

“We Are Important to Jesus!”—John 10:11

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “We Are Important to Jesus!”, is John 10:11. Jesus said: *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

How do you determine the importance of someone or something in your life? Family relationships? Most people will say they would do anything for their family, especially their children. In fact, some would consider not willing to do anything for a family member to be evidence of a lack of relationship between them. Some might even identify it as a sign of dysfunction. In the ebb and flow of life it is interesting how the importance of something, or even someone, is based upon how much “value” one places on the thing or the relationship.

Unfortunately, too many times the “value” of both things and people gets compressed into a standard of money. Married couples quarrel about the manner in which money is spent to the point of producing resentments in their relationship, even leading to divorce. I’ve heard many a farm wife express feelings of not be appreciated and valued when the house is an eyesore while

the quonset and other buildings are immaculate. Parents can crush a child's spirit when "losing it" because he broke the toy within minutes of receiving it as a gift. Why? Because the child did not value it in the same way as the parents. Money as a standard of value in life is so messed up that people turn things upside down. Instead of loving people and using things they use people and love things.

In our text Jesus expresses how important you are to Him because He values you so highly. He is speaking about our relationship with Him by using the picture of the relationship of a shepherd with his sheep—a very cherished picture for many Christians carried over from Psalm 23. It was included in the Introit we read today.

What Jesus thinks about you is displayed by His actions toward you as *the good shepherd*. Throughout John 10 He describes these actions which display how valuable you are to Him. Notice . . .

- His relationship with you is secure and intimate. A parent can discern her child's voice or cry in the midst of many voices and visa versa. Jesus says in John 10:3-4 → *The sheep hear the shepherd's 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.*

- You are so valuable to Him that He will do anything to protect you from others who try to lead you astray and destroy your relationship with Him. Jesus contrasted His care to that of a hired hand in John 10:12-13 → *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. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.* While the hired hand is more concerned about his own welfare, Jesus is solely concerned about **your** welfare. In fact, because He is **truly** concerned for His flock He stands up and fights off *the wolf* (i.e. satan) when he attacks you. You are cared for by Jesus **on His terms—because of His love for you no matter what.**
- Even the lost sheep are valuable to Jesus. He says in John 10:16 that He has *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.* He cares for all who are lost in their sin, so much so that . . .
- . . . He laid down His life for all! This is the ultimate expression of His relationship with you as your *good shepherd!* In this whole description of His relationship with you His atoning death is mentioned over and over again! It is His death and resurrection which has sealed this relationship with you forever!

Jesus says in our text that He is ***the*** good shepherd, the One Who has laid down His life for us. The real impact of such an act on His part is that it flows from **pure love!** He said in John 10:18 that *no one takes My life 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 have received from My Father.* Such a statement is rather strange for anyone having watched His death unfold. Arrested by the Sanhedrin's soldiers, taken through a mock hearing by the priests with trial by the Roman governor who had him beaten, mocked and humiliated in the presence of all. Then he turned Jesus over so the soldiers could kill Him by crucifixion.

From all appearances it looks like His life was ripped from Him. And yet Jesus says, *no one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord?* Even when His disciples wanted to take action during His arrest He reminded them in Matthew 26:53-54 → *Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?*

God's steadfast love for sinners such as you and I was displayed by Jesus' passive obedience, allowing it all to happen to Him so that you could be forgiven of your sin and receive eternal fellowship with your Father in heaven! 1 Peter 2:23-25 describes His passive obedience for you: *When He was*

*reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him Who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. His passive obedience makes your active obedience possible as His lamb.*

By dying and rising for you He has taken you out of satan's grasp and placed us into the protective and caring hands of God so that you can have *life . . . to the full!* Notice Jesus gives your life a different value as well! When you hear Jesus' promise to give you life abundant of what do you think? Prosperity? Good health and happiness? The opportunities to pursue your dreams and desires? A life absent of tragedy and suffering? Eternal life? How about a life lived in the security of your Good Shepherd's providence and protection even with the spiritual battles, tragedies, suffering and so forth right now? You see, experiencing how important and valued you are to Jesus gives you a whole different perspective of what's important and valuable in your life and relationships today!

This relationship of concern and care that Jesus has brought us into motivates us to follow Him as we hear His voice daily in His written Word, the Bible. Jesus and His Word then become very important to us! We value His

written Word for the guidance of His Holy Spirit in our daily lives and reassurance of His forgiveness and grace! As His sheep we consider His will and Word—which is His *voice* speaking to His sheep—to be of utmost importance to the existence of both our spiritual and physical lives and relationships. There are times when you too will be passive to those who sin against you, putting their sin against you in its proper place—at the cross with Jesus. There are times when you too will display active obedience to God by words and deeds which serve others, not because you think they deserve such help but because they are also sheep for whom our Good Shepherd died. Sinners now become just as valued and love by you because of the love of our Good Shepherd for all! Amen.

*Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead  
our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep,  
by the blood of the eternal covenant,  
equip you with everything good that you may do His will,  
working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,  
through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

(Hebrews 13:20-21)