

The Gospel According to John

“Imposter or Good Shepherd— How Will You Know?”

John 10:1-6



John 10:1-5

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

John 10:6

This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them,
but they did not understand what those things were
which He had been saying to them.

Main Idea

There are many false teachers and clever imposters, but true sheep will flee from them and will follow instead the good shepherds the Lord has provided for them.

Background

John 9:34 "...so they put him out."

Ezekiel 34:1-2 and 11-12

Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,
"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.
Prophesy and say to those shepherds,
'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel
who have been feeding themselves!"'"

For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day."

Imposter or good shepherd?

False teachers and imposters



False teachers and imposters...

...do not enter through the door
but come in some other way.

John 10:1

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John 10:7

Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you,

I am the door of the sheep.”

False teachers and imposters
do not come in through Christ.

False teachers and imposters
do not come in through the means
designated by Christ.

Ministry is not simply a matter of personal choice; the Lord calls those He intends to lead His people, and He has provided us means to discern His calling.

James 3:1

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

Questions to ask:

Is the focus of this teacher or ministry aimed at bringing you to Christ?

Is this teacher or ministry affirmed by and under the authority of a gospel-preaching church?

False teachers and imposters...

Do not enter through the door but come in some other way.

**...are thieves and robbers and
are motivated by self-interest.**

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John 10:10

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”

They “come in” because they see some
opportunity for personal gain.

At least two types:

Those who come in because they perceive the work as “easier.”

Those who are seeking to “come in” among the sheep because they have discovered some way to profit by them.

Bear in mind that no false teachers or imposters tell you up front that they intend to fleece you; in fact, they may be deceived themselves.

2 Timothy 3:13

But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse,
deceiving and being deceived.

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False teachers and imposters...

Do not enter through the door but come in some other way.

Are thieves and robbers and are motivated by self-interest.

...are strangers to the sheep.

John 10:5

“A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

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Examples of “Stranger” Shepherds

The business model church
with CEO “pastors.”

“Follow me” ministries with wide
audiences and airbrushed bios.

Some questions to ask before listening:

- Are they accountable to a local gospel-preaching church that takes the protection of doctrine seriously?
- Are they teaching concepts they've *discovered* or *rediscovered* or that offer extraordinary results?
- Are they developing “followers” in some lifestyle, method, or philosophy?
- Are they appealing to you for money or selling their programs?

Imposter or good shepherd?

False teachers and imposters

Good shepherds



Good shepherds...

...enter through the door.

John 10:2

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John 10:7

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I am the door of the sheep.”

Good shepherds come to you through
Christ and with Christ and for Christ.

Good shepherds come to you through
designated means established by Christ
for affirmation and appointment.

1 Timothy 3:1-2

If any man aspires to the office of overseer,
it is a fine work he desires to do.

An overseer, then, must be...

Good shepherds...

Enter through the door.

...are known by and know the sheep.

They are known by the sheep.

John 10:3-4

To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

They are known by the sheep.

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Good shepherds are known by the sheep such that they can be affirmed in their calling.

But this surfaces a great temptation for sheep because in knowing their shepherd they will know his faults and will inevitably be disappointed by him.

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You will never be personally disappointed by shepherds you don't personally know.

Good shepherds know their own sheep.

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When **he puts forth all his own**, he goes ahead of them,
and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Pastoral care was not intended to be administered from ten thousand feet above the flock but by those who are among the sheep themselves.

Good shepherds...

Enter through the door.

Are known by and know the sheep.

...lead the sheep out
and go ahead of them.

John 10:3-4

To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

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and **he calls his own sheep by name
and leads them out.**

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and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Leading sheep out is difficult
because it means leading them out
of their places of comfort.

Good shepherds are willing to risk
disapproval for the sake of Christ
and His flock.

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**When he puts forth all his own,
he goes ahead of them,**

and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Good shepherds lead themselves
and preach to themselves first.

Good shepherds never ask their
sheep to do that which they are
unwilling to do themselves.

Imposter or good shepherd?

False teachers and imposters

Good shepherds

True sheep



True sheep...

...recognize good shepherds.

John 10:3-5

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strangers.”**

True sheep have the same
Spirit of truth by whom good
shepherds speak and lead.

1 John 2:27

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

True sheep...

Recognize good shepherds.

...follow good shepherds.

John 10:3-5

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This is not a reference to a cult
of personality; he is not followed
because he is so great.

He is followed because of how and where,
or rather, *to whom* He is leading.

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of personality; he is not followed
because he is so great.

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or rather, *to whom* He is leading.

**True sheep simply will not follow
a false teacher!**

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and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
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True sheep...

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Follow good shepherds.

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In our pluralistic culture, there is a great tendency to underestimate and even trivialize the dangers of false teaching.

Bear in mind that you are not likely to be tempted by radical ideas but by ideas that have a ring of truth and that appeal to your inclinations.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers **in accordance to their own desires**, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Some questions to ask yourself:

- Do I believe that the Lord calls shepherds?
- Are there reasons for me to distrust the calling of the shepherds the Lord has provided me?
- Am I glad for the food at my table, and am I eating it first and foremost?
- Have I subtly adopted an egalitarian mindset that makes every opinion of equal value to me, or do I prioritize the teaching or counsel of my shepherds?
- Are there teachers or teachings I follow that would be discouraged by my shepherds?

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, **for they keep watch over your souls** as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Concluding Thoughts

Your local shepherds are not the best and the brightest, but they are the ones that the Lord has given to you for the care of your souls.

Ensure that they have come in through Christ and then follow them gladly in grace.