

The Good Shepherd – Part II
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John 10:16-21
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What a beautiful, beautiful song! Young people and children can be dismissed now to their classes. May you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ today. I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to John 10, Verses 11-21 we'll be reading. We're focusing in on Verses 16-21. We looked at Verses 11-15 last week. So this morning we're going to be looking at Verses 16-21 primarily, but I want to read all of the Verses 11-21 because the title of the message is 'The Good Shepherd' again, it's Part II. 'The Good Shepherd – Part II'. It is titled that way because of the emphasis Jesus gives to this glorious declaration, "I am the Good Shepherd." He says it twice in the passage, it presupposes that we are sheep, men are sheep, lost men are sheep. Like sheep, we are defenseless. Like sheep, we are dependent. And like sheep without a shepherd, we come into this world completely defenseless, completely dependent, and we are harassed and helpless. We are in immediate and real danger. We are easy prey to our mortal enemies. We have mortal enemies—the devil, the flesh, the world, all opposed to us, and every human being comes into the world in need of a shepherd, desperate need of a shepherd, needing what only a shepherd can do for the sheep because sheep need protection, and sheep need provision.

So we said last time, this image, "I am the Good Shepherd," is surely one of the most imminently appealing in all of Holy Scripture. We see this even in the way the unbelieving world still finds a strange attraction to this image, this Shepherd. Psalm 23, surely the favorite Psalm of people across the world that know anything about the Bible. That is always the one they want read at funerals, they want that read to them at their deathbeds, the 23rd Psalm. Men intuitively know they need a shepherd and yet the astonishing reality is they will not come to the Good Shepherd. Desperate need and yet hearts that are hard. Even as we just sang about in the song we sang a moment ago, *the feast is laid out, why was I made to come when so many are still hungry outside?* I see in this passage that in the face of this glorious, compassionate, loving invitation, where God has come into the world, the God-man Jesus cries out, "I am the Good Shepherd," inviting sheep to come to Him, beckoning them to come to Him. Condescending to even not only just uttering the invitation, but to add to it reasons, proofs of why they should come, and yet they do not come. Let's read John 10:11-21, beginning at Verse 11.

John 10:11-21:

11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

19 A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" 21 Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we ask that You might now open the eyes of our hearts, that Your Spirit might illumine these words that You've inspired, and that they might set us free. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

It is so important to watch the flow of the Scripture as you read, to ask questions of the text, and to see why does God say what He says here? What we see here, we have kind of a parenthesis in the middle of this argument. Last week the outline of the message was, one clear claim, "I am the Good Shepherd," which was really an invitation to the lost sheep around Him to come. So one clear claim, and two convincing proofs. As I studied on in the passage more, I really believe there are three convincing proofs. There are two in Verses 11-15, and there is one in Verses 17 and 18, and these are basically three added inducements. Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd," but He adds to it a third reason, and what is interesting, and what distracted me from it when I was outlining my text in previous weeks was Verse

16. Look with me at how this flows from Verse 15 to Verse 16. Jesus says, Verse 15:

John 10:15-16 ~ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

I look at Verse 16 as a big parenthesis in Jesus' statement. His argument continues from Verse 15 to Verse 17, but He feels compelled to stop and interject something auxiliary to His argument in Verse 16. He says, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold." If you take that out, listen how clearly Verse 15 follows to Verse 17. He says, "I know the Father and I lay down My life for the sheep. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life." Do you see that? He's talking about what He's been talking about the laying down of His life, why He is the Good Shepherd in laying down His life. He interjects in Verse 16 this statement about His other sheep that He has.

Let me stop and examine why is that? Why stop the argument for this point? I think the reason is it becomes evident and clear when you get to Verses 19-21. Jesus is making this invitation, He is issuing this invitation, but as He issues it, He knows those who are His sheep in the crowd, and those who are not. He's aware that the majority of those in the crowd are not His sheep, and are not coming to Him. I believe what He is doing is, He's comforting the few that are coming by telling them that God has always known that there are just a few that are going to come.

We see it played out in Verses 19-21, we're told about a division that happens where some are even accusing Him of being insane, that He has a demon, demon-possessed. Others are saying, well they are not completely convinced but, "Surely, He must be from God because He opened the eyes of the blind." So this division is happening and Jesus, as He is issuing an invitation, aware of the division that is happening, there are a few sheep that are coming and the majority are not, thinks about in such a Shepherd, loving heart, thinks about the sheep that are coming and He comforts them by basically saying this: "Listen, though you are few, don't get distracted by the masses of unbelieving sheep. Don't let them discourage you from coming because this is the way it is going to be." So His thinking then, in the moment, about the sheep in front of Him, and in the ultimate plan of God, He is also thinking about the ones who will be the recipients of this letter. If you think

about this, and when you read the Scripture, you always should think about it in this way. What the events of the text are happening, Jesus has a reason for saying what He says to His audience.

At the moment, there in the land of Israel, He is inviting people, and there are Jewish people there surrounding Him, and He is speaking what He says for their benefit, but there is a second thing that you should always think about too. That is, we are reading the inspired, written word of God. When God inspired John to write this account down, about 85 or 90 A.D., the Lord had in mind another audience of people very similar, but another audience of people who were struggling with the same kind of doubts. We've talked about the fact that John's Gospel is aimed at primarily Jews and Jewish proselytes. He's writing to the people that are gathering in the synagogues across the Mediterranean world, and He's trying to reissue the invitation of Jesus. He has written these things, remember he is careful to tell us his purpose, at the end of his Gospel, John 20:31 he says, "I could have told you about many other things Jesus did. If I told you about everything, books couldn't hold it, but these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and that believing you may have life in His name. So I carefully selected these things to inspire your faith, to help you follow Him." So he is thinking about those Jewish proselytes who by the time he writes, it has become even more clear that the Jews as a race, overall, have rejected the Shepherd, but God still has some out there in the Jewish audience that are His. Through John's Gospel he is calling to them, but they are struggling with the doubts. "Why, if He really is who He says He is, why is no one following Him?" This is to show them it has always been that way.

In fact, the apostle Paul makes the argument in Romans 9 that it has always been that way all throughout the Old Testament, that the masses of Israel didn't truly follow God in the Old Testament, it was always the elect, always a subset of the whole that were the true followers of God. So don't be surprised, and in a sense, I think the point of this, the parenthesis in Verses 19-21 is this: "As a sheep, hearing this invitation of the Good Shepherd, don't do what sheep often do, because we are not so bright. You know sheep are gregarious animals, they like to be together with other sheep. They don't like to be alone, and sheep tend to want to flock together, and when you see the masses going away from Jesus, don't go with them. Don't look at the masses, look at the Shepherd. Don't listen to the bleating, the bleating of the unbelieving masses as they reject Christ. Listen to the voice of the Shepherd." What John is beckoning his audience to do is, "Don't look at the multitude. If you want to make a decision about Jesus Christ, your eyes need to be on Jesus Christ alone. If you want to make a decision about the words of Christ,

whether He truly speaks the words of God, don't listen to others, listen to Him! He is the Good Shepherd." So that is the force of this parenthesis, and I think even this recounting of the schism that happens in the crowd. So the impact, the force really is, "Listen and look at Jesus!"

Having said that, we want to do just that. We are going to look at and listen to Jesus and the argument that He is making in this passage. Now we stated last time, the invitation is, "I am the Good Shepherd," and we need a shepherd, He says, "I am the Shepherd. I'm not only *a* shepherd, I am a Good Shepherd. I'm not only *a* Good Shepherd, I am *the* Good Shepherd. I am the one and only Shepherd of the sheep. There is no other." Men are sheep, they are lost, sin overwhelms them, their flesh, and they cannot overcome their sin. The devil deceives, the world is headed to hell, and the inertia of that is against the sheep, and the sheep are in a desperate condition. Jesus says, "I am the Shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd."

We said that the word 'good' last time that He uses here, each of the three times that it occurs in the passage, there are two Greek words for 'good', translated by that one word. G-o-o-d, 'good', translates two different Greek words in the New Testament, and John's Gospel as well. The most common word is the word 'agathos' which speaks of goodness as '*that which is beneficent, or that which is beneficial*'. The blessing that something brings, that makes it good. The word here, though it doesn't deny that, there is something else that is forward in the word 'kalos', and that is '*beauty, nobility, excellence, harmonious completeness*'. It is not benefit but attraction that is in the idea of the word He uses here. Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd. When you look at Me clearly, you will feel the attraction of My character," the beauty of who He is. So what happens is, He issues that statement, "I am the Good Shepherd." Think about this for a moment, if people really saw what their condition was, if we saw how lost we are, how without hope and without help, how endangered and imperiled your life is, how you are wandering around really, though you may convince yourself that you know what you are doing, in the quiet moments before you go to sleep, you know you are lost. You know that even the confidence that you portray is a facade. At some level every human being knows that. They know that they need a shepherd, and when these words are sounded out, when Jesus uttered these words, the most beautiful news that the world had ever heard, that any lost sheep could have ever heard, "I am the Good Shepherd, come to Me." You would think that the words itself, just that statement would have caused people to rush to Him. The sheep would have run to Him, to hear the voice of the one who created us. I think that in a sense too, the reason that the unbelieving world hates Jesus is they know, in His voice, that He is the true God. That is why they hate Him above everybody else.

It's amazing, I remember watching shows, *The Larry King Show* a number of times, and having different people represent different faiths. You have a Muslim, a Jew, Deepak Chopra, we talked about him last time, the new age guru, and a Catholic priest. Then he would have somebody like John MacArthur, or Bob Jones III, or some other man who believes in the Scripture and loves Christ, and it is inevitable that that one person is ganged up on by the whole group. Now what is it that can unite a Muslim and a Jew? One thing—antipathy to Jesus Christ. Why would they care? They care because they know He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, in their heart of hearts they know it, and they hate it! It is irrational to hate it. They should love it. If they would only bow then they would receive His grace, but such is the condition of fallen man that we will not bow unless He first changes our hearts.

But still, we need to look at this and just see it for what it is, the amazing, astonishing rejection of this offer. It would have been enough for Him to say, "I'm the Good Shepherd." They should have come running, but do they come running? No, then He graciously adds inducements. "Let Me tell you why I'm the Good Shepherd." We looked at the first two proofs last time. "I'm the Good Shepherd because I lovingly sacrifice for My sheep." He's a Shepherd that lays down His life for the sheep, completely gives everything. Why would you not come to a Shepherd like that? But not only is He a Shepherd who lovingly sacrifices for His sheep, we also saw that He has loving knowledge of His sheep. He longs to know His sheep, and for His sheep to know Him. He relates to His sheep. Human beings long to be known, we want to relate, to know one another. Relationships are everything for us and it is because we are made in the image of God, and God is, at His essential being, relationship. Trinity, three Persons in one God, always relationship, relationship, relationship, and we need relationship. The wonder of it is that this God who is content in Himself, who needs nothing, delights to know you. That is the beauty of it. He is a Shepherd who knows His own, knows them by name. Would you not come to Him?

Then He adds one more evidence, and we want to look at this the rest of the time we have this morning, His third gracious inducement, His third proof that He is the Good Shepherd. It is seen in His irresistible authority on behalf of the sheep. That is the point we want to look at today. You could say that basically John, in writing these words down, is saying, "Jesus is the Good Shepherd, behold His loving sacrifice for the sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, behold His loving knowledge of the sheep." Then today, "Jesus is the Good Shepherd, behold His irresistible authority on behalf of the sheep." This word '*authority*' is emphasized in the passage. Look at Verse 18:

John 10:18 ~ No one has taken it away from Me, (That is My life.) but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Now the word ‘*authority*’ is clearly emphasized there, the fact that He has authority. I love the way the NAS translates it literally that way. “I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.” That is exactly how the Greek says it. Jesus could have just said, “I have authority to lay it down and to take it up.” That would have been a more economical way to say it, wouldn’t it? “I have authority to do both.” No, but He wants to say, He wants us to hear, “I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up.” He is claiming to possess absolute authority! That is good news because we not only have a Shepherd who loves His sheep, we not only have a Shepherd who longs to know His sheep, we have a Shepherd who is able, fully able, to care for His sheep. That is what He is saying here. “I have authority.”

In fact, in the Greek it is even more emphatic, the way that the text literally reads in the word order. They can move words around, word order. In English we are more wooden in our word order. It’s usually subject, verb, objects and all that stuff. Occasionally that’s not the case, but in Greek you can often move it around just like you can in Spanish and other languages. It says this literally: “Authority I have to lay it down, and authority I have to take it up.” It puts the word right up front. It repeats it and puts it up front. His authority is the key. This word *authority* means freedom. It means complete ability and capability, and it’s that which has been received. It’s similar to the word *power*, but it’s not exactly the same. It’s right. God has given Him the right, and therefore, because God has given him the right, He has the might. He has all the power necessary to care for His sheep, and He emphasizes it even more by a word that we talked about last time, and we need to talk about again, because the phrase *laid down My life*, He actually uses the verb *lay down* five times in the passage, beginning in Verse 11, once in Verse 15, once in Verse 17, and twice in Verse 18. The word means not to lay it down just casually, but it means to place, to put, to set.

So Jesus carefully uses that word to speak of how when He lays down His life, He is actively, not passively, dying. There’s a big difference. There’s a sense in which He is receiving the wrath of God, and we talk about His passive obedience going to the cross, but He wants us to see that His passive obedience when He obeys, going to the cross, receiving the wrath of God, that He’s actively doing it. He’s actively choosing to lay down His life.

In fact, this idea of His authority is really set on display in this verse when He talks about His death and His resurrection. I want us to consider the rest of this main point, this third point, *Behold His Authority*, under two sub-points. Jesus possesses all authority. He has the right and the power to care for His sheep. It's demonstrated, displayed, expressly displayed in His death, and it's expressly displayed in His resurrection that He has authority.

1) His Authority is Displayed in His Death:

He lays down His life. He could have said, "I die for My sheep," but He didn't say that. He said, "I lay down My life for My sheep. I lay it down." The idea is He chooses to die. In fact, He emphasizes it also by saying, "No one takes it from me, in Verse 18: *No one has taken it away from Me...*" "When it happens, know that no one has taken it away from Me." In fact, that's one of the sub-plots of John's gospel. Remember how many times we've seen the crowd wants to seize Him? They want to grab Him. They want to stone Him. In John 8:59, they pick up stones, but Jesus eludes their grasp because they're not going to take His life from Him. No one will. He will die when He sets it down, when He lays it down. It's all according to God's plan, and the emphasis here even is on Jesus Himself and His offering of His life.

Now, this idea of His authority and death, I want to share something that I heard John MacArthur preach on in Matthew 27 one time, and he said something that the first time I had heard it, I'd been contemplating and I submit it to you, and I consider it, where he points out that in Matthew 27:50, when Jesus is on the cross, the Bible says that He cried out with a loud voice and He gave up His Spirit. He cried out with a loud voice. MacArthur points out that he thinks that verb *giving up* is an active kind of possessive verb. It's not like He died, He gave up His Spirit, that He actively gave it up, that He willed to die at that moment. His point is, and I think it's definitely something worth considering, that Jesus as the another of life, to die had to even at the moment that He breathed His last, choose to.

In fact, it's also in John 19:30 in this same gospel when he talks about Jesus dying, he speaks of Him crying out and giving over His Spirit, *παραδίδωμι* (*paradidōmi*) which is an active verb which means to give over, to release over. It emphasizes the subject is giving something over. I think in this is the idea that His death is not passive. Even in His death, He's actively doing something for His sheep. He's actively shepherding. Even in His death, He is active and mighty. We might think of it this way: In His death, He's not passive. He is actively shepherding.

I love in Revelation, this is a paradox, but in Revelation 7:17, it talks about the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God shall be their Shepherd. Just think about that for a moment. In the glory of heaven, the Lamb shall be our Shepherd. On the cross, Jesus is the Lamb of God. He goes there, He utters no threats, He's led to slaughter, and there is this element of passiveness in His obedience. He submits to the Father and He puts Himself under the curse for our sins. But this idea that we're seeing here when Jesus says, "I lay it down," is that in that, don't mistake His passivity for weakness, but in reality, the moment which appears to be the most weak moment of Jesus' life, when He breathes His last, in reality that last breath is the Shepherd picking up His staff, His mighty staff, and slaying Satan. At the moment He dies, He is wielding this incredible power. Such is the glory of the Lamb of God that even in His death He is the great Shepherd. That's what He's saying here, that His death itself brings that about, that His death—behold His authority even in His dying. Now, that's the first part, but then also in His resurrection which is also emphasized here in the passage in Verse 17.

2) His Authority is Displayed in His Resurrection:

John 10:17 ~ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

He lays it down in order to take it again. He not only has authority to lay it down, but He has authority to take it up. Jesus is the one person in history that laid down His life. If you stop and think about the fact of how mysterious the wonder of our gospel is—John began by saying:

John 1:1-4 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

He's saying that in the Son of God, in the eternal Son of God, is life, and that as the hymn writer somewhere says in one of the hymns, "...all that borrows life from Thee." Everything that is alive is alive because it's borrowing life from Christ. He is life. How is it possible for the author of life, the sustainer of life, to die? That's the wonder of the gospel. The Man Christ Jesus has never sinned. He's not worthy of death, but when He gives up His Spirit, it is a decisive act, a glorious act, and it is a mighty act.

Also in His resurrection in this idea of taking up, the verb means to take, to seize, or to lay hold of. When Jesus lays down His life, His resurrection is seen as Him taking it back. A lot of times the New Testament emphasizes the Father raised Him from the dead, or He's raised by the power of the Spirit. Those things are all true because of the nature of the triune God, but this passage is emphasizing that Jesus took His life back, that He had authority to lay hold of it. Now, think about how unique that is of all of the men throughout history, all of the great men of God.

Way back in Genesis we read in Chapter 5 the refrain, "And he died." It's one of those passages you read out loud and you hear that. *Adam lived 930 years and he died. Seth his son lived 912 years and he died. Enoch his son lived 905 years and he died.* A couple more generations down, you read about Methuselah who lived 969 years, almost 1000, but the last line is, "And he died." Noah died. Abraham died. Isaac died. Jacob died. Joseph died. Moses died. Samuel died. David died. Isaiah died. Malachi died. They're all still in the tomb. One Man died and took His life back, and that's Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ. He alone was able to do that. He had authority to do that, and in that resurrection, He demonstrates that He has authority to do everything that you and I need as lost sheep. He is mighty. He is able.

I mentioned last time as well, and I want to remind you of the fact that this idea of shepherd runs throughout the Old Testament, our need of a shepherd, that we are sheep. There were three offices in the Old Testament that were seen spiritually as shepherds—the prophet, the priest, and the king. They were the people who were to lead the people. You see this in Jeremiah 23. Prophet and priest are both spoken of as bad shepherds, and the king a number of different places in the Psalms. In 2 Samuel 5:2, David is called to shepherd the nation of Israel. The king shepherds. The prophet shepherds because he speaks the word of God. The priest shepherds because he brings men back to God. He shows men the way to God. The king shepherds because he rules for God, and when they come under the rule of the king, they come under the rule of God. Well, I want to think for a moment about how Jesus' death and His resurrection both are the ultimate moments for Him as Prophet, Priest, and King, and we're going to go to a few passages to see this. In His role as Prophet, what is Jesus as our Prophet? What does that mean? The role of the prophet is to speak for God. The role of the prophet is to reveal God, to speak forth the word of God, to declare the glory of God so the people see God as He is. That's the role of the prophet. Every true prophet of the Old Testament spoke inspired by the Spirit. They spoke the truth about God. Jesus came into the world and John calls Him the Word, because He is the full revelation of God, that His whole life and ministry was the full declaration of God.

John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained (declared) Him.

Jesus said, “If you want to see what the Father is like, look at Me.” That’s the ultimate Prophet, but the supreme moment of prophecy, the brightest light that ever shone from any prophet was when Jesus was on the cross. That was the moment where we see what God is like in a way that no other moment of any other day in all of history was like that. Nothing else surpassed that moment. We’re going to see this when we go through John. John speaks of Jesus’ passion, His death, as His glory. That’s His glory, and in fact, He’s going to say in John 12, “Father, glorify Thy name,” and the Lord says, “I’m going to glorify My name. I have glorified it and will glorify it.” What He’s talking about is, “Glorify Thy name when I’m on the cross.”

What does glorify mean? Glorify means to show forth the attributes of God so that people feel the weight of God. The moment where the most attributes of God were set on display was the cross of Jesus Christ. There’s never been a moment like that in history, because on the cross of Jesus Christ, you see what God is like, fully like, in all of His character. You see His righteousness and His justice. You see His holy wrath, His determination to punish to the nth degree every wicked act that has been done. Every time an innocent person has been abused by someone in power, it is being dealt with on the cross of Jesus Christ and we see that God is determined to punish sin. There’s no moment in history that shows that, because that is the ultimate moment of God’s wrath. God’s wrath has never been displayed like it was on the cross. Hell happened to Jesus on the cross. Nothing will touch that until the end of time when the lake of fire is made.

The people that are in hell now, not in full hell, but people awaiting the judgment haven’t yet suffered the wrath of God like Jesus did. So the wrath of God is set on display, but then also is the love and the mercy. Where would you see the love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God, the goodness of God? The cross of Jesus Christ is the supreme moment. So in His death, in that moment of apparently passive weakness, He is wielding the staff and declaring who God is with might and power. He is the great Prophet.

Let’s talk about then also how His priesthood is demonstrated in His cross. This is easier to assume from the beginning. Hebrews 9:11-14 makes this point that Jesus didn’t offer the blood of bulls and goats. When He went into the true Holy of Holies, the one in heaven, He took His own blood. He was the High Priest who offered Himself to God. That happened on the cross. That happened through the

death of Jesus Christ. In that moment, He brings man back to God. He is the ultimate Priest in His death. He's also the ultimate King. The king is the one who extends the rule of God, who defeats the enemies of God. This is one of the glorious themes of the New Testament, that Jesus in His death is the conqueror. In Hebrews 2:14, the apostle writes:

Hebrews 2:14 ~ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,...

How did He take Satan's power away? He died. When He died, He disarmed him. He took his power away. The strong man was completely bound in the moment of His death like never before. So the King, King Jesus, is reigning at the moment of His death. That's why when you read Matthew 27, which I mentioned earlier where He cried out with a loud voice and He gave up His Spirit, that immediately what happens is you read after that, that the earth quakes, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, signifying access into the throne of God, and the tombs were opened, and people outside Jerusalem came to life. They came to life before Jesus did. They were resurrected. They had to stay in the tombs to wait until He came, because He's the first fruits.

What is that saying? The power of death was broken when He died. He has defeated Satan and defeated death, in His death. So that's why He says, "I lay down My life. I lay it down authoritatively and I win the victory." But it's not only in His death. It's also in His resurrection. Let's think about Prophet, Priest, and King in His resurrection. His resurrection proves the power of His prophecy, His priesthood, and His kingship, and you see this drawn on a number of places, but one place is Revelation 1 where John sees the risen Christ, and John's terrified. He falls at His feet like a dead man, at Jesus in all of His glory, and He places His hand on him. He's commissioning him to write the book of Revelation, to give this prophecy to him. He's commissioning John as a prophet, and this is what He says:

Revelation 1:17 ~ ..."Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Therefore write..."

"Write down what I'm telling you to write, because I am the living One. I am the One who speaks for God. I am the One who is dead and I am alive forevermore." His prophecy is validated irrefutably forever because He lives.

Now, His priesthood is this same way. The author of Hebrews again in talking about the glory of Jesus says that His priesthood is effective and shown to be effective, not by virtue of human requirement, but by virtue of what? The reason that you know Jesus is a faithful priest able to bring you back to God is by virtue not of physical requirement, but by virtue of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16). The fact that His life could not be destroyed shows that He can bring you back to God. The fact that He is King—a number of places this is seen, but particularly in Ephesians 1 when Paul celebrates the power of Christ’s reign which is seen because of His resurrection. He says in Ephesians 1:19 when he’s prayed that the eyes of our heart might be enlightened, that he wants us to see:

Ephesians 1:19 ~ ...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet,...

Everything is in subjection under His feet, and we see it in His resurrection. He’s raised and seated at the right hand of God. So Jesus is saying, “I am the Good Shepherd. Come to Me. I love you. I sacrifice for you. I will know you. By My name you will know Me, and I have all authority. Everything is under My feet because I have died and I have risen again.” With this kind of invitation, who would not come? He is a glorious, wonderful Savior. He can deliver you from the struggles that you wrestle with, the sins that you wrestle with, and He can deliver you from the fear of hell. He can make you know the perfect acceptance of God. He is a glorious Shepherd, and we need a Shepherd. Go to Him today.

Let’s pray together...

Our Father, we rejoice in the glory of our Savior. We thank You for revealing to us our great need and His great sufficiency, and we pray that You would work in the hearts of everyone in this room to be sure that we are following our Shepherd, the only Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Father, grant grace to turn from trusting in anything else, that all might follow Him. We pray this in His marvelous Name, Amen.

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