

Jesus said, I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full. This promise sounds exciting, wonderful, and comforting. But what is "life to the full?" Join us this fall as we explore what the fullness of life in Christ looks like and expose the thieves and wolves that try to tear our life away.



Life to the full



FOUNDRYCHURCH
Devotions

If you do not have a Bible please let us know and we would be happy to get you one

Day 1

In this week's study of the Gospel of John, we are introduced to a group of unusual characters that we probably don't think of often. They are the Shepherd, the Gate, the Sheep, the Wolf, the Thief, and the Hired Hand. For today, let's see what God thinks of shepherds and just how important they were to the early believers, to God, and to us.

Read Psalm 77:20 - We see that God's chosen instruments to lead His people are other people. Out of all the Hebrew people enslaved in Egypt, God calls Moses and Aaron to be shepherds. And their shepherding takes them on a 40-year journey through the desert before finally reaching the promised land.

Psalm 78:70-72 - Fast-forward several hundred years, and God reveals David, a man after God's own heart who becomes the type of shepherd that God delights in.

Psalm 80:1 - God is still talking about shepherds, but this time it is no mere man leading the people. Instead, God points to the perfect shepherd that is to come, Jesus. This is the one God calls "the Gate". Why would God call His chosen vessel a gate? The Gate protects the sheep from the wolves and thieves, and it is the only way out of the sheep pen, just as Jesus is the only way to God.

Ezekiel 34:1-25 - God has had enough. He has watched good shepherds operate like Moses and David, and by this time He has seen centuries of selfish shepherds taking care of themselves rather than the flock (people). Ezekiel is instructed by God to tell the selfish shepherds exactly what He thinks of them and what He plans to do about it.

DAY 1 (continued)

As you read more about this group of characters this week, ask yourself the following questions:

What have I learned about God the Father?

What have I learned about His kingdom?

What have I learned about being part of that kingdom?

Notes

Day 2

(Reading only)

John 10:1-5

Day 3

READ

John 10:6-10

In our Scripture reading yesterday and today we read about some of those strange characters I mentioned on Day One. Recall the Sheep, Gate, Thief, and Robber. I think we already know who the sheep are. In this reading they represent the Israelites.

The thief and robber represent the false prophets, some of whom even claimed to be the Messiah. Jesus says in verse 8 that even though they tried to call the sheep away, the sheep knew the shepherd's voice and did not follow. Shepherds in the field can separate their sheep from other sheep simply by calling their names. The sheep will recognize their shepherd's voice and follow him. The same sheep would run away from a stranger's voice. The Pharisees did not understand this image. In verse 9 Jesus again refers to himself as the gate. Modern day shepherds will often sleep in front of the gate in order to protect the sheep from intruders and save them. Jesus uses this image to describe the salvation He offers.

We don't typically welcome the label "sheep." Calling someone a sheep conjures up an image of someone following mindlessly, which is not the kind of attribute we would put on our resume. But when Jesus compares us to sheep it is a wonderful compliment. It's a name He used for those that love Him, seek Him, talk to Him, and ask Him for wisdom and guidance. It's the name He uses for those who know Him and want to be known by Him. Contrary to being mindless robots, those who seek the Great Shepherd have life, and have it to the full.

Notes

Day 4

(Reading only)

John 10:11-14

Day 5

READ

John 10:16-21

We have been looking at God's word to his people, the people of Israel. But what about Christians in the 21st century who probably don't have an ounce of Jewish DNA? Well, this is where we get our starring moment in the story. This is where we begin to see what the prophets were talking about through all the books in the Bible going back to Adam and Eve and the serpent. We are the "others" in verse 16. And what does Jesus focus on? That the "others" will listen to his voice and join God's chosen people. Awesome!

In verse 17 Jesus takes a turn and begins talking about why the Father loves Him. In a phrase that must have confused those listening, Jesus uses phrases like "lay down my life only to take it up again." Jesus declares, "no one takes it", "I lay it down", "I have authority". These words point again to all the Shepherd will give for his flock.

The Jews scratched their heads and wondered if Jesus was demon possessed or raving mad. We in the 21st century have the Bible, and we understand that Jesus was referring to the cross. We have all the words spoken on our behalf going back thousands of years. Do we recognize his voice as he says we will in verse 16? As we draw near to the great Shepherd, we will begin to recognize His voice over all the competing voices in the world. If we recognize his voice, will we follow Him?

DAY 5 (continued)

Meditate on the scriptures from this week and once again ask yourself:

What have I learned about God the Father?

What have I learned about His kingdom?

What have I learned about being part of that kingdom?

Notes

Bring to service for message notes!

Notes

Look here next week for
GROUPS questions!