

Jesus - the Good Shepherd Who Knows Your Name

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[0 : 00] Today's passage comes from John 10, verses 1-18, where Jesus talks about the meaning of a good shepherd. So please follow along on the screen or in your own Bibles.

In John 10, verse 1, we read, To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hears his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

[1 : 45] He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father.

And I lay down my life for the sheep. 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 receive from my Father. This is the Word of God. Over to you, Simon.

Thank you, Irene. Thanks for reading that so well. And good morning, everyone. I trust you can hear me and that it's all clear. It's really wonderful to be with you this morning.

[2 : 45] Kev, thanks for introducing me. I will trust I will not let down the Murphy name this morning. But it really is such a joy to be able to be here speaking to you all and in the church where Kev is pastoring.

Obviously, I love Kev and Claire and the girls very, very dearly, and hoping that we're going to get to see them sometime soon. But it really is wonderful that we can have a look at this passage this morning.

I trust you'll be encouraged. Why don't you close your eyes and pray as we get started this morning? Father, we come before you. We say that we love you this morning. We're so grateful to you for being such an amazing God to us.

And we pray this morning that as we look at your Word, that you would speak to us, strengthen us, encourage our hearts, build us up, help us to understand what it means. To know you, to love you, and to follow you.

And we ask this all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, it's really wonderful to be able to speak to you in Hong Kong this morning.

[3 : 43] I know that life in Hong Kong has not been very easy of late. And there have been many challenges, as there have been around the world. I was just reflecting on that this week for you guys and just thinking how Christianity itself was birthed in the midst of a great adversity and how the Bible talks about how even amidst trouble and difficulties and even our outward bodies wasting away, our inner beings, our inner persons are being renewed day by day by God.

And so I pray that you know the closeness of God and Jesus during this time. Now, in the midst of difficult times, I guess all of us, what many of us want and are looking for is good leadership.

We want a guide. We want a leader, someone who will be able to shepherd us and guide us through the circumstances that we're in. And how much more to have an amazing leader, an amazing shepherd or guide who also knows us, not just a generic leader far away, but someone who knows you deeply, intimately, loves you, understands what makes you tick and is deeply committed to you.

A couple of years ago, I bumped into somebody that I'd not seen for about 15 years since I was in high school. And this person referred to me by the nickname that kids or my friends used to call me when I was in high school.

They used to call me Spud. It was, I think, because my surname's Murphy. And I had not heard anyone call me that for like 15 years or so. And when they did, it was like suddenly calling me that name, that nickname just brought back an entire flood of memories.

[5 : 23] It's almost like it transported me back to an entire era in my life, something that I'd almost forgotten about. It showed me, it reminded me that these people, this person who had called me that name, knew something about me that many others didn't.

They had access to a part of me. Knew something of my life and my story that had been hidden from many others. Maybe you've had the experience of someone forgetting your name. Maybe someone who really should have known it.

And you watch them kind of awkwardly fumbling as they're trying to avoid calling you by a name and just refer to you in other generic terms. How did that make you feel? Now imagine being at some kind of really important event and realizing that the person there doesn't know you.

Imagine being at the door of death. I don't think the Bible tells us that St. Peter stands at the gates of heaven with the book, seeing who he will let in. I don't think the scripture shows that.

But if you look at that stereotypical picture, imagine St. Peter forgot your name or didn't know your name. A couple of years ago, I read a book. And it's a book by Eric Schumacher.

[6 : 35] It's a short little novella, Eric Schumacher. And the book is called My Last Name. My Last Name. It tells the life story of a woman who goes through life with at least three last names.

She's born Charlotte, or as we come to know her in the book, Lottie O'Connor, Charlotte O'Connor. And when she was very young, about 18 or 19, she married a young man that she fell in love with.

His name was John Carlson. And she became Charlotte Carlson. And they were only married for a short amount of time. She fell pregnant. And then John got sent off to fight in the war.

And John, unfortunately, never made it back to America alive. And she was widowed as a young woman with a young child, Charlotte Carlson. About 10 years or so later, she met another man, an older, kind man, gentle and gracious man by the name of Everett Barnes.

And after some time, she ended up marrying Everett. And now suddenly, Charlotte, Lottie O'Connor, who had then become Charlotte Carlson, became Charlotte Barnes, Lottie Barnes.

[7 : 46] And the story goes through the entire story of her life. Some of the details. It's a beautiful story. But it gets to the point where she's now right at the end of her life in a hospital. Her memory is confused.

She gets things mixed up. There's a nurse by the name of Sarah who comes in and out, tending to her. And as she's trying to think through her memories, she's wondering about her names.

Who is she? I want to ask you this morning, who exactly are you? What is your name? What does your name mean?

A name is something that is deeply personal to us. It represents us. It represents our life, years of our lives. It represents who we are. And our text today shows us that there's a shepherd who knows your name.

In fact, as we're going to see later on, he even has a name for you that you don't know yourself. That's how deeply he knows you. He knows things about you that you don't even understand about yourself.

[8 : 50] He has a future for you that you presently can't see or understand just how wonderful it is. He wants to lead you to green pastures. He knows you better than you know yourself.

And how amazing this is for us to know in tough times. Now, these 18 verses in John are somewhat confusing. The text is complex. I was chuckling to myself earlier when Irene was leading and reading.

And in verse 6, it says, This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. And I was kind of laughing, thinking that's kind of understandable. This text has two main images.

Jesus is a door. Jesus is a shepherd. It's a little bit circular. It's not entirely sequential. And so it can be a little hard to wrap our minds around because Jesus refers to himself as multiple characters in the story.

But the main idea that I want us to see this morning is that because Jesus is the good shepherd and the gate of the sheep, we should recognize him as our good shepherd.

[9 : 47] Enter the fold through him and follow him. This is a truth, friends, that we need to internalize today, not simply just know intellectually. So we're going to explore this in our short time this morning by asking three brief questions.

Number one, why do we need to be properly careful? Secondly, the only one who can properly care for us. And finally, how to be cared for by Jesus. So why exactly do we need to be properly careful?

Scripture refers to us. Jesus talks to us here about us being sheep who go astray and get lost. Now, some of the background to this passage is that in the Bible, God's leaders are often called shepherds.

So we think about Moses, Numbers 27. David, a shepherd of God's people. Many times, God's leaders and God himself is called a shepherd of his people. But this refers to his leaders as well.

Sheep need to be led, need to be cared for. They need to be provided for. And this is what many of us want. If you recognize some sheep tendencies in yourself, you may know sheep tend to wander off and drift off.

[10 : 53] We think about Luke 15, Jesus telling us the parable of the lost sheep and how a sheep wanders off and gets lost and finds itself in all kinds of personal trouble. But we think of Isaiah 53, where the prophet talks about Jesus who will one day come and says, we all, like sheep, have gone astray.

There's something deep within us that tends to drift away from our shepherd, move away from him, trust ourselves, follow our noses, think we know where we're going. So this is all part of our sinful, fallen condition to leave God, the one who's made us and known us.

We often don't want to be led by him. We think that we know best. I remember many, many years ago when my father took me as a 16-year-old boy up Mount Kilimanjaro.

And on that last night, you have guides who are helping to kind of get you up to the top. And that's a pretty grueling trip. You ascend about one kilometer in altitude whilst you're only doing three kilometers in distance.

And it's freezing cold. There's mountain sickness. And I was sick and tired of this. I did not want to get to the top of the mountain. And everything that inside of me was telling me just to prioritize my warmth and my comfort and to abandon the hike and just go back home.

[12 : 13] And my dad still reminds me that I use language that he never knew that he never realized I knew as a 16-year-old boy at the time. What I needed on that mountain that night was both a guide, someone who knew where they were going, who could lead me, who had light, who could give advice.

I needed an encourager. I needed a dad who could put some courage and steel inside of my bones and help me get to the top. And he did do that. And the Bible talks here about us being sheep, those who are vulnerable, need to be cared for.

And what makes us need to be properly cared for even more is not just that we're sheep who tend to go astray, but that we face enemies and false shepherds. The passage talks about there being thieves and wolves who come to kill and destroy.

Now, we need to back up a little bit and try and understand what exactly Jesus is saying here. The context of John 10, actually, is Jesus in John 9 has just been in conflict with the Pharisees.

The Pharisees have been coming after Jesus for healing a man who was born blind. And Jesus is in big conflict with the Pharisees. And part of the conflict is that the Pharisees claim to be shepherds.

[13 : 25] They claim to be God's leaders who are supposed to be shepherding God's people into life and into everlasting life. And Jesus is denouncing them, saying that they are blind guides. They are not true shepherds.

And so when we read this text about thieves and wolves and highlings, Jesus is actually pointing toward the Pharisees, those who are fulfillment of Ezekiel chapter 34.

Ezekiel 34 is a passage where the prophet is, is, is, is ruining the fact that the shepherds of Israel do not bind up those who are wounded and broken.

They do not chase or go after those who've gone astray. They simply feast. They live on the sheep. They use them for their own goods. And Jesus is telling here stunningly to these Pharisees that they themselves are false shepherds.

He talks about highlings who don't face true danger, who will simply run away the minute that any danger comes. And the key for the highlings is that these highlings don't own the sheep. They don't, aren't truly committed to them.

- [14 : 25] And they deceive them through lies, trying to make them think that they care. I want to ask you a question this morning. Who do you, who are those that you think can shepherd you? Who are those that you think can guide you home and take care of you? Provide for you, protect you. Many of us may be inclined to think that our jobs can do this for us.
- We think our jobs will be able to provide for us, give us a preferred future. If we just get the right job, everything will be okay. We'll be able to live to a ripe old age.
- We'll be happy. All of our fears will not be realized. We may put our hope or our hope more concretely in money.
- Or maybe education, pursuing some kind of a higher qualification. Thinking if we can just attain that, that will be some kind of a provider for me. Something that will be able to lead and guide me.
- [15 : 30] Something that will provide for my future. Or maybe a relationship that you feel if you have that, everything will be okay. But friends, when we stop and think about these things, we know our job is not going to die for us.
- Our job is not going to lay its life down for us. Because the promises, the voices that many of these false shepherds make to us are deceptive. And yet many times we're inclined to believe them.
- I remember a heartbreaking conversation once talking with a woman who was being abused by her husband. And had suffered much abuse over many years. And her telling me the words that he had spoken to her.
- Telling her that she's nothing. She's nothing without him. That he's the only hope she has of being cared for and provided for. And yet that care was a distorted care.
- It was an abusive care. There was nothing healthy or right about that. It was a complete distortion of shepherding. A complete distortion of leadership.
- [16 : 32] Now when we hear a story like that, we're probably inclined to recognize, of course that's a false shepherd. But yet in so many examples in our lives, we're inclined to put our faith, our trust to follow.
- The voices of those who don't truly know us. Don't truly love us or care for us. Jesus is showing us here that we need someone, something better. A better shepherd.
- There are enemies and false shepherds out there. The third reason why we need to be properly cared for is because Jesus is going to show us in the passage that eternal life is in the balance. In verse 9 and 10, he talks about being saved.
- He talks about, he says, I'm the door. If anyone enters by me, he'll be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. He talks in verse 10 about him coming to have life and life to the full.
- These passages are talking about eternal life. A salvation. What is Jesus saying? When Jesus is reminding us that you, watermarkers, every one of you have a soul.
- [17 : 34] Every one of you is a person who is made by God to live forever. You're precious. And God wants you to live forever with him.
- Yes, through our own sin, we have wandered off. We have got lost. Some of us have suffered greatly at the hands of others. And that suffering mixed in with our own inclination to run away from God has only led to more heartache and more pain.
- But Jesus is reminding us that you are valuable. You are precious. Too precious to be cared for by someone or something that doesn't truly care for you.
- So the question is, what kind of a shepherd can bring you through to eternity? What kind of a shepherd can lead you to spend, can restore those things that are broken in your life, can restore your life to eternity and bring you to know him forever?

Yes, there are many things that promise to care for us, lead us, but they can't ultimately deliver us. So, friends, who are you being cared for by?

[18 : 39] Who is it that can take you home and guide you through the storms of life? This is why we truly need a good shepherd. And so Jesus, in this passage, begins to reveal to us the only one who can properly care for us.

This is our second point this morning. In this passage, we see Jesus setting himself up as the good shepherd in contrast to the false shepherds of Ezekiel chapter 34 and in fulfillment of God's promise.

In verse 34, in chapter 34 of Ezekiel, God has been saying that all those who are leading my people are false shepherds. But God promises that one day he will provide a true shepherd.

He will come himself and shepherd his people and care for them and love them. This here Jesus, as he begins to reveal himself as the good shepherd, is telling us he himself is the shepherd we have all been waiting for.

And this, friends, as we alluded to before, is not simply something which is optional or extra. This is a matter of life and death. In fact, in Matthew 25, Jesus talks about how on that day the shepherd is going to stand and separate the sheep from the goats.

[19 : 50] Why exactly is Jesus the one who can properly care for us? Verse 3 and verse 14 shows us he's the one who knows us intimately, who knows the sheep.

Jesus here, friends, is seen as a shepherd who knows every one of us so deeply. He can shepherd every one of us with a precise amount of knowledge. He knows where you've come from.

He knows the thoughts of your heart. He knows your fears. He knows your anxieties. In fact, if we come back to the theme of the name, verse 3 tells us Jesus knows us by name.

He knows every one of us by name. Isn't it interesting that in the Gospels, Jesus sometimes changes people's names, sometimes gives them new names. Why do you think he does that?

It's a sense of Jesus giving them a new future, new identity, speaking something else into them and who they are. Jesus knows not just our past, but he knows our future.

[20 : 51] He knows our hearts. I think this allusion to Jesus knowing our name here, even the fact that in the Gospels, Jesus changes people's names is a reference to a very beautiful verse that I stumbled upon in Revelation 2, which tells us that in eternity, Jesus promises to give us a new name that only he knows.

I want you to think about that. There's something that Jesus knows about you and your future that not even you're aware of. A new name that will encapsulate everything about your life, your story.

Yeah, the brokenness and the difficulty, but the redemptive work of his son and the glorious future that he has. Jesus has a new name for you. He promises to give it to you one day. So we go back to our opening story.

Who will Lottie be? Will she one day be Mrs. O'Connor again? Mrs. Carlson? Mrs. Barnes? Friends, Jesus knows us intimately.

It means God cares for us, knows us deeply. J.I. Packer, the British theologian, I think, who ended up living in Canada, loved the justification of Jesus, God's justification for sinners who died through Jesus dying on the cross for us.

[22 : 08] But Packer said something wonderful. He said, it's a great thing to be forgiven by God the judge. But it's an even greater thing to be cared for by God.

Yes, friends, it is wonderful that God has done so much for us. But I want to ask, do you know and experience his care? Jesus is saying he's a shepherd who knows you intimately.

As part of Jesus knowing us, we see secondly, Jesus is able to lead us, lead his sheep to eternal life. In verse 9 to 10, we see this. Jesus promises to save those who are in him.

This to us, this for us is a profound invitation to us, an invitation for us to come and give our souls to him, to come and unbundle our hearts into his lap.

To cast ourselves at his mercies. Jesus calls us by name to himself here. And the language here that I love in, I think it's in verse 3 or 4, it talks in verse 3, it says, The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

[23 : 22] I love the language here of us being his own. It's like we belong to Jesus in the best possible way. We belong to him. And because we belong to him, because we're his, those that are his, he loves us and cares for us so deeply.

I'm sure many of you know there's a real difference between how you care for something that belongs to you and something that doesn't. I know as parents, we sometimes wish our kids would care for their siblings' things the way that they care for their own. I was a reminder of this.

Recently, I have a couple of flasks, a very Asian thing to have for my tea or hot drinks or cold drinks, whatever it may be. And I have a few of these.

But because of the various things that get put in them, whether it's coffee or smoothie, they really have to be cleaned, like, very carefully. If they don't get cleaned well, it's not a very pretty thing. And so I'm, like, fastidious about cleaning my own masks.

And I realize because those particular ones that I own, they're mine. I'm going to use them the next day or sometime that week. When I get home from work and I go myself, I make sure I clean them.

[24 : 26] I go into all the little crevices. I make sure they are spotless. Why? It's mine. I'm going to use it. It belongs to me. Friends, here Jesus talks about us as a sheep being his, belonging to him in the best way.

Knows us intimately and deeply. And because we are his, he promises to lead us into eternity. He alludes here and elsewhere that those that are his, he will not lose, but we will be his forever.

And the final reason why Jesus is the only one who can properly care for us is because we see in the passage he's perfectly committed to his sheep. Perfectly committed. Verse 11 shows us that he's so committed.

He's not like a hireling. The minute danger comes, he's willing to flee. The minute that there's a recession will allow you to lose your job or return to you. Jesus is perfectly committed to his sheep.

He's going to lay his life down for his sheep. When the wolf comes, he's going to lay himself down in the way. Jesus is promising you here, friend. Something that others, even if they do promise, are not able to deliver.

[25 : 34] Now, we're probably listening to this thinking, okay, well, what does this mean for us? And how do we draw near to really be cared for by Jesus in this way? I have one kind of main idea to mention in this third point.

It should come up on the slide. On the surface of this passage, being careful by Jesus, I think, our good shepherd, involves us knowing his voice and following him. In verse 4, he says, the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

At one level, the way for us to be careful by Jesus is to hear and to recognize his voice. I remember a couple of years ago when my son was very small, he had this way of just hearing my voice and being able to recognize it across a room.

So, there could be many people in the ballroom at church, but if I just raised my voice in a certain tone and called his name, it didn't matter how far away he was.

He could suddenly recognize it and just give me that look across the room. The Bible here, Jesus is telling us one of the ways that we're cared for by him is by knowing his voice. By recognizing his voice, his spirit inside of us leads us to recognize his truth when he speaks to us.

[26 : 54] He gives us a sense of discernment when we maybe hear things that are not true. We begin to reject false teaching and strangers. We begin to love God's word. His word becomes beautiful to us.

It's one of the ways that we become cared for by him. We listen to him. We long to hear him speak to us. And this is one of the ways that Jesus does care for us. He speaks to us plainly, honestly.

His scripture, his word is full of his truth. Another way that we see in this passage that we are cared for by Jesus is by following him. He says in verse four again, when he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.

We follow him because we know his voice. Because we've heard him speak to us, we're willing to follow him. Jesus describes himself here as being a shepherd to us, not just a consultant, not just someone to give us advice and hope that things turn out okay.

There's a real discipleship, master, follower relationship here. This voice of Jesus that knows us, he calls us. Sometimes it's gentle and tender.

[27 : 59] Sometimes his voice to us is fairly strong and stern. Like a father saving a child from running into the road, calling us back and grabbing us. So we begin to follow him and we follow him sometimes even when his word is hard.

Maybe there's some today who are listening to what I'm sharing and saying, you know, you want to follow Jesus like this, but it seems like some of his words or some of the things that he says really are challenging.

Some of the sins that he's asking you to lay down are really difficult. And it seems like your sins are where there really is green pasture.

That's where you really will find happiness and joy. And it seems to you like to follow Jesus, to obey him, to hear his voice actually is leading you away from green pastures into some kind of a more barren land, the land maybe of loneliness, maybe where there won't be as much provision.

And there's a real temptation you have to not follow him, but to follow something else. How do we know that his word is good? Well, I mentioned before on the surface of this passage, being cared for by Jesus, a good shepherd involves knowing his voice and following him.

[29 : 13] But there's something deeper in this passage. Let's think about this a little bit more. What is hardest for you about following Jesus? Do you really know that he, do you maybe doubt that he really knows you, really cares for you?

What enables us to follow him, to love him and follow him? What if Jesus ends up being just like some of the other shepherds? I mean, isn't it, isn't talk cheap in some ways? Who can make such outrageous claims here?

And why should we believe him? And if following someone is a matter of our deepest hearts, how can our hearts give themselves to him and to love his voice?

I think to see this, we should go back and see what Jesus says at the beginning of the passage. Invite us to become his sheep by entering through the door. Jesus tells us that not only is he the shepherd, but he's actually the door itself.

And Jesus invites us today to enter by him. What does he mean by this? For Jesus to be the door, friends, this means for us today that we enter into him.

[30 : 20] We enter through him. In John's gospel, I think this means believing upon him, trusting in him. It's John's way of talking about faith. We enter into Jesus. Now, for some of us, it may be a little bit confusing.

And again, this is how I spoke when I began. The passage is somewhat circular. There are a couple of different ideas. Jesus is the shepherd, but he's talking about himself being the door as well, the gate. We could probably ask ourselves, how exactly does Jesus, how can Jesus be the door?

We see a clue in verse 15. In verse 18, Jesus talks about him laying his life down, his life down for his sheep. When the wolf comes, when someone comes to steal and destroy, Jesus lays his life down.

He's going to put himself down in the place of the sheep. To understand this more, to figure out what exactly Jesus means at this stage, we could go back to Isaiah chapter 53. Jesus led like a lamb to the slaughter.

Yes, Isaiah 53 says, we all like sheep have gone astray. But then Jesus becomes a lamb, a sheep for us, torn by wills. Jesus has come to take our place as a lost, sinful sheep.

[31 : 31] This is what it means for Jesus to lay down his life for us. Jesus is laying down his life to save us from wills and enemies, those ones. And Jesus is doing this by getting to the root of the problem, the things that can really destroy us.

Our sin, that which leads us to not trust God, leads us to be separated from him, leads us to wander away. Jesus has come to deal with that problem, both by forgiving us of our sins, by taking our sins on the cross and dying for us.

But also by through his spirit and turning our hearts toward him in love. Because how could we not love someone who has laid his life down for us?

That we can be saved. Friends, in Jesus dying at the cross for our sins, what Jesus came to do, we see his care. We see his commitment. We see his life and his power. Jesus has abandoned his life on the cross in order for you and I to have abundant life.

And so for us to enter through the door means for us to entrust ourselves to him entirely, to place ourselves in his hands. Means to believe the work that he's come to do.

[32 : 37] To walk through the door that he's opened for us to return to God. And friends, if Jesus has truly done this for us, this means Jesus knows you and I better than we can even know ourselves.

I want you to think about this. If Jesus truly died on the cross for your sins, this means Jesus actually knows your sins better than you do. You should have to think about that for a moment.

Yes, we know our weaknesses and our sins at some level. Jesus knows them deeper. Jesus carried them. Every one of them at the cross. He's more aware of the consequences of them, of the horror of them.

But if Jesus died on the cross and rose again for us, not only does he know the deepest parts of us better than we do, Jesus knows our future better than we do. Jesus tells us here in the passage, he has the authority to lay down his life.

He has the authority to pick it up again, to take it up. And that authority was shown when three days later, Jesus rose from the dead. He has resurrection life. And the Bible talks about how he is the first fruits from among the dead.

[33 : 39] But those who are in him, who have entered through the door, will be led by him into eternal life. Jesus knows your future, friends, better than any of us can. If Jesus did not stay dead but raised up again of his own will, so will we do.

So will he do for us. If Jesus can die and has the authority to raise up his life, friends, then he can raise up yours too. Friends, this is the Jesus who's called us, who's come to make us his, who comes to call us in our hearts.

We've heard his voice in our hearts. We can know his voice. And this means we can now respond to him today by actively listening to his voice. Yes, his voice stronger than the roar of many waters and yet gentle and lowly, who invites us then to listen to him.

He's inviting us to let his voice, his commands, love and lead us today. And we can know him and love him because we know he knows us and he's loved us as we are.

So I want to encourage you today to entrust yourself into the hands of your shepherd. And secondly, not just actively listening to his voice but by following him. Friends, let's not trust other guides.

[34 : 47] Let's not trust our own intuition. Let's see where Jesus is leading us and follow him. We can follow him today because he's been through death. And if you're here today watching and maybe you aren't a Christian, I want to invite you this morning to turn from the false shepherds that you may have been following and to put your faith in Jesus, to follow him.

The Bible describes this as repentance and faith, turning, repentance, turning away from the false shepherd that we've been giving ourselves to, faith. Putting our trust in Jesus who died for our sins and rose again.

Now, as I close this morning, I want to, I was alluding or referencing throughout my message this morning, that book by Eric Schumacher called My Last Name about Charlotte and all the names that she had.

The book comes to a close. I want to read a section to you as we end. But it comes to a close with Charlotte in the nursing home about to pass into the next life. She's a bit confused.

But I want you to listen to how Schumacher ends his book. This is Lottie speaking. A knock at the door wakes me. The room is dark. I am in bed and I try to get out, but I do not have the strength.

[36 : 03] Come in. I whisper so softly that I cannot hear myself. The door opens. The light is bright and I shut my eyes. I raise a hand to block some of the light until my eyes adjust.

I can make out the silhouette of a man standing there and looking in. But I do not recognize him, even when I close my bad eye. I cannot see his face.

John? I whisper. What are you doing up, dear? Do you need something? I don't know. Then I see the hand I'm folding up in front of my face, wrinkled and spotted and old.

I fold my hands in my lap. I remember that John is dead, that he died long, long ago. I cannot remember where I am or why I am here. I feel myself growing confused and agitated and afraid.

Everett? One of her other husbands, I say. But the man does not move. Who are you? The man extends his hand and speaks my name. No.

[37 : 04] He does not call me Charlotte or Lottie. He does not call me Miss O'Connor or Mrs. John Carlson or even Mrs. Barnes. He calls me by my name.

A name that I did not know I had. That I've never heard before. Though I know it at once. It is my name. My real name.

My last name. Oh! I laugh and I smile. It's you. I sit up and rise from the bed as easily as I did as a six-year-old girl, jumping off the steps of the one-room schoolhouse.

I begin to walk toward him. Someone else appears in the doorway. It is a young woman dressed in pink. I know her. It is Sarah, the nurse. Sarah reaches her hand along the wall, searching for the light switch, and turns on the light.

She looks toward me, and there is alarm and then sadness on her face. Mrs. Barnes? Sarah does not look at me. She looks through me, past me. I turn, following her gaze to the bed.

[38 : 05] Now I see what she sees. There is my body, like a Sunday dress laid out in the evening after I've worn it and am preparing to put it away. And as I look, I remember, I remember everything.

And I'm filled with deep thankfulness. Sarah passes me and walks to the bedside. She's stroking the old woman's hair and crying and smiling and saying, oh, Lottie, I'll miss you. I turn away from her now, toward the door again, toward him.

I am no longer afraid. I take his hand and follow him home. Friends, Jesus, our great shepherd, our good shepherd, has laid down his life for you, and he's able to shepherd you through this world and into the next.

He knows you. He loves you. He's gone through death for you. He knows your name. Let's trust him, follow him, and give him our whole heart now. Why don't you close your eyes as I pray for us?

Father, we thank you so much for your kindness and goodness to us today. We praise you for that. We thank you for that. We thank you for that. We thank you that you have pursued us through your son, Jesus, our good shepherd, even when we wandered and went astray.

[39 : 23] We thank you that he has brought us back to yourself. He has purchased us with his blood. We pray, Father, that you would help us to see him, to love him, and to follow him today.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. God, please say, club, and how is you going to, of course, guys?