violently and overtly grab whatever they want on their terms regardless of who is watching (often physically accosting people on the road, beating them up to rob them). The ‘sneaky ones’ (e.g. thieves) and the ‘intimidating ones’ (e.g. bandits) came before Jesus wanting to snatch potential followers away from Him. Who are the ‘sneaky ones’ and the ‘intimidating ones’ that precede Jesus? Jesus has a response for the ‘sneaky and intimidating’. How does Jesus teach us to respond to those dynamics today?
- 6) Others come to steal, “but the sheep do not listen to them.”(vs.8) Jesus trusts and counts on the sheep’s God-given capacity to recognize their True Shepherd’s voice so that they will not be led astray. How does Jesus expect us to develop (or to tune into) that capacity/skill today? How does a regular prayer life help you to ‘tune into’ His voice and to ‘tune out’ the voices of the world? How does our ability to follow His voice strengthen us, our families and the entire Church as vessels of God’s Love for a hungry, lost, hurting world? What kinds of activities and habits can compromise our ability to hear and to heed His voice?
- 7) At night, the shepherd gathers up his sheep and brings them into the sheepfold for their own safety. As stated above, the shepherd would sleep at the gate so that no sheep would get out and no thieves could come in. In the morning the shepherd could safely lead the sheep to good pasture on which they could feed. Two powerful qualities of the shepherd are *protection* and *provision*. The sheep are safe and well-fed. Jesus tells us that He is the Gate. We come into God’s protection and provision (salvation) only through Jesus. What is your experience of the “sheepfold” and of Jesus as the “Gate” in your life? In what way have His sheepfold and His acting as the “Gate” protected you from thieves and predators as well as from your own tendency to stray into dangerous areas? How have you experienced Jesus as Good Shepherd? Protector and Provider?
- 8) Several exegetical commentators tell us that this passage reminds us of Ezekiel 34:11,15-16, Jeremiah 23:1-4) where God rebukes the shepherds of Israel (e.g. the religious leaders) for feeding themselves rather than their flocks. God put

an end to their exploitation by assuming the role of shepherd Himself. (Psalm 23:1, 77:20; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Isaiah 40:11). The painful scandal in the Church reminds us that this dynamic is still possible today. How have you seen God come to the aid of His little ones (His sheep) in the Church and in the world? (through people, justice, love, circumstances?) How does being a witness of God's action on behalf of the little ones increase and heal your trust in God and in His Church?