

HOW THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP



THE INFINITE, INTIMATE LOVE BETWEEN THE
GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP ...

***I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. I KNOW MY OWN AND MY OWN KNOW ME,
JUST AS THE FATHER KNOWS ME AND I KNOW THE FATHER.***

(JOHN 10:14-15A ESV)

1. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows his sheep and his sheep know him, 10:14-15.

- (John 10:14–15 ESV) **I am the good shepherd.** I know my own and my own know me, 15 **just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;** and I lay down my life for the sheep.

A. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows—has an intimate, experiential knowledge of and love for—his sheep and his sheep know him in this same way.

B. He knows his sheep “just as” he and the Father know each other.

10:15 “just as” ... according as; even as; in proportion as, in the degree that.

Brief Excursus: The Father and the Son know and love each other in this way ...

- The Father and the Son relate to one another from the depths of who they are.
- A brief overview of their divine attributes will yield very helpful insight as to how they “know” each other.
- God is holy and transcendent in all of his attributes.
 - **Holy** – God is holy in that he is “other” than anyone or anything else in the universe as the uncreated One who is infinitely beyond and superior to all else. He is holy in all of his attributes as in surpassing knowledge both intellectually and experientially.
 - **Attribute** – a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone.
 - **Transcendent** – exceeding usual limits; surpassing; extending beyond the limits of ordinary experience.
- Even though Jesus is holy and transcendent, as his sheep for whom he laid down his life, we know him “just as” he knows the Father.
- Here is partial list of the attributes of our God.

God is infinite, eternal, holy, love, light, glorious, gracious, good, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, wise, faithful, immanent (at hand), righteous, immutable (unchanging), self-existent/self-sufficient, just, sovereign, transcendent ...

END BRIEF EXCURSUS

C. Further insight and explanation ...

In his statement ... “I know my own and my own know me, **just as** the Father knows me and I know the Father” ... Jesus gives us tremendous insight into the

infinite, intimate experiential love and knowledge he has for us. And even though his loving and knowing us in this way is beyond our ability to fully comprehend, he is communicating to us that it is not beyond our ability to reciprocate and love and know him in this same way.

Yes, we take into account our limitations as finite humans, but we must not overlook the work of God in our lives which allows us to embrace and live in this amazing relationship we have with Jesus and the Father.

This was the plan from eternity past that Jesus would lay down his life for his elect sheep. Sheep he had in mind before he created our world. He expressed his love for us by laying down his life to save his sheep.

D. Knowing and loving Jesus in this way is only possible because he first loved us.

- (1 John 4:18–19 ESV) There is no fear in love, but **perfect love casts out fear.** For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 **We love because he first loved us.**

2. Jesus has other sheep in which he has this same relationship that are of another fold, 10:16-18.

- (John 10:16–18 ESV) And I have 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. 17 **For this reason the Father loves me,** because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 **No one takes it 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.

A. Jesus calls out his sheep from two folds—Judaism (Jews) and Gentiles (everyone else).

B. Contemporary Christians are of the other fold.

- (1 Peter 1:8 ESV) **Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.**

C. The sheep from both folds listen to his voice.

D. The Father loves Jesus as they share perfect harmony in carrying out their salvation plan.

E. Jesus emphasizes that the Jews did not take his life from him but that he laid it down by his choice.

F. He did this in perfect harmony with the Father.

3. There was **again** a division among the Jews because of what Jesus said, 10:19-21.

- (John 10:19–21 ESV) There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” 21 Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

A. Jesus again caused division among the people to draw attention to his true identity, cf. John 7:43, 9:16.

B. Jesus came to bring this division because sheep left to themselves do not see the lines of distinction between darkness and light.

- (Luke 12:51 ESV) Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

4. The devil vehemently opposes those who follow Jesus' example to speak God's word to direct people from their lies to the truth of God.

A. The devil hates this because he wants to obscure the identity of the Shepherd of the sheep.

B. This is contrary to John's purpose in the gospel.

- (John 20:31 ESV) But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

C. That is why we must clearly teach that Jesus is the one who entered the sheepfold by the door—the true Shepherd of the sheep.

D. False teachers blur the lines of distinction and “the many” who do not pay much closer attention are deceived into thinking that they know Jesus when in reality they have no relationship with him whatsoever.

- (Matthew 7:23 ESV) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

5. God will not waver in judging these false teachers and all violations and acts of disobedience regarding the message he delivered.

- (Hebrews 2:2–3 NLT) For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. 3 So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak?

A. Do not be so foolish to believe that you can ignore the great salvation that was announced by Jesus and delivered by the apostles.

- (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 ESV) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

B. These acts of disobedience flow from a proud, rebellious heart and show contempt for the finished, sufficient work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

6. Those who stand firm in dividing truth from the lies for the sake of Christ and the gospel will be hated by the devil and by the people who have fallen for this schemes.

A. The one who divides for Jesus' sake is blessed.

- (Matthew 5:11–12a ESV) Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

B. He must be strong in the Lord to stand firm.

- (Ephesians 6:10–11 ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

C. He must be sober-minded and watchful.

- (1 Peter 5:8 ESV) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

7. Those who do not follow Jesus' example of dividing people from their lies regarding his identity will themselves fall prey to the lies and schemes of the devil.

A. Their sinful anger invites more evil into their lives.

- (Psalm 37:8 ESV) Refrain from anger ... it tends only to evil.
- (Ephesians 4:26–27 ESV) Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

B. They will be outwitted by Satan.

- (2 Corinthians 2:11 ESV) ... so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

C. They will be deceived and led astray as Eve.

- (2 Corinthians 11:3–4 ESV) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led

astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

4 For if someone comes and proclaims **another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive **a different spirit** from the one you received, or if you accept **a different gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

8. Those who disobey the command to speak the truth in love become more and more vulnerable to lies that sound like truth.

- (Ephesians 4:14–15 NLT) Then we will **no longer be immature like children**. We won't be **tossed and blown about** by every wind of new teaching. We will **not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth**. 15 **Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ**, who is the head of his body, the church.

- A. If they are believers, they are infantile believers who are unstable and easily deceived.
- B. Infantile believers have rejected—and so they neither obey nor understand—the principles and dynamics of speaking the truth in love.
 - i. They remain captive to their childish behavior.
 - ii. They are unable to discern truth from lies and so are easily tricked by other humans and the devil.
 - iii. Their pride keeps them in a downward spiral of further disobedience and deceit.
 - iv. They increase their vulnerability to deception because they accept their sinful behavior patterns as normal or even good Christian practice.
- C. The one who lies to others has not turned away from the old life and as a result is not being renewed in the knowledge and abundance of the new life.
 - (Colossians 3:9–10 ESV) **Do not lie to one another**, seeing that you have **put off the old self** with its practices 10 **and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator**.

9. The Jews demanded that Jesus tell them who he was, 10:22-26.

- (John 10:22–26 ESV) At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus

was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. 24 **So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”** 25 **Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe.** The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, 26 but **you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.**

- A. The Jews gathered around him and demanded he identify himself.
- B. He had already told them but because of their unbelief they were not able to receive his answer.
- C. They did not believe because they were not among his sheep.

10. Jesus contrasted their inability to believe with his sheep who hear his voice, 10:27-30.

- (John 10:27–30 ESV) **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me**. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, **and no one will snatch them out of my hand**. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, **and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand**. 30 I and the Father are one.”
- A. Jesus' sheep hear his voice and he knows them and they follow him.

Deduction: The person who does not follow Jesus does not hear his voice and is not known by him.
- B. Jesus gives his sheep eternal life and they will never perish and no one can grab or take them away out of his hand.
- C. This is even more certain because the Father has given Jesus' sheep to him and the Father is greater than all.
- D. No one is able to grab Jesus' sheep and take them away from the Father's hand.
- E. Jesus and the Father are one.

11. The Jews picked up stones again to kill Jesus, 10:31.

- (John 10:31 ESV) The Jews picked up stones again to stone him.