

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 12, John 10:1-42, Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome back, everybody, for another deep dive with us. Today, we're going to be looking at the Good Shepherd Discourse. It's John chapter 10, verses 1 through 42.

Very famous passage. But we're looking at it through the lens of a lecture series by Dr. David Turner. And it's interesting because it's not just the feel-good story that we often think of.

We're in Jerusalem right now. Tensions are high after Jesus has healed the blind man, and he's really sparking some controversy. Yeah, no, you're right.

It's a very pointed discourse. With the Jewish leaders. Yeah, and it's really interesting how this discourse unfolds right after that healing in John chapter 9. It's not a standalone parable.

You know, we're dealing with an ongoing conflict here with the Pharisees. And Dr. Turner actually argues that this Good Shepherd Discourse is less about comfort and more about exposing the hypocrisy of the religious elite. So less gentle shepherd and more calling out the wolves in sheep's clothing.

Think of it this way. The blind man who's healed in the previous chapter represents those sheep who are mistreated by the very people who should be caring for them. So Jesus is shining a light on that injustice.

Okay, now you mentioned discourse. John calls this a *paroimia*, which I understand is like a parable, but with its own quirks. How should we understand this literary device? I think the label itself isn't as important as the effect.

You know, Jesus is using vivid imagery to get his point across. He's drawing on familiar roles. Yeah.

You know, the shepherd, the sheep, the sheepfold to make a powerful statement about leadership, loyalty, and belonging. So let's break down the analogy. We have Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Right. But he also calls himself the door to the sheepfold. Right.

What's going on there? It's fascinating, isn't it? The shepherd guides and protects, but the door also provides access and security. So maybe Jesus is saying he's both the way in and the one who safeguards those who belong. And then you have the sheep themselves.

The sheep represent Israel, or perhaps those within Israel who truly follow Jesus. And the sheepfold, it's more than just a pen. It's that place of safety and belonging.

Right. Maybe hinting at the church itself. And then we have this whole cast of characters that threaten the sheep: thieves, robbers, strangers, hirelings, even a wolf.

Who are all these bad guys? Well, Jesus leaves some of it open to interpretation. Yeah. You know, which is what makes this passage so thought-provoking.

Thieves and robbers could be false prophets or leaders who exploited the people. Strangers might represent those who claim to follow God, but actually lead people astray. And the hirelings.

The hirelings. Yeah. Those are the ones that really get under my skin.

They just seem so self-serving. Like what's the modern-day equivalent of a hireling? Oh, you're right. There's something particularly insidious about them.

They're only in it for themselves, right? Maybe that resonates with us today when we see leaders, you know, whether religious or political, who use their position for personal gain, for power, for building their own empires rather than serving those they're supposed to lead. Wow. That connection to modern-day leaders is pretty powerful.

And then there's the wolf lurking in the shadows. It's hard not to see that as a symbol for Satan himself, right? Yes. That's a common interpretation.

Right. The wolf embodies that ultimate threat to the flock, the force that seeks to scatter and destroy. But amidst all this danger, Jesus makes this intriguing comment about other sheep.

Right. What do you make of that? Well, it seems pretty clear he's hinting that God's plan extends beyond the Jewish community. It's like a foreshadowing of the inclusion of the Gentiles, those outside of Judaism, into God's kingdom.

Precisely. It reminds me of how Jesus reached out to the Samaritan woman at the well. Right.

Someone considered an outsider by the religious elite. Yeah. This idea of other sheep is a radical statement about the wideness of God's mercy and the universality of his love.

It's amazing how John weaves these themes together. Yeah. But speaking of radical statements, we can't forget what Jesus says next.

I and the Father are one. Talk about dropping a theological bombshell. Right.

And the timing couldn't be more dramatic. It's Hanukkah, the feast of dedication, a time of heightened national and religious fervor. And here's Jesus claiming a level of unity with God that sends shockwaves through the crowd.

No wonder they pick up stones to stone him. That's blasphemy. Yeah.

It's like John is highlighting the high stakes of Jesus's claims. But wait a minute. Before we get to Jesus's defense, I think it's important to clarify something for our listeners who may not be as familiar with the gospels.

We keep mentioning the synoptic gospels, but John's gospel is unique, right? Absolutely. When we talk about the synoptic gospels, we're referring to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They present a similar or synoptic view of Jesus's life and ministry.

John's gospel, on the other hand, offers a more theological and reflective perspective. So it's important to understand that John is presenting a different lens through which to view Jesus and his message. But getting back to the story, how does Jesus respond to this accusation of blasphemy? Well, instead of backing down, he pulls a brilliant move.

He quotes their own scriptures right back at them. He cites Psalm 82, which is interesting because it refers to human leaders, judges specifically, as gods. So he's using their own text to make a point about authority and divine representation.

That's clever. But how does that connect to his claim of being one with the Father? He's employing a classic lesser-to-greater argument. It's like saying, if even imperfect human judges can be called gods because they wield God's authority, how much more can I, the son sent from the Father, claim a unique relationship with God? That's a pretty bold line of reasoning.

And it seems like he's not just defending himself; he's also turning the tables on his accusers. Exactly. He's pointing out their hypocrisy.

They're accusing him of blasphemy, but they're the ones failing to live up to the standards of justice and righteousness outlined in their own scriptures. Wow. So much packed into just a few verses.

This deep dive is already giving me a whole new perspective on this familiar story. But before we move on, what are some key takeaways that are really standing out to you so far? What should our listeners be chewing on? For me, it's the way John blends this intense historical context- the political and religious tensions of Hanukkah with these profound theological claims about Jesus's identity and mission. It's not just a nice story.

It's a challenge to think critically about leadership, about who we follow, and ultimately about what it means to belong. I agree. It makes me wonder: are we more focused on finding good shepherds or on being good sheep? That's a good question.

But I think that's a question for our next deep dive. You know, as I was reflecting on this whole shepherd analogy, one thing that really struck me is how it ties into this ongoing debate within Christianity, this whole idea of eternal security versus the perseverance of the saints. Oh, yeah.

That's a huge question. It's puzzled believers for centuries. Are we saved by grace alone, or do our actions play a role in maintaining our salvation? Right.

And it's interesting how John 10 seems to touch on both sides of that debate. Exactly. On one hand, Jesus says no one can snatch the sheep from the Father's hand.

That sounds like a pretty strong argument for God's sovereignty and the security of believers. But then there's this emphasis on the sheep choosing to follow Jesus's voice. Right.

They're not just passively being herded. They recognize the shepherd and actively follow him. And Dr. Turner even suggests that this might be John's way of acknowledging both sides of the debate.

It's not an either-or, but a both-and. So what does this mean for us today? How do we reconcile these seemingly opposing ideas? Maybe John is inviting us to hold both truths in tension. You know, we can find comfort in knowing that we belong to the good shepherd, that we're held securely in the Father's hand.

But that doesn't give us a license to be complacent. Right. It's not a free pass to just do whatever we want and assume everything will be fine.

We still have to make choices. Absolutely. Our faith is an active journey, not a passive state of being.

We have a responsibility to listen to the shepherd's voice, to stay close to him and to follow where he leads. It's like learning to recognize his voice amidst all the other noise and distractions in our lives. That makes me think of how bombarded we are with messages these days from the news and social media advertising.

It's like everyone's vying for our attention, and it can be hard to discern what's true, what's worth following. And that's precisely why this passage is so relevant today. You know, it's not just an ancient story.

It's a practical guide for navigating life in a world full of competing voices and conflicting claims. It's a call to listen deeply, to discern carefully, and to follow faithfully. I'm also struck by how this whole conversation takes place against a backdrop of conflict.

You know, Jesus is challenging the religious authorities, exposing their hypocrisy, and they're not happy about it. It's not just about individual salvation. It's about the kind of community we're called to be, the way we treat each other, the responsibility we have to care for those who are vulnerable or marginalized.

It's a call to be good shepherds to one another. That's a powerful thought. It's not enough to just call ourselves sheep and assume we're automatically part of the flock.

We have to live in a way that reflects the shepherd's heart, a heart of compassion and service. Exactly. And speaking of reflecting the shepherd's heart, one detail that always intrigues me is how Jesus calls himself both the shepherd and the door.

Okay. Now that's fascinating. What do you make of that? I hadn't thought about that connection before.

A shepherd guides and protects, but a door provides access and creates boundaries. So which is it, or is it both? I think it's both. And that's what makes it so profound.

Maybe Jesus is highlighting the multifaceted nature of his role in our lives. You know, he's not just a distant deity. He's the one who guides us, protects us, and also provides the way to a deeper, more fulfilling life.

So it's not just about following him. It's about entering through him, allowing him to be the doorway to something truly transformative. That's a beautiful way to put it.

It's about letting him reshape our hearts, our minds, our very being. It's about stepping into a new reality, a new way of seeing the world and our place in it. That makes me wonder: how do we reconcile those two images? If Jesus is the door, how does that relate to him being the shepherd? Are those two separate roles, or are they somehow interconnected? That's a great question.

And I think it gets to the heart of who Jesus is and what he came to do. He's not just a guide or a protector. He's the very source of life and truth, as he says elsewhere in John's gospel, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

So by entering through him, we're not just finding safety in a sheepfold; we're entering into a relationship with the source of life itself. Precisely. And that relationship transforms us from the inside out.

It gives us new purpose, new direction, new hope. It empowers us to live as a sheep, to follow his voice and to reflect his love in the world. But you know, it's important to remember that this entire discourse, this powerful message of hope and transformation, takes place against a backdrop of conflict and rejection.

Right. Dr. Turner points out how chapter 10 ends with Jesus escaping from the angry mob and retreating across the Jordan. It's a sobering reminder that following Jesus doesn't always lead to easy paths or comfortable outcomes.

It certainly doesn't. Even as Jesus offers himself as the good shepherd, as the door to life, he's met with hostility and violence. He's rejected by the very people he came to save.

It's a reminder that following Jesus might lead us into difficult places, into situations where we're called to stand up for what's right, even when it's costly. But even in those challenging moments, John 10 offers a message of hope, doesn't it? Absolutely. It reminds us that no matter what we face, we're held securely in the Father's hand.

We belong to the good shepherd, and nothing can separate us from his love. That's a powerful message to hold on to, especially in a world that often feels so chaotic and uncertain. It gives us the courage to face our fears, to stand up for what's right, to live lives that are marked by love, compassion, and hope.

I couldn't agree more. And I think the best way to honor this passage is to keep wrestling with those questions we've been discussing. What does it mean to enter through the door? How do we live as secure sheep while also actively following the shepherd's voice? These aren't easy questions, but they're worth pondering, worth discussing, and ultimately worth living out in our daily lives.

This deep dive has definitely left me feeling both challenged and encouraged. John 10 is so much more than just a feel-good story. It's a call to action, an invitation to a deeper, more fulfilling life, and a promise of security in the midst of a sometimes scary world.

I think you've captured it perfectly. It's a call to keep exploring, to keep seeking, to keep following the Good Shepherd, knowing that he's always with us, guiding us, protecting us, and leading us toward a life that is truly abundant. Thanks for joining us for this deep dive into the Good Shepherd.

Until next time, keep listening for that still, small voice. So if Jesus is both the shepherd and the door, what does that say about our relationship with him? What does it truly mean to enter through him? Well, I think it's a powerful image. Maybe it's pushing us to see that our relationship with Jesus isn't one-dimensional.

He's not just a figurehead or a historical figure. He guides us like a shepherd, but he also provides a way in, a point of access to a life that's richer and deeper than anything we could find on our own. And that brings me to another question that's been swirling in my head.

John 10 assures us that we're secure in the Father's hand, but how does that impact how we live? Can we be both confident in God's grace and still strive to follow Jesus' voice? It's a tension, isn't it? It's easy to think that once we're in, we can just sit back and coast. But true security, the kind John describes, isn't about passivity. It's about an active, vibrant relationship with the shepherd.

It's like knowing his voice so well that we can follow it, even when surrounded by a cacophony of other voices. So it's not just about believing the right things. It's about living in a way that reflects those beliefs.

Absolutely. It's about letting our faith shape our choices, our priorities, the way we interact with the world. It's about becoming more and more like the shepherd himself, compassionate, courageous, and committed to the well-being of others.

That's a challenge, but it's also incredibly inspiring. It gives us a reason to get out of bed each morning, to engage with the world, knowing that we're not just wandering aimlessly, but following the shepherd who knows the way. You know what I appreciate about John 10 is that it doesn't sugarcoat the difficulties of following Jesus.

It acknowledges the reality of opposition, even persecution. It reminds us that there will be those who try to scatter the sheep to lead them astray. It's like that saying: the path less traveled is often less traveled for a reason.

It's not always going to be easy or comfortable. Exactly. But even in the face of those challenges, John 10 offers this unwavering message of hope and security.

We are held in the Father's hand. We belong to the good shepherd, and nothing can separate us from his love. That's a powerful truth to hold onto, especially in a world that often feels so uncertain and even scary.

It gives us the courage to face our fears, to stand up for what's right, to live lives that are marked by love, compassion, and hope. I couldn't agree more. And I think the best way to honor this passage is to keep wrestling with those questions we've been discussing.

What does it mean to enter through the door? How do we live as secure sheep while also actively following the shepherd's voice? These aren't easy questions, but they're worth pondering, worth discussing, and ultimately worth living out in our daily lives. Well, this deep dive has definitely left me feeling both challenged and encouraged. John 10 is so much more than just a feel-good story.

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Thanks for joining us for this deep dive into the good shepherd. Until next time, keep listening for that still, small voice.