

sermon study guide

Pastor: Ashwin Ramani

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Sermon Title: The Good Shepherd Series Part 3 - His Claims

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What projects or dreams were canceled or abandoned due to circumstances and events out of your control? Is there anything that you wanted to do but now finally have time to do it?
2. Pastor Ashwin said: "This is a critical time for reflection and evaluation for every single person in the world." What have you found increasingly meaningful during this season? What has taken on less importance? How can you lean into that which is meaningful?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read *John 10:7, 11, 17-18, 30*

3. What claims does Jesus make about himself in these verses?

Read *John 10:19-21, 33, 41-42*

4. In these verses, what various responses did people have to Jesus' claims? Why did they respond this way? What responses have you seen to Jesus in your lifetime?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. What has convinced you (or could convince you) that Jesus is the Messiah? How are his claims still relevant in today's global crisis?
6. Pastor Ashwin observed, "This whole crisis has opened a unique window of opportunity. As people around us have been shaken by the events of the last few weeks many are questioning their convictions." What opportunities have opened up for you to tell others about Jesus? What opportunities are in front of you that God may be calling you to act on?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Ashwin said, "Even in dark times like this current coronavirus pandemic, if our hearts are spiritually sensitive, you will hear God inviting you to draw closer." How will you respond in practical ways to this invitation?

THE WORD (NIV)

John 10:6-7, 11, 17-18, 30

⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

¹⁹ The Jews who heard these words were again divided. ²⁰ Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

²¹ But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

³³ "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

⁴¹ and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true." ⁴² And in that place many believed in Jesus.

Acts 4:12

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

sermon study summary

The Good Shepherd Series | His Claims

Pastor Ashwin

John 10:6, 19-21, 33, 41-42

During the last few weeks we have focused on Jesus as the Good Shepherd: He is our Provider and Protector (John 10). This is an image that Christians have turned to for centuries in times of distress. Today we focus on Jesus' authoritative claims that demand a personal response. We begin with how some people in Jesus's day responded.

The First response

The strict religious Pharisees didn't understand the imagery of the Good Shepherd (10:6). They were skeptical, and their skepticism turned to scorn. They thought Jesus was deranged or worse, demon possessed (John 10:19-21). Without investigating the evidence, they rejected him! Others were curious: They examined the evidence and came to the conclusion that a man who was demon possessed couldn't do what Jesus was doing.

Skepticism continues to keep people away from Jesus; they look everywhere else for spirituality but are cynical when it comes to believing in Christ. If you are not a Christ follower, please don't stop with being skeptical or curious. Take the next steps. Investigate and discover the claims of Christ for yourself!

The Second response

Jesus' opponents prepared to stone him for blasphemy because he was making himself God (John 10:33). However, it was not so much that Jesus was making himself God, as God was making himself human! Their hearts and minds were closed to the claims of Jesus, and they rejected him altogether.

For us, when life seems to be going smoothly we tend to make less time for God. Many have been shaken by the events of the last few weeks. Yet through this crisis comes a piercing question: Have we built our life on wrong foundations? In the Western world we have discovered how painful it is to know that we are not in control of our lives. This is a critical time to question and reevaluate our core convictions. God is gently revealing that we need to remove our cover-ups, repent of our sinful ways and build our lives on the unshakable foundation Jesus provides.

Unfortunately, many who go through this pandemic will not turn their attention to God. If a person's heart remains hardened Jesus will eventually walk away from that person. That is a greater tragedy than the coronavirus.

What about you? What principles govern your life? Do they really matter in light of eternity? Do you see this pandemic as random and meaningless, or is God speaking clearly and distinctly to you through it?

The Third response

Many in Jesus' day rejected him altogether. He left Jerusalem and went where others would receive him favourably (John 10:41-42). As God speaks today, he will not force himself on unresponsive hearts. He is also calling our church to remain faithful. All through history, the church has grown in times of crisis, not prosperity. This pandemic has opened a unique window of opportunity. As people bring their fears and questions to us, let us share our hope in Christ.

In this Easter season, let us remember how God took the evil of Jesus' crucifixion, and in one masterful stroke, turned it around to bring the greatest good. Let us believe that God can overrule the effects of the coronavirus and bring healing from brokenness, salvation and reconciliation with God, and the promise of heaven.

The Good Shepherd is calling you by name. Surrender your life fully to him and receive peace, joy and stability. Make that decision today.