

John 10:1-28 part 1 - The Shepherd and the Sheep

Monday, December 05, 2011
9:07 PM

Parallel Passages
Ezekiel 34
Jeremiah 23:1-8
Psalm 23

Introduction

Sermon Introduction:

Psalm 23 - ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

This Psalm is one of the most recognized and cherished Psalms in the Bible, even among unbelievers

- The desire for the good shepherd is a basic human desire - even if the desire is corrupted by sin
- The need for a good shepherd is a basic human need - whether the need is recognized or not

The Old Testament prophecies that the coming Messiah would be that great Shepherd

- (Refer to Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23:1-8 - we read earlier this morning)
- Here Christ is saying that He is the referent of these passages - the Good Shepherd who will save His people

Passage Introduction

This passage is closely connected to the passage before

- John 9, the healing of the blind man
- John 10:21 - the people are still talking about the healing of the blind man

Reason this is important = John 9 ended with Christ accusing the Pharisees

- John 9:41
- Therefore, this passage is a continuation of this discourse, whether directly in time or sometime later (depending on whether John 9 happens after the feast of Tabernacles in John 7/8 or before the feast of dedication in John 10)
- The immediate recipients of this discourse are the Pharisees who are the false shepherds Christ is preaching against

**Ending in the middle of a paragraph in John 10, the first few verses of the second half of John 10 have relevancy to the topics this morning, but John 10:22-41 will be looked at separately

(Read John 10:1-28)

Outline and Proposition

We will look at this passage in correlation with these two prophetic passages

- There are four themes in these passages
 - An accusation against the current Shepherds
 - A promise of a coming Shepherd and a distinction that identifies Him
 - A judgment among the current sheep
 - A covenant of peace with the remaining sheep
- We will follow these four themes through the first half of John 10
- We will do the first three this week, and the fourth we will cover next week

Proposition: Christ identifies the Shepherd and He identifies the sheep and we must examine ourselves according to these identities.

An Accusation

Both prophetic passages start with an accusation

Ezekiel 34:1-4 - ¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

Jeremiah 23:1-2 - ¹"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD.

- Christ starts John 10 with an accusation as well (vs 1-2)
 - The 'shepherds' are truly thieves
- Christ intensifies the accusation at the end of our passage this morning as well (vs 25-26)
 - The 'sheep' are not even sheep

Application - In His accusation, Christ identifies false shepherds and false sheep and we must examine ourselves according to these identities (a call to solemn examination)

II Corinthians 13:5-6 - ⁵Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?---unless indeed you fail to meet the test! ⁶I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.

- Christ made this accusation against the most religious and devoted people of His day - the shepherds of the people
 - The Pharisees (for good reason) have gotten a bad name, but we must remember that they were very religious and devout people
 - ◆ Paul even says (Romans 10:2) - **For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.**
 - He said not only are you not shepherds, you're not even sheep
- We ought to examine ourselves as well, to make sure we do not fall into the same error
 - Are we true shepherds?
 - Are we even true sheep?
- The criteria for answering these questions will be given in the next two points

A Distinction

Both prophetic passages go on to make a distinction between the false shepherds and the true shepherd

In Ezekiel it says that God Himself would be the true Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:11-16 - ¹¹"For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

In Jeremiah it says that the Messiah (David's descendant) would be the true Shepherd

Jeremiah 23:3-5 - ³Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD. ⁵"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

- Christ also continues with a distinction between false shepherds and the true Shepherd and claims that He Himself is this true Shepherd (Claims By Parallelism - Promise Fulfilled)
 - By doing so He is claiming that He is the Messiah (according to Jeremiah)
 - By doing so He is claiming that He is God Himself (according to Ezekiel)
 - This will be important when we reach the second half of John 10 (sneak preview)
- To demonstrate that He is the true Shepherd, Christ makes four distinctions about shepherds
 - A difference in entry (vs 1-2, 7-9)
 - Enter by the door (which is Christ) or over the wall (any other point of entry)
 - A difference in purpose (vs 10, 16, 28)
 - To give life abundantly or to steal, kill and destroy
 - To seek out all of the sheep or to be content to let them perish (cf Ezekiel 34:4)
 - A difference in knowledge (vs 3, 14-15)
 - Intimate knowledge of the sheep or disregard of the sheep
 - Knowledge rooted in the unity of God (preview toward John 17 and the High Priestly Prayer)
 - A difference in dedication (vs 15, 17-18, 12-13)
 - Willing to give His life for the sheep or running at the first sign of danger

Applications

1. In His distinctions, Christ identifies Himself as the great Shepherd, so we must examine ourselves to see if we recognize the Shepherd (The sheep must recognize the Shepherd - The sheep must exult in the Shepherd)
 - Objectively, they ought to be able to tell the Shepherd from not shepherds
 - ◆ Must recognize the things and people of Christ and the things and people not of Christ

- They must also recognize and value what the Shepherd has done/is doing for them
 - ◆ Christ is the true Shepherd
 - ◆ He knows the sheep intimately, with a good purpose
 - ◆ He is giving life abundantly to the sheep
 - ◆ He has given His life for the sheep
 - ◆ Application = Psalm 23 - an exultation in the fact that the Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- ◆ Do you truly identify Christ as your Shepherd?
 - ◇ Does your soul rest in Christ as your Shepherd?
 - ◇ Does your soul exult in Christ as your Shepherd?

2. In His distinctions, Christ identifies Himself as the true Shepherd, so under-shepherds must examine themselves to see if they are really shepherds (Are we following in the Shepherd's footsteps - The examination part 1)

I Peter 5:1-4 - ¹So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ²shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

**Under-shepherds = elders/pastors (shepherding the church), parents (shepherding their children), other positions of God given authority*

So everyone here this morning either is in a shepherding role or is very likely in the future to be in some sort of shepherding role

- A shepherd must share the entrance of Christ - assuredly saved, but also walking in, abiding in, Christ
 - ◆ Shepherd, are you abiding in Christ as the source your of life?
 - ◆ Shepherd, do you have evidence of your abiding in Christ?
- A shepherd must share the purpose of Christ - to push the sheep into Christ, the source of life, and to seek out the sheep not yet in the fold
 - ◆ Shepherd, do you continually point to Christ, or do you find yourself often making much of yourself?
 - ◆ Shepherd, do you seek out those who are not in Christ yet, or are you content with what you already have? (**Look different)
- A shepherd must share the knowledge of Christ - to know the sheep intimately
 - ◆ Shepherd, do you take the time to know the sheep in your care, to know their needs, their desires, their struggles?
- A shepherd must share the dedication of Christ - to care for the sheep to the point of giving up his life
 - ◆ We can't give our lives for the sheep in the same way Christ did, but we ought to share His level of dedication to the sheep
 - ◆ Shepherd, do you have this level of dedication to your duties as a shepherd, do you care for the sheep this much?

A Judgment

The prophetic passage in Ezekiel moves on to describe a judgment of the sheep

Ezekiel 34:17-24 - 17 "As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. 18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? 19 And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? 20 "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, 22 I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

- Returning to John 10, Christ also claims to be the descendant of David that will judge between sheep and sheep
- A Continuing Distinction: The true sheep from the false sheep
 - A difference in knowledge (vs 3-4, 14-16, 27)
 - The sheep know the Shepherd's voice, others do not
 - A difference in action (vs 3-4, 27)
 - The sheep follow the Shepherd, others do not
 - A difference in discrimination (vs 5, 8)
 - The sheep will not follow anyone else, others will
- A Diagnostic Distinction: Is one a sheep or not a sheep? (vs 24-27) (Diagnostic as opposed to Causative)
 - Actions demonstrate whether one is a sheep or not
 - These distinctions can show whether one is a sheep or not
 - They do not determine whether one is a sheep or not (2 complementary points)
 - It is not because one hears the voice of Christ that one becomes a sheep - it is because one is a sheep that one hears the voice of Christ (vs 16)
 - It is not because one rejects the voice of Christ that one becomes not a sheep - it is because one is not a sheep that one rejects the voice of Christ (vs 26)
 - So, these distinctions are a judgment - Christ judges who are sheep and who are not sheep based on their attributes

Applications

1. In His judgment, Christ identifies the sheep and we must examine ourselves to see if we are really sheep (Sheep must look like sheep - the examination part 2)
 - Do we know (do we love) the voice of Christ?
 - ◆ **Psalm 119:162 - I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil**
 - ◆ Do we find ourselves submitting to the words of Christ (the Word of God) in agreement?
 - ◆ Does something in our spirits respond to and exult in the words of Christ, the Word of God, in a way that nothing else causes our spirits to exult?

- Do we follow the voice of Christ?
 - ◆ **John 14:21-24 - ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.**
 - ◆ This is really a continuation of the last
 - ◇ If we know and love the voice of Christ, we will follow
 - ◆ So, the more important question is, do we follow the voice of Christ
 - ◇ Do we keep His commands? Do we follow where He leads?
 - Do we reject voices that are not of Christ?
 - ◆ **Colossians 2:8 - See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.**
 - ◆ Again, a continuation of the first, if we know and love Christ's voice above all other voices, we will follow Christ's voice in opposition to all other voices
 - ◇ Do we give the teaching of Scripture the priority place in our lives, or do we give other 'authorities' (e.g. common sense (the sheep's own voice), worldly conformity (the other sheep's/goats' voices), other teachers (other shepherds' voices), etc.) the primary place?
2. As part of His judgment, Christ makes a positive judgment as well - He identifies and seeks out other sheep and we must examine ourselves to see if we are seeking these sheep as Christ did (Evangelism must be rooted in Christ's understanding of the sheep)
- Christ makes a very 'reformed' statement here (Although I'm not going to dwell on it, I can't pass over the doctrines of grace stated clearly here)
 - ◆ He says there are two categories, sheep and not sheep (all over the passage)
 - ◆ He says these categories exist before coming or refusing to come to Christ (vs 16, 25-26)
 - Christ says that the sheep will be known by hearing and following His voice (vs 27)
 - Christ's mission is finding those sheep that are scattered among the goats (vs 16)
 - Our mission must emulate Christ -
 - ◆ We know why to evangelize
 - ◇ We evangelize because we know that there are sheep that have not been brought into the fold - there are those who are Christ's but have not yet heard His voice
 - ◇ We evangelize to identify these sheep when they hear the Word of Christ and follow Christ
 - ◆ We know how to evangelize
 - ◇ We evangelize by shouting out the word of Christ among the goats, so that the sheep scattered throughout will hear and follow

- ◆ We know how to deal with both acceptance and rejection
 - ◇ Rejection will happen, because we are shouting among goats who don't know our Master's voice - we should not take it personally

John 15 - ¹⁸"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.
 - ◇ Acceptance happens, not because of our ability, but because of Christ's voice

I Corinthians 3 - ⁵What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Conclusion

Christ makes an accusation, a distinction and a judgment and we must submit ourselves to these and examine ourselves according to these

So, therefore we must:

- Recognize the Shepherd - Exult in Christ as our Shepherd (Psalm 23)
- Imitate the Shepherd - Under-shepherds must follow the example of Christ
- Know and follow the voice of the Shepherd - If we claim to be sheep, we must look like sheep
- Have the goal of the Shepherd - Our evangelism must be bound by Christ's understanding of the sheep

Next week, we'll look at the fourth point Christ makes - A Covenantal Sacrifice