



March 18-19, 2023

John 10:1-42

Ice Breaker Questions

- In John 10, Jesus uses farming imagery to connect to his audience: they would all be familiar with how sheep relate to a shepherd. What kind of imagery do you think Jesus would use if he lived from 1990 - 2023 instead of 2000 years ago? What do you think would connect with people? [Technology we all use \(Internet / iPhones / Computers\) / Historical Events / Music Lyrics or Sports / Pithy quotes from politicians like "I have a dream" that all of us know :-\)](#) - lots of ideas could be shared here.

Understand Their Story

As we begin reading John 10, it's important to realize that this chapter has three major scenes. Scene 1 (John 10:1-21) seems to be continuous with John 9. Jesus heals the man born blind, eventually tells the Pharisees that they are blind, and continues speaking to them in John 10. Scene 2 (John 10:22-39) occurs in the temple some time later. In Scene 3 (John 10:40-42), John simply notes that Jesus withdrew and people believed.

1. Read John 10:1-21. What are the main points that Jesus wants to communicate to the Pharisees in Scene 1? [That he is the door \(gateway\) to salvation and eternal life \(v 9\). He is the good shepherd who calls his sheep by name, leads them, and lays down his life willingly for his sheep \(v 1 - 3, v 11 - 15, v 18\). His sheep hear his voice and follow him \(v 3-5\). He offers his sheep abundant life, whereas others \(the thief\) steal, kill and destroy the sheep \(v 10\), and flee when there is trouble \(v 13\). He will bring other sheep \(Gentiles\) into his flock \(v 16\)](#)
 - a. If you are a Christian, you are one of Jesus' sheep. What image or idea encourages you the most as you read these verses? [There will be various answers!](#)
2. Read John 10:22-39. What is at the heart of the controversy between Jesus and the Jews in this section of text? [The Jews accuse him of blasphemy - "you make yourself God" \(v 33\). Jesus says they don't believe because they are not one of his sheep \(v 26\)](#)
 - a. What does Jesus urge the Jews to do? [Even if they don't believe him, they should believe his works \(v38\). His works bear witness about him \(v 25\). What does this teach us about Jesus? He wants them to know and understand that He is in the Father and the Father is in him! He wants them to have eternal life!](#)
 - b. What does Jesus add in this section about the way in which he cares for his sheep? [He gives them eternal life, no one can snatch them out of his hand, or his Father's hand! \(v 27-29\)](#)

Connect to His Story.

3. Looking Back: Jesus' words of rebuke in John 10 take on deeper meaning if we know some of the Old Testament scriptures which Jesus is alluding to as he calls himself the good shepherd, in contrast to others who are thieves and robbers. In Scripture, shepherd imagery refers to God himself (Psalm 23), or the people he appoints to lead his people: religious leaders (priests and scribes), or political leaders (kings).
 - a. Read Ezekiel 34:1-10. What does God say about Israel's shepherds in this text? [He is judging them because they are self-centered - they exploit the sheep rather than feed them \(v 3\). They](#)

aren't strengthening the weak, healing the sick, binding up the injured or seeking the strays (v 4). It is their fault that the sheep were scattered!¹ He will judge them, and remove them from leadership (v 10).

- i. How is Ezekiel 34:1-10 reflected in Jesus' words to the Pharisees in John 10:1-21? The Pharisees aren't caring for the weak and sick (like the blind man in John 9). They are worried about holding onto their own power and exploiting the people. They are like the bad shepherds that Ezekiel was writing too.
 - b. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16. What solution does God give in these verses? He will be the good shepherd to his people: He will search for his sheep (v 11), he will rescue them (v 12), he will bring them out of captivity (v 13), he will bring them into good pastures (v 14-15), he will make them lie down, bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, and will bring justice (v 16)
 - i. How is Ezekiel 34:11-16 reflected in Jesus' words to the Pharisees in John 10:1-21? Jesus is saying I AM the one prophesied about in Ezekiel 34. I am God, come to be the good shepherd to his sheep!
4. Looking Forward:
- a. Read Revelation 7:9-17.
 - i. How does the Spirit inspire John to use ideas from John 10 as he writes Revelation? In John 10, Jesus talks about bringing other sheep into his flock. In Revelation 7:9, we see people from all tribes and nations around the throne! Jesus is their shepherd (7:17).

Apply to Our Story

5. There are so many ideas that could be applied to our lives from this text, but I'll focus on two below:
 - a. Jesus claims to be "the good shepherd" and "the door" through which people obtain salvation (v 9), and obtain abundant life. How do you see this claim contested in our culture? (eg. what or who offers abundant life in our day? What would these people or organizations say about Jesus' claims and his offer?) Various answers! All rival ideologies claim to provide the way to abundant life, and suggest that following Jesus does NOT lead to abundant life, but is instead narrow, boring, stifling etc. For example: the American dream will lead to abundant life / listening to your heart will lead to abundant life / freeing yourself from the shackles of the past - or from societal structures based on a Christian ethic (eg. marriage) etc.
 - i. To apply this more personally, do you actually believe, deeply, that following Jesus DOES lead to abundant life and that he is the GOOD Shepherd? Are there times you have questioned this claim?² Various answers! I know I (Kristal) have struggled with this when I've wanted to do something that Jesus and scripture tell me not to do! I'm assuming others feel the same!
 - b. Jesus urges the Jews to investigate and believe his works, even if they have trouble understanding who he is (v 37-39). What are different ways you could encourage or walk alongside someone who is in the same position as the Jews? What could you recommend? That they keep learning and reading about what Jesus says and what he has done and, if they are willing, that they pray for the Spirit to open their minds to understand. Perhaps you could offer to read through the gospels with them, and talk about what they are learning. You could also direct them to great websites like the Bible Project (<https://bibleproject.com/>), Apologetics Canada (<https://apologeticscanada.com/>) or GotQuestions.org (<https://www.gotquestions.org/>) which talks about the scriptures, and addresses people's questions.

¹ Ezekiel is written when Israel was taken captive by the Babylonian empire. God is laying the blame for this event at the feet of the shepherds.

² The way you answer these questions will shape your willingness to obey Jesus even when your emotions or fears are pulling you in a different direction! The world around us, and our own hearts will consistently tell us what the serpent told Eve in Genesis 3: that Jesus doesn't want the best for us, that God is holding out on us and keeping us from realizing our full potential. We must ask the Spirit to help us fight this lie of Satan with everything we have, in order to continue following Jesus all of our days.

As you end your session, read through Psalm 23 and pray in Adoration, Confession and Supplication. What can you praise God for, based on Psalm 23? What do you need to confess? What can you ask him for?

God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 10:1-42

As we noted in Ezekiel 34, shepherd imagery was used to refer to God and to those he appointed to care for his people. This image carries into the New Testament as Jesus charges Peter to "feed his sheep" (John 21:15-19), and Peter passes the baton to church elders, saying:

shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)

We are not all religious and political leaders, but we all have areas of impact at our workplaces, in our neighbourhoods or families. What would it look like for you, today, to faithfully shepherd those in your care?

- Do you do your paid or free work willingly, or under compulsion?
- Are you primarily concerned about what you'll get (working for gain), or are you eager to serve?
- Do you domineer over those in your charge, or are you an example to them?