

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus" — John 12:21

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

by Bubba Garner

The gospel of John was written to produce faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31). It is constructed around seven miracles, or signs as John calls them, that could only have been performed by a divine being. Who else but Jesus, God in the flesh, could turn water into wine, walk on water, restore sight to a blind man, or raise Lazarus from the dead?

The fourth gospel is also framed around several "I AM" statements that, once again, only Jesus could have made. Who else could live up to His claims to be the bread of life, the light of the world, and the resurrection and the life?

"I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11), He also said. He is the One who came to seek and save the sheep who had gone astray. He is the one who felt compassion for the crowd, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He didn't respond by claiming to be "like" a shepherd or that He was "a" shepherd. He boldly professed to be "the good shepherd."

What is it about Jesus that makes Him the good shepherd?

Jesus knows His sheep. In Biblical times, the sheep were not just some business expense or tax write off for the shepherd. He was intimately connected with them; he was personally involved. And the sheep had such a love for their tender shepherd that they would only follow his voice. In fact, when they heard the voice of a stranger, they didn't run away and hide, they found him who knew them by name.

Jesus calls His people by name. "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona" (Matt. 16:17). "Zaccheus, hurry and come down" (Luke 19:5). "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). And Jesus knows you by name. He knows what you're thinking, how you're feeling, when you're afraid, and when you fell lost. "I know My own and my own know Me" (John 10:14). You are not just another number to Him. You are His sheep, and the good shepherd know His sheep.

Jesus watches over His sheep. When the sun went down at the end of a long day, the shepherd didn't get to clock out. As they came in for the night, he inspected them, one by one, while they passed under his rod. As he carefully looked over them, he counted. If one came up missing, he didn't do a cost-benefit analysis and say, "well, at least I still have 99 left." He went out and searched for the one who had strayed and brought him back to the safety of the fold. He did this because he knew them sheep and he watched over them with his own life.

When Jesus made the claim to be the "good" shepherd, He did so to distinguish Himself from all other religious shepherds. The Pharisees would not accept the man Jesus healed, figuring a man born blind must be a man born a sinner. "So they put him out" (John 9:34). But Jesus goes after that sheep. He doesn't abandon him to danger. He accepts Him into a better fold, one where his needs and cared for, where he can find pasture.

Jesus wants to lead you to safety, to find green pastures and still waters. But He can't lead someone who wants to be the leader. Hear His voice. Follow Him. He is the "Shepherd and Guardian" of your soul (1 Pet. 2:25).

Jesus lays down His life for His sheep. There was an easy way to tell the difference between a shepherd and a hired hand—how they responded to danger. When the wolves or thieves came to threaten the flock, the hireling fled for his own life, But the shepherd

Wear Masks

Today's Schedule

The Lord's Day

8:30 - Assembly
Building

9:30 - Assembly
Building

10:30 - Assembly
Building

fought for the lives of his sheep. Before David became the “shepherd- king” of Israel, he tended his father’s sheep. He told King Saul how he rescued a lamb out of the mouth of a lion, grabbing the lion by the beard and killing him (1 Sam. 17:34). The shepherds did this not to impress anyone or for fear of losing their job. They were motivated for no other reason than their love for their sheep.

Jesus laid down His life, not for sheep who were loyal to Him and following Him. He laid down His life for Judas, who betrayed Him. He laid down His life for Peter, who denied Him. He laid down His life for the false shepherds, who crucified Him. He laid down His life for sinners, who rejected Him. The good shepherd became the lamb of God. He laid down His life to give the lost sheep safety and salvation.

Jesus, the good shepherd, is calling. Come to Him, where there is rest and room, while there is time and opportunity.

Decidedly Different

Dee Bowman

To suggest that the Christian is different is to state the obvious. He cannot be what he is and be the same as everyone else. Peter says it well: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). Three things stand out in this passage: the priesthood comes of a connection to royalty; the nation is one that is sanctified; and the people are peculiar, which means they are distinctive, not ordinary. All three of these things speak to the kind of people who have chosen to follow God.

There are several areas in which Christians are—and must be—different. I have chosen four to discuss briefly.

The Christian is decidedly different because:

He sees a bigger picture. His view is not focused on this world only, but on the world to come. In fact, he is impressed with the transitory nature of all that appertains to this world to the point that he puts only relative value on things of the earth. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” says John (1 John 2:15-17), “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, with the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth forever.” The Christian sees further, sees more clearly, sees more joyfully than the person in the world. He has a higher view.

He serves from a higher motive. He is not energized by the same things that energize the people of the world. Paul emphasizes our motive when he says, “And above all these things, put on love which is the bond of perfectness” (Col. 3:14). Love is the divine motive and it provides the impetus for all the Christian’s actions. He begins and ends all that he does out of love for God and love for his fellow man (Matt. 22:37), seeing the possibility of service to both as the real road to happiness in his life. Love is not just an emotional experience to the Christian; it is an energizing force leading to holiness, piety and good works.

The impressions on his mind come from a different source. A Christian’s mind is tuned to a higher frequency, open to a more lasting influence. He understands the value of higher thinking and godly impressions. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8), is Paul’s way of getting the right impressions into the mind of the Christian. The true child of God will find ways to make sure these impressions are a reality in his mind, thus producing a force for good in his life.

He regards his being as a privileged obligation. The Christian sees himself as having real worth only because of his connection to his Master. In his mind he sees his life as having been purchased for a reason—to bring honor and glory to his Father and His Son. “I beseech ye, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:2). To him that means he is constrained to voluntarily present himself to His God on a daily basis, to render to Him his love, respect, and faithfulness, and, by so doing, to let his light so shine that others may see Christ living in Him (Matt. 5:16). In seeing himself as given over to God, he sees himself as proving “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Yes, we’re different. Not odd, but different. Not social mismatches, unfit for society, but peculiar in a special and holy way—one calculated to bring honor to God.



Read your Bible daily