

LESSON 49

The Good Shepherd and the Merciful Samaritan

John 10:1-21; Luke 10:25-37

BEFORE WE BEGIN, after Jesus had described the Pharisees as *blind* in John 9:39-41, he changed His figure from "I am the Light of the world" (John 9:5) to "I am the Good Shepherd." In this lesson you will learn to know Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Read John 10:1-11

LESSON OUTLINE

A. The Good Shepherd

1. Jesus began speaking by giving a negative example: He described those who enter the sheepfold illegally. They do not go through the door, the lawful entrance, because they are thieves and robbers. Jesus was applying this figure to the Pharisees whom He had just rebuked. They were the *spiritual* thieves of his sheep.
2. The door of the sheepfold is the door to the kingdom of heaven; and Jesus is the door through which His sheep enter the kingdom of heaven. There was also a porter, a herald, who was John the Baptist. John held the door to the kingdom open.
3. The sheep — all God's sheep — know the Shepherd's voice and respond to Him because they belong to Him; for from eternity He has called them all by name, to be His, verse 4.
 - a. He cares for them and feeds them through all their lives, verse 9.
 - b. He cared for them so much that He gave His own life to save them.

Read verses 12-21

4. The Good Shepherd has the *authority* to care for His sheep and to die to save them. The authority is His Father, Who loves Him for laying down His life for the sheep, verse 15.
 5. Jesus told His audience of Jews that He has other sheep, too, not of the sheepfold of Israel, but of the Gentiles. They feed in other pastures. Soon — after Jesus' death and resurrection — all His sheep will be in *one* fold, verse 16, in the church of New Testament times.
- ##### B. Other Shepherds
1. Strangers try to enter Christ's sheepfold. They try to sneak in: not

by the door (which is Jesus) but by climbing up some other way, verse 1.

- a. They are strangers, and the sheep will not follow them.
 - b. They are thieves and robbers, trying to steal the sheep; but Jesus' sheep do not hear them, verse 8.
2. The false shepherds see the wolves of danger coming, and they flee. Why?

- a. They are not true shepherds, but hired servants. They want their wages. They seek themselves. They take the office of a shepherd to enrich *themselves*.
 - b. When danger threatens, they show that they do not care for the sheep, nor value their lives, but run to save themselves, verse 12.
3. The Pharisees understood that Jesus was speaking of them. Their reaction to Jesus' beautiful Words was: "He hath a devil, and is mad," verse 20. Others in His audience, remembering the blind man, asked, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" verse 21. Once again, this is a striking example of the two opposite reactions to Jesus' Words.

Read Luke 10:25-37

C. The Parable of the Merciful Samaritan

1. The occasion for this parable was the coming of a lawyer to Jesus, to tempt Him. The lawyer asked the question of verse 25. Remember that a Jewish lawyer was supposed to be an expert in the knowledge of God's law.
 - a. Jesus turned his question back to him: "What does the law say?"
 - b. The lawyer correctly went to the heart of the law by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5.
 - c. Jesus answered, "This do, and thou shalt live."
2. The lawyer, attempting to trap Jesus, was caught in his own trap; and to justify himself he asked, "Who is my neighbor?"
3. To teach the lawyer about his neighbor, Jesus told a parable.
 - a. He made the setting for the parable on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.
 - b. That road went from 2,600 feet above sea level to 1,300 feet below. Consequently, the road was steep and winding. It was also rough, rocky, and lonely.
 - c. Lawless bands of men found this an ideal place to attack lonely travelers who could not defend themselves.

4. The man in the parable, traveling alone, was attacked by thieves. They took everything he had, even his clothes, and beat him so badly he was almost dead.
5. Two men happened to pass by as their fellow countryman lay there half dead. They were a priest and a Levite.
 - a. Their work was in the service of Jehovah: to teach the law and to be examples to the people.
 - b. They offered sacrifices for those who had sinned. They should have been the most compassionate men in Israel.
6. The priest saw the dying man and walked around him. The Levite stopped and looked and went to the other side of the path. Why? Both served the law outwardly but had no love in their hearts.
7. Then a Samaritan passed: a man from the nation which hated the Jews and whom the Jews despised with a passion.
 - a. *This* Samaritan did not deserve the hatred of the Jews.
 - b. He felt sorry for the badly-injured Jew.
 - 1) He dressed his wounds.
 - 2) He let him ride on his own animal.
 - 3) He went to the nearest inn to get help and care for the man.
 - 4) He left instructions, verse 35, and money for the man's care.
8. Now Jesus was ready to ask the lawyer the *correct* question:
 - a. not "Who is my neighbor?"
 - b. but "Whose neighbor am I?"
9. In this parable Jesus taught that the love of the Samaritan was rooted in *compassion*: to suffer with someone else. That love is rooted in the love of God, Who sent His compassionate Son to suffer and die for us.
10. What is the answer to the question: "Whose neighbor am I?" I am neighbor to those who cross my path and need my help. I help them because of God's love to me and His grace in my heart.

DO NOT FORGET that Jesus told this parable in answer to the question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The answer is that everything which you inherit has already been earned for you by your Savior. Knowing this, you love your neighbor for God's sake, and you are now ready to

Discuss in class the question: "Whose neighbor am I?"