

The Good Shepherd

Jesus lifted the latch to the gate of the sheep-fold. The disciples and some others watched in silence as he stepped into to the pen. Closing the gate behind him, Jesus began to walk through the noisy yard among the bleating sheep. The animals milled and mixed about in the tight enclosure. Jesus seemed amused as he looked them over. They were sheep from many flocks; they belonged to different local shepherds. To protect the animals it was the custom to keep the sheep in a common fold each night.

The sea of woolly gray backs parted as Jesus walked among them. Turning back to face the disciples, Jesus pointed toward the sheep-gate and said: “Whoever does not enter the sheep-fold through the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a marauder.”

Placing his hands flat against his chest, Jesus declared: “The one who enters through the gate is shepherd of the sheep...he walks in front of them and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.”

As he spoke Jesus opened the big gate again and led the flock out toward the green pasture. Only his own sheep followed him. The others stayed in the fold. They would not follow any other shepherd. They would wait for their own to come for them.

The group of men, most of them Jesus’ disciples, looked on pleasantly as Jesus led the sheep. Some of them still did not get the message Jesus was trying to teach. They weren’t picturing themselves as the sheep and Jesus as their true shepherd...the one who speaks with God’s voice.

Jesus seemed to know they needed more, so he made it clearer: “I am the sheep-gate...whoever enters through me will be safe. He will go in and out and find pasture.”

The men began to nod, smile and speak among themselves as Jesus’ ideas began to arrange themselves in their minds.



Is Jesus your good shepherd? Do you recognize his voice in your life? Do you follow his lead? Do you believe the Good Shepherd Jesus knows you by name?

Jesus says that he is not only the shepherd, but that he is the gate as well. In this teaching we come to understand that it is only through this gate, through him, that we can enjoy life everlasting. As he said himself: “I came that you might have life and have it to the full.”