

Gospel of John (Study 21 of 24, Chap 10 Cont)

by G.W. North

This sermon explores the significance of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the importance of finding spiritual nourishment in our daily lives.

Duration: 50:48

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 10:9, John 10:11

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the message of Jesus and following Him wholeheartedly. He highlights how Jesus laid down His life for the sheep, referring to His sacrifice on the cross for our redemption. The speaker encourages the audience to trust in God and not rely on their own understanding or desires. He urges them to seek God's guidance and find pasture in the places where God leads them. The speaker emphasizes the need for discipline in following God's will and encourages the audience to embrace the grace of God and allow Him to lead their lives.

Transcript

Well, did you bring your answers this morning? Oh, I don't know that I'm touching that yet. I'm asking them whether they're bringing their answers this morning. Did you say what answers? Well, let me remind you what I asked you.

If you had... You stay right there. If you had the opportunity to choose one of the days of the Lord Jesus Christ, which would you choose? Did you give any thought to it? No, no volunteers. Resurrection.

You would like the Resurrection? Transfiguration. The what? Transfiguration. Figuration.

Anything else? I know you'd say, well, I'll choose all of them, but you're not allowed to. Because he said the days will come when you'll look to see one of the days of the Son of Man as his own Saviour. Which is it? I gave you some selection, like a feeling of a 5,000 or, you know.

No? You're all too timid. You're entitled to choose yourself. He gave them the opportunity.

But I'll tell you what I would choose. Would you like me to? All right. I'd like to choose the day when he gathered them into the upper room.

The story of it extends through five chapters, did you know, in John? Not any other day extends as far as that. To have heard him teaching, telling them, and of course washing their feet at the start. All the things that he revealed during those days.

But perhaps you might have chosen to be at the manger when he was born. That's entirely up to you. He gave them all the opportunity to choose.

Well, all right then. I'm very obedient, aren't I? At times. Here we go.

Let's come then, shall we, to where we left it. Was it Monday? Chapter 10 of John's Gospel. I believe we only got somewhat partway through the chapter.

Dot will check me up on that. I said to Derek, if I come back next year, and I know you'll all be gone. Well, not all of you, but most of you will be gone then.

I would finish John's Gospel. I've left so many Gospels, many lectures, things undone. I've done half of the Romans or half of something else.

I never get... I talk too much. I never get right through. Let's start then in the tenth chapter.

Which particular verse it was, whatever it was, if I overlap, that will be fine. At least I think so. Verse 11.

Do you know that that's what I do? I'm only me when I'm... whatever I'm doing. I read, re-read, re-read, re-read, re-read, re-read. Over and over and over again.

I commend it to you. It gives the Holy Ghost a chance to teach you. So then, in this tenth chapter, I'm starting with I AM THE DOOR, verse 9. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.

It's very, very wonderful. There's a different approach to the sheep and the shepherd and everything else in John's Gospel. He always approaches everything differently.

For instance, when we talked about the feeding of the 5,000, he approached it differently. He tells you that Christ was sitting on a mountain and he asked Philip what he should do. And so on and so on.

But it tells you he knew what he would do. Well, the other Gospels don't say anything about that. It's showing the wonderful person of Jesus.

Of course, he's wonderful if you see him in the other Gospels. But John was so captivated by the Lord. Do you remember, he was the one that laid his head on Jesus' breasts.

We're not told that any of the others did. They might have done, but we're not told if they did. And he gets into the person of the Lord.

He's not concerned with his work, he just speaks about a few miracles. He's concerned with him. I don't know whether we should talk about miracles when we get to heaven.

I think we should be taken up with him. If you find me there, you can tell me I'm right or wrong. But here's the thing.

To be taken up with him. And he says you'll go in and out and find pasture. You were taught by Luke, for instance.

Or the sheep that went astray, he told the parable of Luke 15. And it's gone out and it's left the flock. But this isn't what he's talking about.

He uses this thought of in and out amongst people in everyday life. Wherever you go, and mark this well, you should be able to find pasture. Because Jesus says you shall.

In and out. And you'll find pasture. In everyday living.

The phrase is taken up by Peter, for instance, in Acts 1. Almost the same phrase where he says, from those that went in and out among us. They chose the twelfth apostle after Judas's death. But never mind.

Let's just go on with the scripture. It says this. In and out and find pasture.

Now let me ask you this. Challenge your own heart on it. The places you go in and out of, or the people you mix in and out to, do you find pasture there? Check out.

You know that sheep virtually only live to eat grass. You know what I mean? They're always nibbling. They don't regurgitate like cows do, or sheep do.

Sheep don't. They just eat. That's it.

They're always after pasture. Cows can lie down. Even good old English beef can lie down.

Before it's beef, you can... They're bruminants. They sit down. They chew up the stuff that they've swallowed and bring it up again.

Sorry, only into their mouth. And re-chew it. It becomes milk, unfortunately.

It's a good way, you know, with... Oh, I shouldn't get onto these things. I'll leave it. Let's go in and out and find pasture.

Shall we? You like that, are you? Are you like that? You find pasture everywhere, do you? If you can't find pasture, into which the good shepherd leads you, don't go any more. Now, I've told you, I've warned you. Don't go any more.

If you can't find pasture, be careful. Don't be unequally joined with all kinds of other things, people, its and that, and something else. Keep clear of it.

You've got a never-dying soul to attend to. Remember that. God is speaking to us.

If he says he's the door, you're to enter into his flock that way. But he has to be the door to everywhere else. All right? If you marry, he's got to be the doorway into marriage, or else you'll finish up looking ten ways for pasture and can't find it.

Just be careful. Let him lead you. When you're as old as I am, you've had a hand and an ear and that in lots of other people's lives, simply because people come to share.

I told you at the beginning I'm more interested in your souls than whether you get a diploma or what it is at the end. It doesn't worry me. Not one little bit.

Here's the thing, beloved. Let's go right through it, shall we? You go in and out. Find pasture.

And he goes on, I think we mentioned this the other day. Let's start at verse 11. I am the good shepherd.

The word is beautiful in the Greek. I am the beautiful shepherd. The beautiful shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

So let me ask you this much. Do you think Jesus Christ is beautiful? Not just good. Do you think he's beautiful? Just think about it.

Maybe none of us in the room are very beautiful outwardly. But isn't it wonderful to know that there's a beauty that this world never sees. He gives his life for the sheep.

Amen. But he that isn't hire him, but by the Peps I ought to comment, because this is my danger, commenting on every verse. But let me stop.

When he talks about finding pasture, or you'll go in and out and find pasture, that's the pasture you've got to find. The beautiful shepherd. I lay it down for you.

This is the big thing. Giveth his life for the sheep. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Just go through the verse. Says nothing about his blood in that verse. Says nothing about his death.

Says nothing about the cross. Just keep it clear in your mind. He loved the whole world.

And they could have come and fed on him. Immediately we think of the cross, when we think of God so loved that he gave his only begotten son. Because it's the evangelical background of our thinking, which of course is wonderful.

I'm an evangelical. But the whole thing for you to see is, because of the teaching, even what you get, what these lovely workers do, that you're in. I love it here.

I'd come to you every week if I could. If you could stand it, that is. The whole thing, beloved, is that you read the blood into everything, if you're not careful.

For instance, did you know, that when the Lord Jesus came into the world, I'm in this kind of mood this morning, you'll have to put up with me. When the Lord Jesus came into the world, he sent his forerunner, that announced him. And have you realised this? I got into awful trouble once when I said it, but it's true, it's in the Bible, or not in the Bible in this instance.

He never spoke about the blood, did you know that? He never spoke about the cross, did you know that? Who said, behold the Lamb of God, but immediately you think of the cross and the blood, but he never said that. He said, behold the Lamb of God. And there won't be any blood in New Jerusalem, there's no talk of that in the last chapters of the Bible.

Did you realise that? Him, there's the Father and the Lamb, the Lord God Almighty and his Lamb, not the blood. Just keep it clear, learn to think in what the scripture actually says, or does not say, and you'll really

get what's being said. Praise God for the blood, we're washed in it and everything, and we're constantly in need of it, but just look up, I give my life for the sheep, or, he doesn't say it that way, because John is saying it, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Then he talks about the hireling, the fellow that's paid to look after the sheep. Can I be anecdotal, can I tell you stories? I'm in that mood, I get like this in conferences sometimes, I have a day when all I want to do is ruminant. I once, when I went into my first pastoral charge, a long time ago now, fifty years almost, might be fifty years and a few months, I was asked to go and preach in this church, until then I'd been in our own business, which God had enabled me to found, and they asked me to preach, and I went and preached, and before I left, they were looking for a pastor, I knew they hadn't got a pastor, so they invited me to become their pastor.

I'd never had any training at all, never had a Christian workers' part, never had nothing like that. I went from business into the ministry, all right? So, they asked me if they could talk to me after the service, when I'd done the morning and evening service, and then they very delicately approached the matter of money, because you've got to have money to have a wonderful place like this, and so on, and I said to them, if anybody talked about paying for me, paying me for preaching the gospel, I should think it was the devil talking to me, dead silence. They wanted to talk about how much I wanted to be their pastor, so now you know my approach to it all.

And that's the thing, the higher thing, oh, and people have got to live, oh, yeah, I know, but you don't live by money, not if you're really in God, you live by God. People call it faith, it's a lot of nonsense, you live by God. I just tell you that, because some of you may get invited to do something in the future.

Learn to think right, and you'll get your life right. It's so important to understand. Let's go on, and he says, all about the higher thing, you can read that for yourself, I trust you are reading through, he says, I am the beautiful shepherd, I know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

I do wish, because you often hear me saying this, so you get tired of it, I wish they'd never chapterised or versified the scripture. He says, I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me. You see, the verse break has ruined the continuity of thought.

Even so, know I the Father, and I lay down my life. It's the Father, if you like, Jesus talking, the Father and me, or I and the Father, whichever you want to say, doesn't matter about the grammar at the moment, the Father and me, and you, we're all in this same knowing of each other. That's what it's supposed to be.

This is among the most blessed things in scripture. Isn't that wonderful? Do you believe, and will you believe if you haven't done so far, because you may not have heard it said before, that you are incorporated into the Godhead. You've got to be in Jesus Christ.

This is what he's talking about. That's an incorporation into Him. Do you believe that? That doesn't make you the big G-O-D, that's devilish.

It's the fine line between the sweet, beautiful knowing of what was God's intention in the beginning, and the way it's been distorted by the devil. Keep it right. You know, life for you and me only consists of God and being in God.

Oh, yes, you've got to find a job and you've got to do all things on Earth. But that's what it consists of. We were started that way, when God made Adam and Eve.

That's the way He started. Eve was in Adam. Adam came forth from God's own skill.

He didn't come forth from God in the sense, this is why women are so much superior to men. And I mean that, don't think I'm flattering. All the men won't like to hear me say this.

We're only made out of rough dust. They were made from the bone and everything of a man. That's why they're so much more refined.

Beautiful. And I'm not merely talking about faces. Hmm.

A refinement from Adam. And if women would keep that place, there wouldn't be such things go on, go on. Here then, I'm not talking about you obviously, but I'm talking about generally.

You're to understand what it's about. Now, we come forth from Christ, if we're in the church. We're His bride.

And there's nothing about this in John. But unless you get the whole scriptural teaching and thinking about it, you'll never get isolated verses right. Or chapters.

Here to see the whole thing. A known of mine, as the father knoweth me, even so I know a father, and I lay down my life for his sake. Now if you are a father, or connected with farming, you will know that that's what farmers do.

They sow two crops at once. Really, if they're proper real farmers. I mean I don't know what they do in other countries, excuse me, but I know this because I had to do farm work for a certain period of time.

And they go to sow a field with what you want put in it. Corn, okay. And they also sow grass seed, which will, when the corn is cut, will grow up and the sheep can go straight on to it and feed in the next season.

It's there, they sowed it. You're following what I'm saying? That's right. And they lay a field, that's the actual word they use.

And there has been, I remember the title of a book, I'm really ruminant this morning, aren't I? But still, never mind. I remember the title, called Silver Lay, spelled L-E-Y. They lay the field.

So there it is. I lay down my life for the sheep. If I may put it this way, he was laid out for the sheep.

You understand that? This is not, I'm going to die for them, but that's involved in it. Like, if you like, the corn crops, and it dies, and then the grass comes up for the next year's feeding. Or maybe the same year if it grows quickly.

Here then is the thing to get. That you and I are to feed on Jesus Christ, if I may put it plainly in the banal state, as our grass, if we're sheep. That's what he's talking about.

Do understand that even in the beginning of the teaching of redemption in the Scripture, and you know where that is first taught in Scripture? Go to the bottom of the class if you don't know. It's in Ephesians, sorry, Exodus, chapter 12. That's where redemption is first taught.

And I've said this over and over again, I'm going to keep saying it so I go home. But, I mean to glory when I say go home. Welcome, welcome, find a nice seat, no cushions for anyone, except me.

I've got one. Here then is the great and wonderful truth, beloved. Those people in Egypt, you see they were sheltering under the blood, and so on.

But you must also know they had to be eating too. They had to eat the flesh of the lamb, whose blood was sprinkled on their houses, and they wouldn't have been redeemed. And God would have left them in Egypt, with all the shouting of the blood, and the sight of the blood.

They would have been left, they had to eat the lamb. And do you know that Jesus' blood was only shed for you so that you would come and eat him? Live by him. If you didn't know that, somebody's let you down.

It's plainly written there, you can all read it for yourself. Exodus chapter 12. We're suffering from a lack of reading and understanding of the scriptures.

That's what we're suffering from. It's all there. If we would only read, and keep reading, till at last, a little joke here, God might get us all, let them in, keep one, he'll reveal his secrets to you.

If you do that, but you're so busy, aren't you? That's the trouble. Don't expect to know anything, if you're going to be as busy as always. You might as well give up.

Here, then, is the thing to get into your hearts. I lay down my life for the sheep. Because, you see, they were all so busy at that time.

And he passes on into this group in the 14th chapter, but we won't get there this morning, obviously. He passes on into that. As you read on in the scripture, this laying down of the life, you say, well, of course, he was going to the cross to lay down his life.

That was the initial thing. But he, of our redemption, of course. But he'd been trying to make them understand without getting impatient.

The Lord never got impatient with people. He said to them once, he says, how is it you don't understand? He said that. Do you think if he was standing in the midst now, do you think he might say that to us? How is it that you don't understand? And he meant you to ask yourself why.

That's why he asked the question. Why is it I don't understand it? Here is the big thing. I answered that question myself.

Nobody ever asked me, but I made sure that I more and more grew in understanding. That's the thing. That's nothing to do with gifts, as a spirit.

It all starts with gift anyway, if God gives us a new life and a new heart, and you can't buy anything from God. But what we mean, call them the charismatic gifts, just to give them a name. It doesn't come by that.

It comes by reading, rereading, and of course praying, meditating. It'll come. I promise you that.

If you give God that wonderful commodity called time, you'll know. Amen. Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock, I pointed that out the other day, and one shepherd.

The word is fold, if you're usually authorised, which I am, and intend to do until the Lord takes me. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. He took the same life as he laid down.

Praise God. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority, is the word here, to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again.

Now listen. Take this in. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Now God will only ever authorise you, or give you authority in life, if you receive the commandment first. You want authority, you take commandment first. I received it as a commandment.

And only those who obey God the Father's commandment, have any authority. They may talk about it. That's a commandment.

A tremendous thing. To have authority that isn't under commandment, you just take it in life. Now I know I've got one dear brother here, who has authority in a certain sphere.

He won't say which it was, and he told them they had to do this, and they did. But he was under a command himself. See this is the whole thing.

Authority without being under command, is a loose cannon, if I may use the term. It's a big thing for us to get. He was authorised to lay down his life, for the sheep.

It's a big thing. And I want the Lord, because you will meditate in it all, to do that for you all. Get under God's command.

Then you will have authority. For it all comes from God. It's a big, big thing.

And the rebellious heart of man, or woman, doesn't accept it easily. You don't like to be told what you've got to do. The whole thing, if I may mention in the military service, is to make everybody obedient.

They've got to be obedient, because that in the heat of the battle will probably save them and their comrades, if they'll all be obedient. Do exactly as they're told. And that's the thing with God.

Oh, God's not a military commander, excuse me, He is a military commander. Jesus said this in Luke. Oh, I'm virtually preaching this one, never mind.

He said, what man of you, if you've got, say, a hundred soldiers, would go and take on a bloke that's got ten thousand? You wouldn't, would you? He doesn't use my language, but that's what he says. He says, now I know that there's going to be a lot less Christians on the earth fighting for me than there's going to be the devil's servants. And you've got to come under discipline.

If you're going to fight, you don't have to fight your own battles first, though most people are fighting their own battles. You've got to fight God's battle first and sign on for it, if you want. You will do what He says.

Oh, well, everybody's fighting their own battles. Well, don't. I don't.

I leave that to the Lord. This is the big thing, and if you start to fight your own battles, that's how you'll go on for the rest of your life. Lose yourself in God's army and learn to obey.

You'll find a lot of your other problems will disappear because the fellow up top will tell you what to do. You know what I mean? I've put it in common language. But this is why so many of you are fighting on the home front, sort of thing.

They're making politicians of us all. You and I, beloved, are to understand what it's about. Lose yourself in God or find yourself in Him.

All right. He says, I've got other sheep. I've got other sheep.

The Jews thought they were the people. They thought they were the only concern of God. Did you know that? That's what they thought.

They were God's only concern. It's a big thing, isn't it, to understand this. Because you do know, don't you, in vain will you look for evangelism in the Old Testament because they weren't commanded to evangelize the nations.

So that's why you don't hear over oatmeal meetings and people like that. It's in the New Covenant. Now, where God would discipline His church to live for others, go for others.

That's what it's about. It's a New Covenant altogether. Don't look for it in Moses' writings.

Don't look for it in Isaiah's writings. Don't look for it. It's not there.

They were the people. He's no sooner risen from the dead than they said, go into all the world. That's what he said.

Boy, that was new. They thought everybody had to go up to Jerusalem. I'd have told them, too, they weren't being disobedient.

But we're on an entirely new level altogether. Don't, like I hear so many times, preaching from the Old Testament, the Old Testament, the Old Testament, get infused with the New and get infused with the glorious life and zeal of Jesus and the purpose of God. That's what you ought to engage yourself with.

Amen. Now, you see, I told you the other day, I know we're not in John 11 yet, but I want you to turn to John 11. These things all cohere in the New Testament.

When you go to New, I mentioned it the other day, how he let Lazarus die, when he could have saved him from dying if he'd wanted to. Here then, in chapter 11, the Lord Jesus says this. When he was going, good old Thomas, we always speak about Thomas as being a bit of a wretch, you know, I'm not going to believe him, but did you realise it was Thomas who said, when he said he's going to Bethlehem, let's go and die with him.

How about that? Now, you give him a lot of commendation as well as criticism, if you're a preacher, because everybody criticises him. Let's go and die with him, he said. That was one.

But that's not what I want you to look at. This is what I want you to look at. Jesus answered, in verse 9, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, not even stumble, leave alone fall, because he seeth the light of this world.

If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. You see, Jesus was walking in another day, all the time as he was on earth. He never walked by the light of this world, this age, or anything.

All the disciples were all stumbling around, all the time. They were always blubbing, making mistakes, falling over. Everybody reads them and says, Well, there you are, we're all human, aren't we? And that gives you an out.

You couldn't find it, you see there. We're all human, aren't we? But they were born again. Nobody was born again before Pentecost.

The whole tremendous truth, beloved, he was walking in another day. Everything was light for him. And you are invited to walk there.

After that he said, if you like, descended from the heavens to the earth again, and he said, Oh, well, our friend Lazarus is dead. He's dead, all right. You see, nobody dies in the glorious day.

In the days when God came and walked with Adam, in the garden, gloriously light, nobody died. They died when they got out of the garden, where God used to walk. You understand that? It was a marvellous thing.

Oh, this Bible is a wonderful book, you know. Of course, you've got to spend time. You've got to get up about four in the morning, or something like that, if you can.

Not expecting too much of you. No student gets out of bed before they're forced to. But here is the thing.

Here's the thing, you see. It's all right. Don't come.

If you really want it, God will give it to you. Don't worry. You can't be better than God in your thoughts, and in your ways, and in your wishes.

You can't be. He'll give it to you if you let him. It might require a bit of discipline, but that's what we're talking about.

Here God wants us into these glorious things, beloved. He'll bring us in. You see, those people, they didn't understand at all.

They were good men. We've left all and followed thee, they could say. They were dead.

Absolutely dead. Even Jesus, I said, how's it you don't understand? The Lord says. Utterly dead.

Understanding their cause. They understood physics, or did they? I don't know. They understood parsing and all this business because I'm talking about language now.

They understood that. But you can understand all that and not understand a thing in the day and the night. The light that he's talking and walking.

In him was life, and the life was the light. And he went in and out among them. He found pasture everywhere.

And where did he find pasture? In the places where his father led him. For he never did anything without his father. Oh, if we could only get our lives into this.

Don't strain at it. Step into it in the grace of God. And then discipline your lives.

And see what God has for you. And see where he'll lead you. He says, I've received this commandment from my father.

And that's what he did. He walked in the commandment of the father. Now, if you be a true child of God, God will make that commandment for you understandable to you.

He doesn't expect you or me to be the equal of his son. We expect us to be his children, love. So we go through.

And it says this. There was a division again among the Jews for these sayings. Many of them said, he has a devil and is mad.

Why hear ye him? Others said, these are not the words of a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? So now you're back in chapter 9. See the continuity of truth in chapter 9. He'd sat on the ground and made clay. And he'd anointed the blind man's eyes and told him to wash in this pool that he thought was specially set for him.

You know, that's what the word Siloam means, the name of the pool. He went there and he washed his eyes and he came seeing. All right.

And then you remember how he said, whether he be this or that, I don't know. One thing I know, once I was blind, now I can see. Now he didn't immediately think, oh, marvellous, look what's happened to me.

He said, the one thing, now you start with one thing. Don't start talking as though you're sort of a demigod just because something's happened to you that's real. Yeah.

Hallelujah. If you know you're born of God, if I may use this term advisedly, you've come out of the bowels of God. For that's where you come from physically, out of the bowels of your mother.

There. You see, understand what it's about and then go on. I mustn't give you too many stories.

I was meditating whether to or not. But learn this. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? That would have made a big impact on them.

Because a man said, well, I have one thing I know. Don't you start talking theology to me or anything. You see.

You get onto that ground. Move from there. Be humble enough to.

Because in this time you're told just to get up. You see. Let the Lord teach you the way of humility.

Fancy or don't fancy because it's reality. God coming down and being born into a manger. Just be like that.

That's how it starts. Amen. And would you believe it is five to ten.

I'd have a cup of tea please dear.

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