“The Goodness of Our Shepherd”
September 21, 2014
Text: John 10:16-21

Last Sunday, in our study of Jesus the Good Shepherd, we found that the original word for “good” that Jesus used, meant goodly, beautiful, noble, or intrinsically pleasing. This word is used often in the Bible, to describe a variety of things ranging from fruit good (Mt 3:10) & everything else God has created (I Tim 4:4), to the Law of God (Rom 7:16).

In the NT we are commanded/taught to=>

* “Have a reputation for good works” (I Tim 5:10)
* “To do good...to be generous & ready to share” (6:18)
* “To be an example of good deeds” (Titus 2:7)
* to be “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14)
* “[to] have regard for what is good” (I Cor 8:21)
* “[to] hold fast to that which is good” (I Thes 5:21)
* “[to] consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Heb 10:24).

In each of these cases the word for “good” is the same word Jesus used to describe Himself as the Good Shepherd. It is the “good”-ness in Christ that all but the most negative and unbelieving of minds would recognize as good, & would find attractive/appealing/pleasing.

In today’s text, the goodness of Jesus, our Good Shepherd, will be further examined, to answer the question=>

What is it, that makes Jesus so good?
Our text will provide 3 answers=>
* Jesus’ goodness saves the elect
* Jesus’ goodness pleases the Father
* Jesus’ goodness is obvious even to some non-believers.

* **Jesus’ Goodness Saves the Elect**

Christ, in His goodness, reached out w/ concern to the souls of the elect, extending beyond Jewish believers, to include Gentiles who were among the elect, as well.

He would bring/lead them also to Himself, so that, believing in Him, their souls would become saved.

*[John 10:16]* (Jesus)⇒ “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”

Who were these “other sheep” who weren’t in “this fold”?

And what is the fold, of which they were not part?

Ans: They were Gentiles whom God had chosen in eternity past. “This fold” refers to the safety of Judaism.

* In verse 3 of this chapter, Jesus had said that He, as the Good Shepherd, calls his own Jewish sheep by name and leads them out of that fold, forming His flock, and leaving unbelieving Jews in the fold of Judaism.

* In vs 4, Jesus said His sheep follow Him out of the fold, because they know/recognize His voice.

The “other sheep,” who aren’t part of “this fold” represent Gentiles who are also among God’s elect.

Isaiah’s prophecy had declared that, when Messiah came, He would shine the light of the gospel on Gentiles
a/w/a Jews (42:6) => “He [God] says, ‘It is too small a thing that You [Messiah] should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’”

These Gentiles, like the Jewish believers, had been given to Jesus by the Father (6:37) before the foundation of the world.

In Jn 17, Jesus will pray => “They were Yours and You gave them to Me” (17:6).

Gentiles didn’t form a “fold” of their own, because, as Jn 11:52 explains, they were “scattered abroad.” But Jesus gathered them together, & brought them into His flock, along w/ Jewish believers.

Jn 12:32 (Christ) => “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

Jesus said “I have other sheep”; not “I will have them.” He had them right then, even though they weren’t yet born again.

He laid claim to them as His sheep even before they were saved, and even before He had died for their salvation.

These Gentiles hadn’t yet believed in Jesus, but they were among the elect, predestined by God in eternity past, to do so.

Jesus said of these elect Gentiles => “I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice.”
The word “bring” actually means Christ must lead them, & Jesus indicates that He must do so, just as He had led the Jews. The tense of the word “bring” means it refers to a single act, & prob. refers the moment a person is irresistibly called/drawn to Jesus, & believes in Him for the salvation of his/her soul. Jesus said, “They will hear My voice,” just as He had said of Jewish believers in verse 3 of this chapter=> “The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” Still today, God’s chosen hear Jesus’ voice in the gospel. The H.S. leads them to faith in Christ, & they become saved.

In terms of Jesus’ leading Gentiles in general, to Himself, the moment of their “leading” as a race was Pentecost. That was when the Church was led out of Judaism, & Judaism’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah. From its birth, the Church, as Jesus viewed it, was to be made up of both Jews/Gentiles alike. But it took Peter’s vision of the sheet coming down out of heaven full of clean/unclean animals to bring Jewish Christians to that realization. And even then, the issue of Gentile inclusion in the Church had to be officially decided by a Church council.
You might think the Apostles would have understood this principle based on Jesus’ words in our text; but they didn’t.

**Every one of us as individuals, who have become saved, have been brought/led to Christ by the power of God in Him.**

His loving goodness sought us, & led us to follow Him by faith, so that He became our Savior/Shepherd.

We would never have come, unless God had drawn us.

Jesus said of God’s elect Gentiles=> “I must bring them also.”

If Jesus, being the omnipotent Son of God, says He “must” do something, you can be very sure it will happen.

Our Lord will always accomplish what He sets out to do.

And so He would bring Gentile believers into His flock.

**In addition, Jesus described how He was going to do it,**

when He said=> “They will hear My voice.”

Jesus saves people’s souls, as they hear the gospel, & the H.S. drives it home to their hearts, so that they believe in Christ.

He has commissioned us who believe, to proclaim the gospel to others, saying=> “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk 16:15).

This is our Lord’s command to us who believe in Him.

We aren’t told to do a lot of other things in order to bring people to salvation in Christ—just to preach the gospel.

Then Jesus assured us=> “They will hear My voice.”
Scripture says of God’s chosen sheep that they will hear Christ’s voice & it will ring true to their hearts as they do. Others, upon whom God has not shed His grace, may turn away and ignore the gospel; But as for Christ’s own chosen sheep, they will hear it.

Paul told Jews who had rejected the gospel=> “Let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen” (Acts 28:28). Paul had no fears that God’s Word would not be received. We shouldn’t either, given the fact that Jesus has His sheep who must be led to Him, for salvation. And we may well be the ones to lead them. On the other hand, you might be one of those being led to Jesus yourself, having already resisted God’s grace long enough in the past.

If you are, I strongly urge/encourage you to surrender yourself to His leading, esp. if you sense God’s Spirit drawing you.

The Lord knows His own sheep, & they will come to Him. And He promises=> “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (Jn 6:37).

With the entrance of Gentile believers into Jesus’ flock, there was a unity between Jews/Gentiles that had never existed before.
Jesus said=> “They will become one flock with one shepherd.”

Every true believer, regardless of his denomination/race, is one w/ every other true/sincere/spiritually-minded Christian.

Anyone who loves the Lord Jesus & lives in close communion w/ Him, perceives the life of Christ in others who love Jesus Christ, & they have fellowship together.

Set an Arminian who truly loves Jesus, next to a Calvinist who truly loves Jesus, get them both praying, and you will find they pray very much alike.

In fact, they can feel surprisingly comfortable praying together.

There is a strong family kinship/feeling among those who are one in Christ, because they are all members of His body, & are sheep of His flock.

The best way to draw real Christians together in true unity is simply to get all the sheep to follow their Shepherd.

So what makes Jesus, the Good Shepherd, so good?

So intrinsically pleasing?

1st, He saves his elect, & unites them in oneness, w/ Him.

* Jesus’ Goodness Pleases the Father

[Verse 17] (Jesus)=> “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that [in order that] I may take it again.”
The Father’s love for His Son is eternally linked to Jesus’ heartfelt obedience to His Father.

In fact, all love of god is connected w/ obedience.

The ultimate example of that obedience occurred when Jesus laid down His life in crucifixion, for the salvation of His people.

As Paul put it in Phil 2=> “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. / For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name” (Phil 2:8-9).

Jesus has already said twice here in John 10 (vss 11 & 15) that He would lay down His life for the sheep; & that is what He did.

His dying at the hands of sinful men, then taking His life back again through resurrection, was viewed by His Heavenly Father w/ profound/infinite pleasure.

Through His death, the Good Shepherd offered Himself as a sacrifice for His flock, that would satisfy divine justice, reconcile man to God, and create true unity among all those who are born again.

Then, according to Rom 4:25, He was raised for our justification. The wording of verse 17 indicates that Jesus’ death was not an end in itself, but that He died so that He could be resurrected.

He died for the purpose of rising again into a new life, in a new kind of body, the first fruits of resurrection
(I Cor 15:20), of which believers will be the latter fruits when we too are resurrected.
The perfection of man’s nature—both in body/soul—had been God’s purpose from the beginning.
And that would never be possible until he had become a new man, living in a new body, free at last of the effects of sin.

Jesus’ death/resurrection was the means by which that was made possible, & He became the prototype of what we shall be through both physical/spiritual resurrection.
Having not only died to atone for our sin, but also risen back to life, Jesus raises/will-raise us to new life also in Him.

In Jn 6:39, Jesus had said=> “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”

Jesus will raise His whole flock to resurrection/glory, just as the Father had planned & commanded.

There were other reasons why God the Father, loved the Son for laying down His life, but perhaps the most important was Christ’s own delight in His Father’s redemptive plan.

The Son’s delight delighted the Father.

The redeemed were to be a people who had known both good & evil, & had experienced the tragic results of their own sins.
They were to be restored from sin/death/hell, to become a people who, by painful experience, would learn to abhor all unrighteousness—but esp. their own. But to make this plan work, God Himself would have to become a man, identifying Himself w/ all other men, then dying in their place to satisfy the divine Law.

God the Son agreed to this, was born of a virgin, set aside the free exercise of His own glory, & lived in complete dependency on God the Father, just like every other human being does. Not only did the Son submit to God’s will, He embraced it w/ love/joy.

In Psa 40 He says=> “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. / I delight to do Your will, O my God” (Psa 40:7-8).

It was the Son’s highest pleasure to surrender Himself to God’s will and God’s plan, for the redemption of fallen man, even knowing it would require Him to submit to death Himself. He endured the nails of His crucifixion, the scourge/scorn, the injustice of it all, the imputation of man’s sin to Himself, & the Father’s having to reject/forsake Him. Ultimately, He endured the bitter agony of death itself. And He endured it all quietly, like a lamb being led to the slaughter.

The Father loved His Son, & would never have withheld His love, if Jesus had not accepted the cross.
But His love became focused into intense & loving delight as His Son willingly died in the way He did, for the salvation of His sinful people.

In vs 18, Christ reminds us that He did it all of His own free will.

[Verse 18] (Jesus) => “‘No one has taken it [life] away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.’”

No one forced Jesus to lay down His life—not Judas’ treachery, not the soldiers who arrested Him in the garden, not the Sadducees who sent them, nor the scribes/Pharisees’ political manipulations brought it all about, and not Pilate, in spite of his asking Jesus=> “Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?”

Christ answered=> “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above” (Jn 19:10f).

Unless God had enabled Pilate to exercise his authority, as a Roman ruler over Jesus, putting Him to death, he could have done nothing to Christ.

As Peter explained it on Pentecost to the Jews=>

“This Man [Jesus], delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death” (Acts 2:23).

Does this mean God the Father, by some power superior to that of the Son, had forced Jesus to lay down His life?
No, Jesus’ power is infinite, just like the Father’s because He too is God.

As He said, “no one” had taken His life from Him.
Not even His Heavenly Father.
The Father did command His Son to give His life as a ransom & a propitiation for human sin;
But (as we have seen) the Son willingly obeyed the Father’s command, embracing God’s redemptive plan Himself;
No one forced Him to do so.

Having emptied Himself & lowered Himself to our manhood,
Jesus did nothing, until it was authorized by the Father.

He was still the eternal Son of God, & was still therefore omnipotent w/i Himself.
But He voluntarily restricted the use of His own innate power, until authorized by His Father to activate/use it.

Not only had the Father authorized Him to die/rise-again, He had commanded Him to do so.
The Father/Son are One, & that oneness acts together in the Father’s commands, & the Son’s loving obedience.

In Jn 14, Jesus will say=> “So that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me” (Jn 14:31).

We who have believed in Jesus, are to respond in exactly the same way to His commands, as He does the Father’s.
Jn 14:15 (Jesus)=> “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

Do you want to show Jesus you love Him?
If so, get into His Word & obey it by=>

* Repenting of sin
* Loving Christ wholeheartedly
* Praying to Him humbly/worshipfully
* Attending church faithfully so you can learn more about Him.
* Proclaiming the gospel to the lost.

Review=> What is it, that makes Jesus so good/winsome?

* His goodness saves the elect
* His goodness pleases the Father

* Jesus’ Goodness Is Obvious Even to Some Non-believers

Not all, but some, as we’ll see in verse 19-21 of our text.

* Those who love their sin so much that satanic blindness blocks their spiritual eyes from seeing even the brightest beam of God’s light, find the goodness of God unimpressive & even repugnant to them, so they close their minds to it.
* But those who are at least open-minded enough to consider the truth, can recognize the goodness of Jesus for what it is.

In the same way, the gospel of Jesus Christ creates division still today bringing out both the-best/the-worst in human nature, because (as Rom 8:7)=> “The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.”
That’s what happened among the crowd of onlookers in our text, and the result was a division among them.

[Verse 19] => “A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.”

We have seen divisions over Jesus like this since chapter 7, where => “There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, ‘He is a good man’; others were saying, ‘No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray’” (7:12),

Another division “because of Him” occurred in vs 43 of John 7, and feelings got so intense, some wanted to seize Jesus.

More recently, we saw that after Jesus healed the man born blind,

“Some of the Pharisees were saying, ‘This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.’ But others were saying, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?’ And there was a division among them” (Jn 9:16).

And now John writes => “A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.”

1st, we see a reaction that prob. came from the Pharisees =>
their never-ending hostility towards Christ, mixed w/ a fear that others might listen to Him, & believe His words.

[Verse 20] => “Many of them were saying, ‘He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?’”

Jesus had talked about laying down His own life, then taking it up again, & He had said the Father loved Him for that.
In the Pharisees’ minds, no one could, by his own power, raise himself back to life after he had died.
And to die by his own power would be the sin of suicide.
So for Jesus to say God the Father loved Him for intending to kill Himself, was heresy in their book.

John says this represented the thinking of many Jews there, & that they concluded therefore, Jesus was demonized.
They went even 1 step further, arguing that the demon in Jesus’ mind had actually driven Him insane.

These people hadn’t given serious consideration to anything Jesus had said.
Instead of believing-Him/believing-in Him, they had leveled an accusation at Him, that had serious implications for them personally, being similar to the one we find in Matt 12.

There Jesus had healed another blind man, but one who was also demonized, and the Pharisees said=>

“This man [Jesus] casts out demons only by Beelzebul [name for Satan], the ruler of the demons”
(Mt 12:24).

Jesus had responded by accusing them of blaspheming the H.S. & had said they could never be forgiven of that.

Unlike those in our text who simply dismissed Christ’s words, a few were at least willing to listen to Him open-mindedly.
We don’t know whether/not any of them went on to believe in Jesus, but at least these were reasonable enough to recognize in Jesus’ words/deeds, His inherent goodness.

[Verse 21]=> “Others were saying, ‘These are not the sayings of
one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?’”

These more rational minds saw Jesus as sane/gracious.

I.e. as “good.”

They came to the same reasonable/logical conclusion that the blind man himself had reached=> “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him” (Jn 9:31).

What does this passage say to us, & how should we respond?

1) It tells us that there is an inherent goodness about everything Jesus said/did, that all but the most seriously sin-blinded and Satan-blinded minds are able to recognize.

So we ask ourselves how we feel about Jesus, in light of everything we read about Him in Scripture?

Do we love/worship Him?

That’s the reasonable response because He is so good.

2) If we discover there is an inexplicable animosity or indifference in our hearts towards Jesus, we should place ourselves in the same camp as those Pharisees who hated Him.

Indifference is really just passive hatred.

In that case, we need to seek His forgiveness, asking Him to do for us what only He can do, having laid down His life and taken it up again=> forgive our sin.
3) If we consider ourselves Jesus’ sheep & part of His flock, we should seek to emulate our Shepherd’s goodness, as we read at the beginning of this message=>

* “Have regard for what is **good**”
* “[Be] zealous for **good** deeds”
* “Be an example of **good** deeds”
* “**Do good** [by being] generous & ready to share”
* “Hold fast to that which is **good**”
* “Have a reputation for **good** works”
* “Consider how to stimulate one another to love and **good deeds**” (Heb 10:24).

In obeying these commands, we will prove our love for Jesus, just as He proved His love for God the Father, by becoming obedient even unto death.
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Text: John 10:16-21

1. Last Sunday in our study of Jesus the Good Shepherd, we found that the original word for “good” that Jesus used meant goodly, beautiful, noble, or intrinsically pleasing.

I Tim 5:10; 6:18; Titus 2:7; 2:14; I Cor 8:21; I Thes 5:21; Heb 10:24

What is it that makes Jesus so good? Our text will provide three answers…

* Jesus’ Goodness Saves the Elect

2. Christ in His goodness reached out with concern to the souls of the elect, extending beyond Jewish believers to include Gentiles who were among the elect.

[John 10:16]

3. Isaiah’s prophecy had declared that when Messiah came, He would shine the light of the gospel on Gentiles as well as Jews.

Isa 42:6; Jn 6:37; 17:6:11:52

4. Every one of us as individuals who have become saved have been brought or led to Christ by the power of God in Him.

Mk 16:15

5. Scripture says of God’s chosen sheep that they will hear Christ’s voice and it will ring true to their hearts as they do.

Acts 28:28; Jn 6:37

6. With the entrance of Gentile believers into Jesus’ fold, there was a unity between Jews and Gentiles that had never existed before.

* Jesus’ Goodness Pleases the Father

[Verse 17]

7. The Father’s love for His Son is eternally linked to Jesus’ heartfelt obedience to His Father.

Phil 2:8-9; Jn 10:11, 15; Rom 4:25; I Cor 15:20

8. The perfection of man’s nature—God’s purpose from the beginning—would never be possible until he had become a new man living in a new body free of the effects of sin.

Jn 6:39; Psa 40:7-8
9. The Father loved His Son; but His love became focused into intense delight as His Son willingly died for the salvation of His [14 sinful] people.


10. The Father did command His Son to give His life for human sin; but the Son willingly obeyed the Father [20 embracing] God’s redemptive plan Himself.

Jn 14:31, 15

* Jesus’ Goodness Is Obvious Even to Some Non-believers

11. Those who are at least open-minded enough to consider the truth can recognize the [20 goodness] of Jesus for what it is.

Rom 8:7

[Verse 19] Jn 7:12; 7:43; 9:16

12. First we see a reaction from the Pharisees—their never ending hostility towards Christ, mixed with a fear that others might listen to Him and [16 believe] His words.

[Verse 20] Mt 12:24

13. Unlike those in our text who simply dismissed Christ’s words, a few were at least willing to [14 listen] to Him open-mindedly.

[Verse 21] Jn 9:31

What does this passage say to us, and how should we respond?

*14. It tells us that there is an inherent goodness about everything [12 Jesus] said and did.

*15. If there is an inexplicable animosity or indifference in our hearts towards Jesus, we need to seek His [24 forgiveness].

*16. If we consider ourselves Jesus’ sheep, we should seek to emulate our Shepherd’s [18 goodness].