

John

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[0 : 00] Let us turn to the chapter that we read, the 10th chapter in the Gospel according to John, in the 14th verse.

The Gospel according to John, chapter 10, in the 14th verse. I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine.

I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. As we journeyed here after a trying day, we wondered how we would be able to speak this evening.

But as we entered our friend's house, these words dropped in, and am known of mine. And they seem to bring a little hope that they may have dropped in by the Lord, by the effect that they had upon our spirit.

This is a most solemn chapter and yet, most blessed to those who have an understanding and sight to see their interest in the things which are recorded.

[1 : 44] But how the Lord, he speaks very solemnly and how the Lord always speaks very solemnly with regard to his sheep and those who are destitute of grace.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entreth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way the same as a thief and a robber.

He's pointing out very plainly and very clearly that there are other ways. Ways according to the understanding of man.

Ways according to man's fallen nature of entering into the kingdom of God. And how many we see following their own sinful inclinations.

Those things which may bring a certain amount of happiness, a certain amount of satisfaction to themselves in this life but will never save their souls.

[2 : 57] We see many that have a religion but is as empty as the very heart which they possess. They know nothing of the almighty power of God.

Never have they been brought by his grace in need of salvation. What a mercy if you and I have.

If we know what it is to be led by that good shepherd. You see there are bad shepherds and how those words on one occasion were very heavy upon our spirit.

When the hireling fleeth and leaveth the sheep. when one is brought into a situation and they know not what to do and when such a solemn word comes Lord am I a hireling?

Am I to leave the sheep? Lord am I one that when the wolf comes when trials come when temptations come would flee?

[4 : 11] Yes if left to myself. what is the ground? What is the stability of your hope?

I am the good shepherd. I suppose that every religion where they have some sort of God they look upon him as being a good God and they worship him but he says I am.

I believe it was here recently that we said when God sent Moses before Pharaoh and Moses being full of fear he said who shall I say that I am?

He said say I am hath sent thee. I am guide so that whatever state Moses was brought in I am thy help I am thy guide I am thy counsellor I am thy wisdom Moses had a wonderful God he was the good shepherd and how he led Moses and how Moses under the influence of that good shepherd was able to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness and how all the Lord's servants must be led by that same good shepherd and also be led into the things and the truths which this good shepherd will feed his flock upon now I am the good shepherd and know my sheep some few months ago

Mr. Ramsbottom was addressing the Sabbath school of Brixton and he mentioned about a farmer who had to sell everything that he had apart from two sheep and the time came when he had to part with those two sheep just to give him sufficient money to carry on but the way was made where he had sufficient money to buy back these sheep and he went to the sheep market where there were hundreds of sheep and he said to the man there he said I want to buy back my two sheep well he said you can have them if you can find them and this shepherd he went a little way away from the sheep and he blew his shepherd's whistle and out of that great multitude of sheep there were two seen to go and to follow that shepherd

[7 : 10] I thought how touching how real not only with regard to this life but how real of the most precious with regard to the Lord's dear people they will not follow a stranger now how then were we brought into our profession because every one of us here tonight by our very presence profess to know something at least with regard to this shepherd now he says I am the good shepherd and know my sheep he knew them in eternity they were given to him by his father he tells us so in this very chapter given to him but they were given to him at a price and as we read this chapter there was that which we read which has often troubled us because he said my father is greater than I and yet so often we read of the trinity being equal being one person and it seemed to come to us well of course his father was greater than him because here we see the lord Jesus in his humanity who took upon him the form of our nature without sin and therefore he could rightly say my father is greater than I as he came into this sinful world because he was a good shepherd shepherd ah yes and so many will agree with me that he is a good shepherd and that he was a good shepherd to come into this sinful world to lay down his life and they will go even farther and say yes for those that his father gave him and they will lay claim to that as being one of that number

I wonder how many there are today who make a profession of religion who perhaps have known the reality of almighty God in their life and yet still are troubled and exercised as to their standing before God I know my sheep he knew them in eternity and he knew the type of sheep they were he knew how rebellious they would be and when we come to consider what sheep really are like we know so little of them but perhaps some of you know more than I do with regard to sheep but when one is able to go before the sheep so different to what we so often see where the shepherd is behind and with his dog driving them but to go before and then for him to lead the sheep it must be a good shepherd to be able to do this because even when the sheep are driven by the shepherd and the dog we see them stopping to take a nibble of the grass at the side of the road or try to break through a hedge but now you see this shepherd he leads his sheep and he leads them into the green pastures and so many will say yes he is a good shepherd but before he leads into the green pastures he brings them out of the wilderness he brings them by that almighty power he knows them he knows their weakness he knows their sin and he makes them aware of it we should never never appreciate a saviour heaven will be no place for you and I until we know the cost and the value of it it is a place of refuge eternal refuge it is a place of safety and it is a place for a particular people the sheep of the

Lord Jesus Christ that good shepherd now as one then is brought to know this shepherd you see the shepherd I was going to say he was in B and it would be right to say so before the sheep and he makes himself known to the sheep the sheep don't make themselves known to the shepherd he has control over them and therefore he brings to bear his will and his will is this that they might know him I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine known of mine only the Lord's people know him many profess to many speak about him as being their God many we've heard call upon him as their father their heavenly father but sometimes when we hear such bold statements that him comes to our heart where'er to call the saviour mine with ardent wish my heart aspires do you find it so if only you could call this shepherd this good shepherd your shepherd how different things would be and you say here the scripture says the Lord

Jesus Christ said so himself and known of mine that they know me and my sad condition is this I dare say that this Lord is my Lord I don't feel that it would be right for me to say tonight that I feel that assurance as I would desire I long for it and I would desire to be assured within my own heart but not assured as someone how I need that good shepherd to make known to me that good way of salvation and my interest in it now he's a good shepherd because he leads his people he leads them first of all into that knowledge of their need yes he will lead them into the green pastures but how they are brought first of all to need those green pastures how they have to be brought hungry thirsty seeking and all the while a sheep is satisfied it will never follow this good shepherd how they go on in life care is unconcerned until that appointed time and when this good shepherd who knows his sheep he knows exactly where they are out of those thousands there may be one here one there who knows there may be at this present time one or even two of his hidden sheep in this very village how he all he has to do is to call them and they follow him you know sometimes we do not realise the power of almighty god of what he can do and how he can bring one out of nature's darkness but if we are truly favoured to know something of this good shepherd we should perhaps be able to look back upon our own pathway a little and realise what we are and what we were and what we still are and yet to have known something by blessed experience of what this good shepherd really is was it not he who first told our hearts to pray that brought us and led us to the throne of grace to pray for mercy that's where he will lead you first of all to be led as seekers seeking mercy and forgiveness forgiveness you may not know how it will be obtained but how you'll have to seek for it and you'll never be satisfied until you find it a favoured soul that is brought there to seek for mercy and to seek forgiveness and I'll tell you this that once the

Lord leads you there you'll have to go back to that same place time and time again pleading seeking again more mercy and how you will find the truth that this God is bounteous in mercy and in truth and so often when we hear that he's bounteous in truth we may think well of course that will be by revealing the truth of his word to us well of course that is so but he will reveal the truth of our fallen nature he will reveal to us what we are and what we're capable of doing and sometimes he leaves his people to their own devices he allows Satan to tempt them how you see even Job who was a righteous man look how

[18:28] God permitted him to be tempted as thou considered my servant Job there's no sin in temptation none whatever but where the sin is is when one is led by Satan into temptation then left to fall into sin and have you known what it is is there one here tonight who has been led into temptation and you've fallen under the temptress power how God has proved to you your weakness the depravity of your nature and now you're smarting under it and that very temptation that led you into that temptation who knew your weakness because he does and how he knows how to tempt with those very things that you're likely to take notice of that others wouldn't he knows your weakness and how he will tempt you and then having tempted you and you having fallen how he comes as the abuser and what is his purpose why to try and separate you to try and stop your mouth to try and keep you away from this good shepherd but how you have to prove again how this

Lord leads you back to the throne of grace and I don't think there's anything more blessed than to fill that spirit of true repentance not that I would desire any of you here to fall under the tempter's power but I must confess I know what it is and I do know what it is to be drawn back by this good shepherd and how one's heart at times has been broken at the goodness of this shepherd when one has fallen into sin may our hearts never be lifted up against one who has been left to fall but may we pray for such a one that there might be a true spirit of repentance and a turning again unto this good shepherd

I believe many of the Lord's dear people have had to suffer at the hands of others who know nothing of the pathway that they have been called to walk but this good shepherd he leads his people in various ways his servants he leads into those places where they will have to go to lead others under the influence of his grace and therefore you won't find all the Lord's servants alike but you will find this good shepherd always the same sometimes we may go and hear a man as we have done and we receive food under the ministry of the word and we've gone again to hear the same man and how he has set forth the same blessed truths but those experiences which we had in time past how we failed to obtain them you see the Lord is a sovereign in the way in which he leads his servants into our experiences and the experiences of his people now has this good shepherd then led you into this good way because he will lead you to seek salvation he won't rest assured with self satisfaction that you're better than anyone else or because you're trusting in something else because there are so many ways in which one can enter into erroneous teaching did he begin the work within your heart if not he'd come some other way in now if he began it he will continue it he will never leave it and he will perform it right down to the very end of time

I am the good shepherd and know my sheep he knows them he knows their weaknesses he knows all their thoughts which if others knew as much about these sheep as this God knew and knows they'd have nothing to do with them and they would never be able to sit around the Lord's table and commune one with each other and he's a good shepherd in this that he does not reveal the hearts of each other so that he alone knows the depravity of our nature and those things that take place inwardly he's good in so many different ways things that do but surely his greatest work is the way in which he leads his people into the truth there are those they join one particular church of a certain denomination they stay there a few years and then they move on to some other denomination and they enter into that now I'm not going to say the

Lord doesn't lead his people that way it is possible to show them the emptiness of the form without reality but where the Lord teaches his teaching is always the same he will lead you to show you the weakness of our fallen nature but he will also lead you to show his almighty power to save and it may be a long time before you are brought to see his mighty power to save and his goodness not as a good shepherd over the whole of the flock as indeed he will but to you as an individual sometimes we are more concerned with the flock than we are as individuals we often hear well of course the denomination is so small and the little churches are becoming so small well of course if we are rightly led these things are going to be a concern to us but don't let us lose sight of the fact that if we are true worshippers of God we have a good shepherd and not only a good shepherd but he knows his sheep they are known of him you say well I wish I could say that that I knew him alright well let's go back to the very beginning where we started he leads his people to pray for mercy have you prayed for mercy well then you must know him if that prayer has ascended from your very heart you must know him because there is no one else you can seek mercy from apart from him and is it a constant concern within your heart that as you go before him

[27:13] I am speaking of those secret things now not what you are able to tell others and what you are able to do in front of others but those things that go on secretly between you and perhaps you and you alone only know and as yet you are not able to see between you and your God but how you have to go to him and pray to him in secret and tell him of your weakness and of your sin and your need of mercy well that's good isn't it to have someone that you can go to you know you could go to anyone and tell them your sin and some of the sins you try to cover up wouldn't you but when you go to this God this good shepherd you can tell him everything he hates your sin

I say he hates it but he loves the sinner and he's a good shepherd because there is forgiveness with him if we are able under his spirit to confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and if God has put it within your heart whoever you may be to go to him and pour out your heart's desire in secret before him pleading for forgiveness where your sins are a burden to you well then he has begun that good work within your heart and he will perform it a good shepherd black as I am he's been a good friend to me there's one thing I cannot do and never will do this side of the grave being able to speak of his goodness as I should but I do love to speak a little of his goodness to those who are in need of a good friend and when one is brought to know him you won't need him to say he's a good shepherd you'll know it and know my sheep and known of mine you'll know where to go to when you come to the word of God

I've had people come to me and they'll bring perhaps some obscure part of the scripture and ask my opinion upon it you know there's much of the scripture that I don't understand I don't profess to know there are one or two portions where the Lord has enabled me and I believe led me to a portion and as I try to set it forth so the Lord has opened it up to my understanding and I believe owned and blessed it and we would give him the glory for him but those things that the Lord has revealed to us we must leave you see we should gain nothing by trying to delve into those things that he's hidden from us but it is the essentials that are so important not whether we understand this scripture or understand that scripture because as light is given you'll find that there is a wonderful harmony there is a wonderful blessedness in the old testament and the new but have we been led by this shepherd into our need have we been led to those good places where he leads his sheep those good places are the throne of grace which he will value he won't value it as he ought and when I say the throne of grace I don't mean prayer meetings you'll want to go to the prayer meetings you'll desire to go and hear others play but I'm speaking of those that throne of grace which is within your heart which he will set up within your heart and where you will have to go to him and tell him all your needs all your sorrows and how he will lead you now he's good in this respect because wherever he leads you'll be able to look back and say well that was a good place that was a good spot where the

Lord for a while enabled us to rest perhaps you've been traveling on he's been leading you through a busy day and you came into the Lord's house and there the Lord met with you he knows you he knows you've had a busy day he knows you're weary Jesus himself being weary sat thus by the well for a purpose and it was for his own honor and glory and I found sometimes that it is those occasions when we come into the house of God when we're cluttered up with the things of time and when we're weary it is those times that we see the goodness of the Lord not those times when perhaps we've had plenty of time to prepare ourselves for worship but whilst we should as enabled you know there was a day of preparation and I often feel that when

I hear those who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus where they've been on the Saturday and then they come to the house on the Sabbath and they find no profit of their souls you know there is a preparation the day of preparation mentioned in scripture and it is right as far as we are enabled to prepare ourselves for worship but we're not always able to do it and sometimes the Lord who knows us and knows our need on those very occasions he's proved to be such a good shepherd how we proved it sometimes as we've had to go and minister I say had to because it wasn't within our heart to go sad isn't it when one who professes to be a servant of the

[34 : 25] Lord feels it not within his heart to go and testify this good shepherd but that has been the case and when we've been taken up with the things of time and rushed off and found ourselves more or less before the Lord's people but how the Lord has proved himself to be a good shepherd sometimes we're full of unbelief we fear that he will fail but he never will he'll never fail his people now I know that mine you know the mercy seat you know your need of mercy and you know at times he's the only one that can do anything he's the only one that you can trust he's the only one who you can look to to whom else can we go thou hast the words of eternal life you know man today is doing everything he can to attract and to build up the churches he never will he may build them up with numbers but not with godly souls man is trying to do the work of god himself which he will never do it is the work of this good shepherd to lead and he will bring his people and who knows surely it is in those places we remember some years ago going to a little place in the early days of our ministry ministry and we went into this little room and I think there was three in this little room and myself and the deacon and we were troubled all the way and all we could say was lord remember me lord remember me and as we were in the vestry and the chapel was too large for the congregation

I said they went to this little anteroom and the deacon gave out the hymn and as we walked into that little room they were singing and now they are in thy kingdom are dear lord remember me and how fitting you see the lord has promised to be where two or three are gathered together the lord knows his sheep the lord knows their need and the lord is a faithful he's a good shepherd and where he has made that promise rest assured of this he will perform it now it doesn't mean to say because two or three gather to worship a form of worship that is there but it's those who gather in his name those who are troubled those who seek to be led by him not to go their own way not to do as they want to do but to be led by him in whichever way he will lead them now he will show you that he is a good shepherd and you will know that he's your you'll know him by this that where he leads you he'll bring you into that place and some may not have been brought here yet where you will say yes lord however harsh the way may be still lead on and I'll willingly go through anything if only

I wonder how many have prayed like this I am if only lord you will prove to me that you are my redeemer that you are my god is there a sincerity is there an earnestness in your prayer where you have been brought not always you won't always be there but have you ever been there has this good shepherd led you to a place where your salvation has meant more to you than anything else that you could obtain upon the face of this earth well then he's a good shepherd to bring you there isn't he because what he has done he has revealed to you his goodness he's revealed to you your sinfulness your undeservedness but he has brought you by his goodness to know him you do know him otherwise you would never is there any man any woman any child that would make such a foul be prepared to suffer anything to know someone that they've never known or desire to know or want to know of course not the desire is within your heart to know him that I might know him and the fellowship of his sufferings and you will know him by the pathway of suffering true religion is not an easy going religion you'll find it is a pathway of suffering if you are a follower of the

Lord Jesus there'll be many things it won't be necessary for me to tell you but you will know within your own heart what you have to suffer Moses chose rather to suffer didn't he with the people of God and to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season is this really your choice why why because you know him you know there's something there in him and that known of mine you know he's faithful you know his word is true you know he is able to do those things that you ask him as you plead with him although there's doubt and unbelief within your heart as you ask him as to whether he ever will but that doesn't alter the fact that you know him and in spite of your unbelieving heart you do believe that he can do it he will do it he will do it you'll know he's good by overcoming all your unbelief we knew a man and I believe he's still alive and how he kept on what is unbelief what is unbelief

I said it's something which is only really known by the Lord's dear people do you know what unbelief is how Satan will come and how even at the throne of gracious you're pleading for those three things there's that within your heart Satan will tell you there's no good you pleading there's no good you asking for mercy you're too great a sinner and then how the Lord will lead you away from all the arms of flesh you trust in this and you trust in that how he will lead you away even from his servants we've already mentioned this how we perhaps sometimes the foolishness of our heart we go to hear one of his servants who has been made useful to us and we go to hear his servant we don't go to hear what the Lord will say how often we hear say today we've heard

[42 : 08] Mr. so and so how much better it would be if friends were true and said we've heard the word of the Lord or if they haven't to keep quiet I would to God that there was more speaking than having heard what God has said because he will speak peace unto his people and and known of mine and you'll know this that there'll be no peace there'll be no safety for you no real satisfaction until you are assured that this God is your God and I'm going farther with that you never will know apart from a few fleeting moments that this God is your God until you're safely landed by this good shepherd into eternal bliss you'll find that your life will be a conflict from beginning to end until you take your last breath

Satan that great enemy of souls who tempted the Lord Jesus is not going to leave you alone you're not going to have an easy comfortable religion not if you're one of these sheep but this you will know that in that rugged pathway the Lord will find some comfortable spots for you to rest and where he will you'll find that he will restore you where you will find true comfort and where you will know him as the good shepherd and when others begin to tell you to go some other way he won't listen to strangers indeed not as they tell you to do this do that no that will be strange because if the Lord leads you he'll lead you in such a way it will be clear it will be plain and you'll see him in it now this again is how you would know know him it's because you will see him in the way those sheep are lower on the ground than the shepherd however small the shepherd may appear to be they can still see him in front and they still follow him and there have been times in your experience although

Satan will try and wrestle it from you and your will say I know that the Lord was in that I know the Lord did appear for me there I know the Lord did lead me into that particular pathway yes but Satan will say yes but that was only providence was made does it matter if the Lord leads you in providence I'll say does it matter he's the good shepherd and if he's the good shepherd has led you in providence surely that is out of his goodness and then as you're able to see that he has led you in providence hasn't grace found some response within your heart to him you can't separate providence and grace where there's grace within the heart the two they're like links in a chain they work together they're the two chains around the breastplate which hold the breastplate of the high priest providence and grace it's no good looking to providence and calling providence grace because it's not but how many are there today that can speak of a

God of providence and don't you cast aside the things of providence as being of little value I believe the child of God he can see providence in his pathway and providence is part of the good shepherd however much religion you may have if you can't see God's providence in it it's not worth very much the providential way in which he leads the providential care over you where he snaps you by hands bread from death and damnation which you well deserved but he had mercy upon you because he was a good shepherd who delights in mercy and and known of mine and then as they approach toward the end of the journey as they come nearer to him you notice in that flock of sheep there are some closer to him others are well bad but they're all part of the flock you may at times be troubled because you don't feel that the Lord has been made so precious to you as he has to others well you see that again is part of the tempter's work as the tempter comes to you he's bound to point these things out to try and cause you concern but how the Lord puts that to good account because if you're exercised about these things it will make you desire to be nearer the

Lord than what you are it will make you desire to be more Christ-like than you are is that a desire within your heart I wish I could be more Christ-like not holy not self righteous in that respect to puff up your pride but to have more of Christ's nature to have more of his spirit within you and then perhaps Satan will come and tempt you and say well of course you are not the spirit of Christ and therefore the scripture says that if you have not the spirit of Christ you are none of his he knew the pathway of temptation and therefore if you know the pathway of temptation you know a little of what he went through but what he went through cannot be compared to the temptation which you are going through because his was an immensity the sinless son of God and unknown of mine yes that ransomed redeemed church of God they know him they know him as he is now we see him through a glass darkly but to really know him the good shepherd and to be in that flock to be gathered into that fold that eternal bliss with him never again for the wolves to come and to attack never again to seek other pastures but to be shut safely in that fold don't think about religion as you think about business as you think about various social activities may the

[49 : 53] Lord lead you to know something of that which is within the heart which responds to his leadings to his teaching to his guiding and which at times will bring you to his precious word and say Lord this is thy word show me something in thy word which will be a comfort that will be a help to me and how the Lord has done this and still does it to his people how he will bring a word and I pray that it may be so tonight and unknown of mine as these words dropped in us we even stood up we won what we could say but you know he is a good shepherd oh that he may have led me tonight to speak to one of his sheep however far back you may be in the fold even the last one if you can see this God leading and drawing you away from the world and showing you that there is something solid that there is something real that there is something which is of value even in this life although as we look at it today what is there

I say what is there out of Christ but to know something of this good shepherd in this life how it will prepare us and at times cause us to seek that which is to come I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and know mine or may we know more of him may he become more precious to us may we become more Christ like more like true sheep than we are amen in please have and sources