

Session 5 – I AM the Good Shepherd

John 10:11-18

Jesus' words invite us to consider
a deeper question:

**What kind of leader truly gives
life rather than taking from it?**



How to Use This Study

This series is designed to be experienced in two stages.

- **Personal Study During the Week**

Each participant reads the Scripture and works through the Study Guide before the group meeting.

- **Group Discussion Together**

When the group gathers, the Facilitator and Student Guides help guide conversation, reflection, and prayer based on the material everyone has already explored.

- This format allows the group to move beyond surface discussion and engage the Bible more deeply together.



Where We Are in John's Gospel

As John's Gospel unfolds, Jesus continues revealing **who He truly is.**

Each moment builds on the last.

- **Session 1 — The Word Became Flesh (John 1)**
 - **Session 2 — I AM the Bread of Life (John 6)**
- **Session 3 — I AM the Light of the World (John 8)**
 - **Session 4 — I AM the Door (John 10:1–10).**

Now Jesus deepens the image:

Not only is He the Door to the flock he announces—

“I am the Good Shepherd.”

(John 10:11-18)

He is the Shepherd who gives His life for it.



Continuing the Same Teaching

John 10 is not two separate teachings.

It is **one continuous message**.

First Jesus Explains

The sheep

The gate

The false shepherds

Now He explains what a true shepherd does.

This shift moves from access to life to the character of the one who leads the flock.



Shepherds in the Ancient World

In the ancient world, shepherding was demanding and dangerous work.

Shepherds were responsible for:

guiding the flock to food and water

protecting them from predators

searching for sheep that wandered away

caring for the weak or injured

The safety of the flock depended entirely on the shepherd.



The Shepherd in Scripture

Throughout the Bible, God describes Himself as a shepherd.

Psalm 23

“The Lord is my shepherd.”

Isaiah 40:11

God gathers the lambs in His arms.

Ezekiel 34

God promises to rescue His sheep from corrupt leaders.

Jesus' declaration in John 10 directly fulfills this promise.



Jesus' Declaration

Jesus says

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep"

John 10:11

This is another **"I AM" statement** in John's Gospel.
Jesus is not only claiming authority.

He is revealing the kind of leader He is.

Not just a shepherd.
The Good Shepherd.



What Makes the Shepherd Good?

The word “good” does not simply mean kind. It means:

noble

genuine

trustworthy

Jesus is describing a shepherd whose character can be trusted completely.

His leadership is defined by sacrifice, not self-interest.



The Good Shepherd's Sacrifice

Jesus immediately explains what makes the Shepherd good:

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep"

John 10:11

This is one of the clearest previews of the cross in John's Gospel.

**Unlike leaders who protect themselves first,
Jesus protects the flock even at the cost of His
own life.**



The Hired Hand

Jesus contrasts the Good Shepherd with another figure.

12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

John 10:12-13

The hired hand works for wages.
When danger comes, the hired hand runs away.

Why?

Because the sheep do not belong to him.
He has no real relationship with the flock.



Leadership Without Love

Jesus explains the difference clearly:

The hired hand abandons the sheep when wolves appear.

The sheep become scattered and vulnerable.

The hired hand cares more about **his own safety** than the flock.

This image exposes leaders who seek power but avoid sacrifice.



The Shepherd Who Knows the Sheep

Jesus says something remarkable.

14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,”

John 10:14

This relationship is not distant or impersonal.

The shepherd knows the flock individually.

The sheep recognize the shepherd’s voice.

Faith is not only belief in ideas, or actions aligned with those ideas.

It is relationship with the shepherd who knows us.



A Relationship Like the Father and the Son

Jesus goes even deeper. He compares this relationship to His own relationship with the Father.

15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

John 10:15

The intimacy between Jesus and His followers reflects the intimacy within the Trinity.

Following Christ means entering into relationship with God Himself.



Sheep Beyond This Fold

Jesus then says something very surprising to an audience that saw Israel as God's beloved, special, and chosen people.

16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

John 10:16

This points beyond Israel.

Jesus' mission will reach all nations.

HIS LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDS

His flock will include people from every background.



One Flock, One Shepherd

Jesus explains the result of this mission.

16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

John 10:16

One Flock—One Shepherd

This statement points to the unity of God's people across cultures and nations.

Remember John's opening:

*“To **all** who receive Him, He gives the right to be called the Children of God.” John 1:12*

The church becomes a global community centered on Christ.



The Shepherd's Authority

Jesus then explains something profound about His death.

18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily.

John 10:18

His death will not be a defeat.

**His love for His sheep is great—He will
voluntarily offer Himself**

Jesus lays down His life willingly.



Power to Lay Down Life

Jesus continues:

18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

John 10:18

He has authority to **lay down His life.**
And authority to **take it up again.**

This statement points forward to the resurrection.

The Good Shepherd is not defeated by death.
He conquers it.



The Heart of the Shepherd

The central message of this passage is clear.

Jesus leads through:

sacrifice
relationship
protection
love

**His leadership is fundamentally different
from every form of self-serving authority.**



The Invitation

Jesus' declaration is more than information.

It is an invitation.

But people must decide whether they will enter.

To follow the Good Shepherd means trusting the one who:

- knows us
- protects us
- gave His life for us

Following Christ means placing our lives under His care.



Reflection Questions

1. What makes the image of a shepherd meaningful or powerful?
2. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes sacrifice in describing leadership?
3. What voices today try to lead people without truly caring for them?
4. What does it mean to trust Jesus as the shepherd who knows you personally?



Key Takeaway

Jesus does not lead like the world's leaders.

He leads by giving His life for the sheep.

The Good Shepherd knows His flock, protects them,
and calls them by name.

The question is not whether the shepherd is calling.

The question is whether we will follow His voice.

