

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, May 13, 2018

**“I Am the Gate”
A Study of John 10:1-10**

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Have you or a friend ever been robbed? Describe the experience.

Today is the last study in our series through the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. In today’s study, we’ll examine Jesus’ claim to be the “gate” or the “door” to the sheep. Jesus says he is the only entry through which legitimate shepherds come to his flock.

Read John 10:1-10.

This passage is about the need for shepherds, the task of shepherds, and the mandate for shepherds.

The Need for Shepherds

Describe a religious leader who has disillusioned others by his bad behavior.

To be fair, not every religious leader who disappoints us is the “thief” Jesus warns about in John 10. But the result is often the same: We become reluctant to trust **any** religious leader. Was that the intention of Jesus’ warning? What evidence can you find in John 10:1-10 that Jesus warned against **bad** leaders because he wants us to follow **good** leaders?

Why does Jesus expect his people to be gathered into a flock led by a shepherd/pastor? In other words, what advantages are there, and what potential dangers are in store for those who don’t? (Hint: Read Ephesians 4:11-13 and Hebrews 10:24-25 for ideas.)

Next week is Graduate Recognition Sunday. What advice would you give someone who is moving away to college about finding a church in the college town they move to? (What qualities should they look for? Why is it important for them to get involved?)

The Task of Shepherds

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Who is the Chief Shepherd?

Read Acts 20:17, 28. Who did Paul say had made them overseers?

Jesus is the shepherd of the church, and he does his work of shepherding *through* leaders he calls. According to John 10, there are at least four things an earthly shepherd does in imitating the Chief Shepherd.

First: He speaks Christ's words. Read John 10:3-5. It is *Christ's* voice that the sheep learn to trust. So how can an earthly shepherd speak with the trustworthy voice of Christ? In what ways does an earthly shepherd speak in this way? (Example: preaching. Now name 2-3 more.) Since Christians have a responsibility to discern that it is the voice of Christ they're hearing in their pastor, how do they do so?

Second: He leads the flock in the direction Christ wants them to go. In John 10:4, what is he doing with the flock, where is he taking them? In this verse, the shepherd "goes out ahead of them." Why is it important for a leader to lead by example and not just by instruction?

Third: He brings in "other sheep." Read John 10:16. In what ways does your pastoral team at Hillcrest do this personally and in what ways do they work to enlist you in this work?

Fourth: He works sacrificially. Read John 10:11, 15, 17, 18. What was Jesus predicting when he said he would "lay down his life" for the sheep? In Acts 20:28, what has God done that should motivate pastors to do a good job? (Explain "bought" and "with his own blood.")

The Mandate for Shepherds

Once again, Read John 10:1-2, 7, and 9. Recall from the sermon the way shepherds in Jesus' time protected their flock at night.

By calling himself the gate for the sheep, Jesus was saying something about **a shepherd's work** and **a shepherd's salvation**.

A shepherd's work. A legitimate leader will come to the sheep, call to the sheep, and lead out the sheep through one way: the gate. Explain the analogy: Who is the gate? In what ways do leaders relate to the sheep only through that gate? What does it mean for an illegitimate leader to "climb in by some other way"?

A shepherd's salvation. In God's eyes, a shepherd is also a sheep! Can this truth make you more patient and prayerful with the imperfections of earthly shepherds? How so? What can members of the flock do to make shepherds feel that they are *part* of the flock and not just remote *leaders* of the flock?

As you make your list for the closing prayer, pray for the pastoral team: Tom Goodman, Gene Chappell, Michael Slaughter, Elizabeth Linam, and our interim youth minister John Cameron. Also, pray for our search for a new Children's Minister and a new Youth Minister.



Close with praise reports and prayer requests.