



**SERIES – Believe: The Book of John**

**SPEAKER: Nat Crawford**

**Tuesday, February 14, 2023**

**Scripture: John 10:16-18**

**TITLE: Life on the Line**

John 10:16-18

“And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. so there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Fathers.”

Only genuine, authentic, true love for the endangered one could motivate another to risk his own life to rescue another. But here in our passage for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the 5<sup>th</sup> times, Jesus affirms His personal commitment to putting His own life on the line for those of His flock.

- “The good shepherd lays down His life the sheep”—John 10:11
- “Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep”—v. 15
- “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again”—v. 17
- “No one takes if from me, but I lay it down of my own accord”—v. 18
- “I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again”—v. 18

In bold contrast to the false shepherds—the thieves, the robbers, the hirelings—the Good Shepherd does not serve out of simple duty and obligation but rather as one driven by a heart-felt, deep, loving motivation! Our focus on this Good Shepherd text is continually upon the intimate relationships:

- Our shepherd comes to us through the door because he is known by the doorkeeper.
- Our shepherd calls us because he knows each of us by name.
- Our shepherd increases our security because he himself occupies the one way in or out.
- Our shepherd knows intimately what is good and necessary for our wellbeing.
- Our shepherd leads us by walking among us, not by driving us.
- Our shepherd gives his life not because of mob violence but because of divine purpose.
- Our shepherd is in total control of his mission and his destiny.
- Our shepherd will die for us on his timetable and rises to new life on exactly the hour of his plan.

But it is the most intimate of all relationships that intensifies the hostility of the leaders of the Jews. Having spoke three times of “the Father,” a phrase the Jews themselves would embrace

when speaking of God's intimate relationship to their nation, Jesus now changes it to "my Father," a statement that no one would dare have used! It's this declaration that, in their minds, justifies stoning because if it's not true, it is blasphemy. And before this conflict is resolved that is exactly what they will determine.

However, the conflict centers on the awkward transition in the storyline between chapters 9 and 10. Remember John 9:40 – 10:1,

"Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.'"

And they did not miss His point! With a simple parable Jesus has again exposed them as the uncaring, self-serving, false shepherds of Ezekiel 34. You see, Jesus had given sight to a well-known blind man. That man exclaimed, "Once I was blind, but now I see" and because of that he was literally cast out of the temple by the religious leaders. So Jesus sought him out as any Good Shepherd would do. Those so-called spiritual shepherds had repeatedly seen the Savior but did not receive Him as such. They had often heard His voice yet did not follow. Yet in just a short time the formerly blind man had both seen and heard the Good Shepherd, and by faith had followed Him.

Some immediately accused Jesus of being demonically possessed and insane. Yet others tried to reason as to how a demon oppressed man could give sight to a man born blind.

So it is that the Good Shepherd who comes to seek and to save the lost calls by name the outcast, the disenfranchised, the rejected, the Jew and the Gentile alike. And those who hear immediately follow for they know His voice. They have one shepherd. He has one fold. There is one Savior. He who gives sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf is our Good Shepherd!

So we like David can say: "The Lord is my shepherd—no wants!"