

Title: A COMMUNITY BUILT THROUGH LEADERSHIP, JOHN 10:1-10
(Chatham, NJ; 05/15/11, AM) [D – Topical]

Theme: The Good Shepherd instructs the church on appropriate leadership characteristics.

Purpose: To discuss characteristics of good leadership illustrated by Jesus in the Good Shepherd imagery, and to encourage the entire church to grow in them.

Introduction:

1. Jesus portrays himself as the Good Shepherd, and this standardizes leadership in the church.
2. According to Ephesians 4:13 & 15-16 all of the church is to grow into the image of Christ, and so the Good Shepherd is the image we all strive for.
3. Here are the insights into leadership that Jesus describes.

I. Provides Leadership without Lordship

- A. Not domineering, 1 Peter 5:3.
 1. No doubt Peter remembered Jesus washing his feet at the Last Supper.
 2. He also remembered feeling indignant at James and John when they requested the most important seats in the Kingdom.
 3. Jesus told them not to lord it over those under their care.
 4. Peter now counsels his fellow elders to shepherd their flocks without domineering over them, but to do so willingly without feeling under compulsion.
- B. Lead the sheep, John 10:3.
 1. The elders are to lead, an activity that requires initiative.
 2. Peter expresses it as exercising oversight.
 3. Part of oversight is protecting the sheep from harm.
 4. Another part is giving them an example to follow, 1 Peter 5:3.
 5. Still another part of it is taking them to where they can be spiritually nourished, caring for their needs.

II. His Relationship with Them Is Intimate not Distant.

- A. Not Distant
 1. A hired hand sees the sheep only as objects of usefulness: they draw him a paycheck.
 2. The owner has a vested interest in the sheep like any owner of a business has a more personal interest in how the company does.
 3. Ownership creates an attachment.
 4. Though we are not owners, we are stewards of the owner and thus have a supreme interest in other members of the body of Christ.
- B. Intimate
 1. The shepherd calls the sheep by name, John 10:3.
 2. The sheep recognize his voice, 10:4.
 3. God cares for us, 1 Peter 5:7.
 4. In turn we call him "Our Father."
 5. Fellowship within the body of Christ must develop intimacy.
 6. Intimacy also develops in us an interest in the welfare of others.

III. He Gives Life; He Doesn't Take Life.

- A. The taking of life

1. Those who treat their position of leadership as a means of gain (1 Peter 5:2) are those who take life rather than give life.
2. He is no better than the thief and robber that Jesus speaks of.
3. We are not to see in others only what we can get out from them.
4. Some people take life in other ways: they never give to a relationship; they are always squeezing out of it whatever is to their benefit.

B. Give Life.

1. The Good Shepherd gives life, John 10:10.
2. His desire is to have others experience good.
3. He gives salvation and access to spiritual blessings.
4. This works out in our lives as demonstrating hospitality, doing good to others, and fulfilling the second commandment by doing no harm to others.
5. Anything else is nothing short of taking life.

IV. He Offers His Own Life

A. Not flee or abandon

1. The hired hand flees at danger, John 10:12.
2. He is after all only in it for himself.
3. Unger's discussion of fear in *War*, p. 120. This *cover, fire, cover, fire* technique is essentially what the men at Valley Forge learned and used effectively against the British in the Battle of Monmouth.
4. Later he talks about how men overcome their fears, pp. 121-122, 123-124.

B. The Good Shepherd lays down his life, John 10:11.

1. When Audie Murphy, winner of the Medal of Honor, was asked why he took on an entire German company, he replied, "They were killing my friends." (*War*, 121)
2. Friends give themselves to their friends, John 15:13.
3. John counsels his church to lay down their lives for one another, 1 John 3:16-18.

Conclusion:

1. Church leaders follow in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.
2. Church members seek the image of Christ in their lives a well.
3. Let us all seek to become like Christ and imitate the Good Shepherd to one another and to the world.