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SPEAKER

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Fully Alive

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That You May Have Life

SCRIPTURE

John 10:1-21



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Good morning, Providence. If you have your Bibles, take them and turn with me to John chapter 10, John chapter 10. If you're a guest with us, we are so grateful that you are here and thankful that God has brought you. If you're not a Christian this morning, we're so grateful you're here. If you're exploring Christianity, maybe you're even new to Christianity, to the Christian faith, and like, "What is this all about?" we're so grateful you're here. You may not have a Bible. If you don't, there's one under the chair in front of you. Take that, and that's a gift. We want you to have that, a copy of God's Word, and then to be able to ... This morning, we'll be on page 896, 896. You'll see at the top of your Bible, the word John, then the big number down at the bottom left corner is 10. That's the chapter we're in. If you're new to Bible study, you don't know these things. We're going to read verses 1 through 21 this morning.

Then, this is what we do each week. We gather. We open this Word. We read it, and then it reads us, in a sense. Then we plow through it, and it plows through us. We pray that it's not just informative, but it's transformative, that God's Word would change us. Grateful for those in the amphitheater and also those live-streaming. We say hello to you, as well. Some, we know, that do this each week, even across the pond, and so we're glad that you've joined us.

John chapter 10, incredible book we're walking through. The context, quickly, really we picked it up. If you know, in John chapter 7, He's at the Temple. Jesus is at the Temple, and He's teaching. The Pharisees, these religious leaders, who don't have a relationship with God through Jesus, they're trusting in their good works. They're trusting in trying to keep certain aspects of the law, and He's engaging them. It's a big festival going on in Jerusalem.

Jules and I had the opportunity to be in Jerusalem years ago when I was in seminary, and we studied there for a few weeks. They're there at the ... Where the Temple was, it's tons of folks there. This is the scene. There's tons of folks there. They're celebrating. There's a division breaking, and Jesus is saying things they don't like, to the point that they want to kill Him. They want to stone Him, right? You see this taking place, these certain conversations.

Then, last week, we see they were picking up stones to kill Jesus, and Jesus made His way out. It's like He went to the Pool of Siloam. He sent a guy down there, but imagine Jesus having this interaction, and then making His way out of a real ... If it was standing room only in this room, that's what probably the crowd was like. He made His way out. I'm thinking He's gone, but He sees a blind man, right? He goes, let Me just stop and heal him real quick, all right? He puts some mud, and He says, "Now, you go down to the Pool of Siloam and wash, and then tell the Pharisees."

Then Jesus, the end of the chapter last week, He finds this guy. They have an interaction. He believes on Him, because God opened not only his physical eyes, but his spiritual eyes, and the scene closed last week with the Pharisees still being able to see physically, but blind spiritually. The guy that could really see in the story was the blind man, because God opened not only his physical eyes, but his spiritual eyes. The conversation picks right up — does it not? — where he says in verse 1, “Truly, truly, I say to you.” He’s getting ready. Get the scene right. These Pharisees in verse 40 and 41, they’re hearing these things. They’re not sure what’s all going on. There’s just great tension in this, as John, years after this event, is writing this.

There’s this great tension. He’s going to use this language, this morning, of a shepherd and sheep to try to break through to their hard hearts. He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber, but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

“This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they didn’t understand what he was saying to them, and so Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly,” second time, “I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

“He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the 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, and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 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.

“There was again this division among the Jews, because of these words. Many of them said, He has a demon, or, He is insane. Why listen to him? Others said, These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” This is God’s Word, and it’s a good one. Let’s pray.

Father, we love You. We’re so grateful this morning for this amazing Word. We ask, we ask this morning that You, in Your kindness, would teach us this morning. Teach us, we pray, in Jesus’ great name, amen.

I remember very specifically, as if it was yesterday, but it was years ago, that Julie and I had the kids on vacation down at Carolina Beach, and as we were down at the beach, having a Britts donut, which I highly recommend. We were enjoying this day, this particular day, and we were going to rent a rickshaw to ride with all the kids just down the boardwalk. As we're there, trying to get the kids assembled, we're in zone defense with all four of them. I don't even like defense. I like offense just give me the ball. We're trying to gather them. I forget the ages, sometimes I forget their names, but they're seven ... I think it was seven, five, three, one, or six, four, two, newborn. It was a lot of them. It was just a lot of them.

I'm sitting there, and I'm like, "Jules, let's just get in the rickshaw, and let's go." I began to take notice. I'm always doing a headcount, always doing a headcount, right? I noticed there's only three sheep. There's only three kids. I panic, and I'm like, "Jules, Jules, where is [Emmy]? Where is she?"

Jules, in her calm, collective way says, "Dave, you're holding her."

"Oh, yes I am. Yes I am." See, listen, listen. Jesus uses this amazing imagery this morning of a shepherd and a sheep to show us He never, never, loses one of His sheep. He knows. He knows their name. He knows where they are at all times. Listen. He calls them, not in a panic state, but He calls them by name. Let that rest on you this morning for just a moment, right?

God almighty created the universe, knows your name if you're in Jesus. You've trusted Him, as a child. He knows you as a, not an enemy, but as a child. Do you not take more comfort in who knows your name than in whose name you know? I mean, I know the name Michael Jordan, but he does not know Dave Owen. God is amazing, because He's concerned to let people know not just His name, but what He does. I mean, in the Old Testament, we know Him as I Am, right? I mean, He's just I Am. He's just constant. He's always. He's like Niagara Falls and these rivers that ... these incredible waterfalls that they just never stop. They just keep coming.

Then Jesus picks up on this I Am language, and He attaches ... He expands it just a tad, seven times in the book of John, where He will be very specific in identifying who He is. He says, "I am the bread of life," and, "I am the light of the world." Today, we're going to see two more of these amazing I am statements, where He'll say, "I am the door," and, "I am the good shepherd."

This morning, very quickly, I want to show you three amazing truths about Jesus. My hope is that it will fuel faith and belief in Him, because John tells us this is why he wrote it, in John 21, that many will believe and have life in Him, and that it would move us and mobilize us to live on mission. The first one, very simply, is this: Jesus protects His people from being misled. Jesus protects His people from being misled.

Now, notice, in verses 1 through 6, of all the animals that God could have chosen to describe His people, I mean, He chooses sheep. He doesn't choose horse. Think for a second, right? When we think of a horse, of a wild horse, all right, take a look at this picture, and just think about a horse, when he's out in the open, wild, he's finding life. There's a sense of freedom. He's just running, experiencing the beauty of all that is in the wild, but when it comes to sheep, there's really no wild sheep running, right? No, not at all.

I mean, he's like, "I need something to eat. Where is everybody?" See, they run around in a circle. Sheep are one of the most dependent animals known. Literally, death is a daily threat if not for the shepherd. I mean, they'll eat poison if it's not guided. They'll walk off a cliff if not directed. They'll fall prey to wild animals if not sheltered and protected.

Listen. Let me just explain this. Listen to me this morning. This is the most common language that God uses to describe His people. It's not a slam on humanity. Listen. It's not a slam on humanity. Psalm 8 says humanity ... We're made in God's image. They're the highest of all creation, so when he uses the sheep language, it's not a slam on humanity. No, what He's doing is He's highlighting the role of a shepherd. This is what's happened. Oh, He's going to highlight the role of the shepherd, and His great care. Listen. The sheep language, this would be resonating, in some sense, with these Pharisees that are there. I mean, he would use this story, in a sense, John, to show Jesus is the Great Shepherd. I mean, Moses and David both were shepherds, and then they led God's people. Even God Himself, even God Himself in Psalm 78, Psalm 78, says that God led forth His people like a sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. He led them to safety, so they didn't fear.

One of the most incredible psalms in all the Scriptures that's probably the most request psalm at a funeral is Psalm 23. You're familiar with this. This is David's really portrait perspective of God as a shepherd. He says, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me," this shepherd, God, "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Then he says in verse 4, it's interesting, he says, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Think about that. I mean, David's got a perspective of God, and trusting in the promises of the Messiah that's to come, that will paint such a portrait for him that he can describe death now as a shadow.

I mean, think about that for a moment, right? Think about if you're riding down the street, and the 18-wheeler's beside you in the car, and the shadow of the 18-wheeler hits your car. It doesn't damage you, right? It's only a shadow. Because of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection ... See, Jesus actually got hit by the 18-wheeler. He got hit by God's wrath, so the shadow of it would only pass over us, in a sense. This is this language. It's the shadow of death. It's dark for just a moment, and there's always light on the other side of the shadow, isn't it? You have to have light to create a shadow, so light's always close.

Listen. Listen. He says, "I will fear no evil." I mean, John's painting for us this picture. He's leading us into this language to show this true, true shepherd. It's so fascinating. Notice a few things quickly. We don't have time to unpack all of it, but let's go for it, as much as we can.

In verse 3, think about this sheep pen. In biblical times, you've got this sheep pen. I'll show you a picture, where multiple shepherds would bring their sheep, and they would stay at night in this sheep pen as they're staying there, multiple shepherds to protect them from the night and these wild animals and so forth, but then in the morning, as verse 3 says, the sheep hear his voice. The shepherd would come, and they would name the sheep, and they would call the sheep by name. They would recognize the shepherd's voice so distinctly that those are the only sheep that would walk out with that particular shepherd. This is what some of the things He's tell us, right?

The sheep, they know his voice, and they follow it. Jesus, He does this to His people. They know His voice. They follow. See, one of the ways that you know you're following Jesus is if you're following His voice. You say, "Now, how's that happen? I don't hear it audibly. Jesus isn't here physically. How do I do that?" Well, you listen and follow His Word, called the Bible. You pay close attention to Jesus and the under-shepherds that He's entrusted to your care, that have your best interest at heart to teach you the Bible, week in and week out.

You, as Christians, you listen to it, and you ... because, not in order to be accepted by God, but because you've been accepted by God, if you've trusted Jesus and you followed Him. You'll follow His Word. He leads you. He leads you, now maybe not to an easy life, but to a full life. This is God's Word, as it comes. It's like my kids. Sometimes if they get lost ... We're in a grocery store or something, and they're on the aisle with the cookies, and I'm on the other aisle. They don't see me, but they hear my voice, in a sense. I call them. I'm like, "Josh."

He's like, "Yeah, Dad."

I'm like, "Leave those cookies alone." Then I'm like, "Meet me down at the end." They know. They respond to Dad's voice.

Verse 4 ... It's interesting, because it says in verse 4 that they go before. The shepherd goes before. A lot of sheep in the Western world, they're behind, pushing, right? In this, biblical times, they're out front leading. This is what Jesus does. He doesn't lead behind you, yelling at you. He leads in front, caring for you, guiding you, directing you, so take comfort, Christian, this morning. If you're a non-Christian this morning, take comfort. This is the God that we serve. He doesn't yell and demand, in a sense, to be made right. He gets in front and leads, caring, guiding us.

Notice verse 5, quickly. One way that you can tell if you're a follower of Jesus is not only that you're following God's voice found in the Bible, but you're fleeing worldly wisdom and false teaching. Those voices are becoming more and more strange, as you grow more in this Word. As you get in this Word and you grow in this Word, and the Spirit of God that wrote the Word, the Spirit of God that comes and takes up residency in you that, when you're born again, and you place your faith in Jesus, that they bear witness to each other. The more you're in this Word, the more the wisdom of the world becomes stranger and stranger and stranger to you, just like a new person that's been in that world comes to this Book, and they're like, "This is strange to me." This is why we love walking with you through this Book, to learn how to not only understand it, but to apply it.

Let me ask this one. Do you listen to worldly wisdom more than you listen to the Word of God? Are you viewing this Book, are you viewing this Book, as so significant to your soul that it's as what food is to your body, this Word is to your soul? Not many of us will miss a few meals a day, right? When you do, what happens? You grow a little, hmm, a little grumpy, a little crabby, impatient. Imagine what your soul does by not being fed by God's Word. It begins to just shrivel up and become hard. This is what happens to the heart.

Way of application, very quickly this morning, let's listen to God's Word in order to follow Jesus's voice. Let's follow. Let's follow this Word. Let's follow the Bible in order to follow Jesus's voice. Let's flee from these strange voices that oppose Jesus's Word this morning.

Notice number two, right? Not only does He protect us, making sure we're not misled by these things, but He provides for us. Jesus provides for His people, who are in a mess. Now notice what's going to happen from verses 7, all the way down through 14, really. We're going to see this amazing transition. Jesus is a master at this, right? Because He comes again, and He's like, "Truly, truly, I say to you. I am the door of the sheep." Now, He's getting into ... We've learned in verse 6, this is a figure of speech, verse 5, this whole language about the sheep and the sheep pen. Then He's getting very specific. He's transitioning into salvific language by saying, now listen. I'm the door of the sheep.

What's going on here is He's transitioning. He's moving us. He's moving those recipients of this Word to really see and experience how mercy invades mess. This is what He's doing, right? His mercy invading our mess is like a Boeing 777 airplane that compares to a battery-operated flashlight. I mean, and look, the thing about this is it's so fascinating. I don't ever want to make light of physical suffering, but eternal suffering in hell apart from God is catastrophic. Jesus knows that, and He makes a way for us to miss hell in the end, in spite of all of our mess, through His cross and resurrection.

Now, He gets specific. He's saying this phrase in verse 7, "I am the door." There was one door to the sheep pen, where they came in and out. In from this protection and out to pasture, to graze and to be refreshed and to eat. Jesus is saying, "I'm not going to point you to the door." He says, "I am the door." Now, this is very specific language. He says, "I am the door," meaning what? Meaning, He's the only way to God. We'll learn more about that in John 14, where He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," but think about this. Now, when we say that in our day and our context and our culture, that sounds narrow-minded to a lot of people.

I find it liberating. I find it loving. I find it extremely clear. There's no confusion. He's validated it by coming back from the dead. Now, think with me. He says, "I am the door." Then He's going to say, "I am the good shepherd," in verse 11, "that lays down his life." Think about this shepherd. He's the shepherd of the sheep, but think about this. This loving shepherd will become the sacrificial lamb.

It's perplexing probably for the Pharisees to hear this language. I mean, the good shepherd is the great sacrifice. This door ... Notice what happens. This door ... What is at this door? What is in this door? What does this shepherd provide? I want you to notice two things really quick. One is salvation.

Notice in verse 9, "I am the door." He repeats Himself. "If anyone enters by it, he will be saved." He will be saved. Now again, context ... The sheep are going in and out of the pen door at night to be saved from lions and tigers and bears, but he's pointing to that salvation, in a sense, to point us to another salvation, to point us to the salvation that's found in Jesus, and not being saved from animals and predators, no, but to be saved from God's wrath. I mean, this is why this is such good news. When we say the Gospel is good news, this is the salvation that's not being saved from an animal, but from God's righteous and holy wrath. This is a promise that's fulfilled in Jesus, that was initiated in Genesis chapter 3, that One's going to come, and He's going to make everything right.

This is what has happened. He's come, and He's lived a perfect life, when humanity rebelled against Him, all of us. None of us had to be trained to disobey God. It's a natural inclination. First words out of the kids' mouths are no and mine. Didn't send them to disobedience school to get that. That's in the human heart, right? The human heart is there, and it goes astray. Jesus has come, and in His perfect life, He has made a way to be not only known by God, but to know God and have an eternity with God one day when death does come. He grants us, He gives us, His righteousness, and our sin is put on Him at the cross. In His cross, that's where He absorbs every drop. He absorbs every drop of God's wrath.

For those who trust in Jesus and place their faith in Jesus, that wrath, not a drop of it will touch you, when you step into eternity. This is the door that is open. This is the shepherd that's providing. He's providing salvation in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is the greatest news that you and I will ever, ever hear. Listen. This Shepherd ... Listen. This Shepherd, He doesn't, as in verse 12, He doesn't flee. He doesn't flee from us in the face of the cross. He set His face toward the cross and runs.

These other shepherds, these hired servants, they're fleeing. They're scattering, but not this Shepherd, not this Shepherd. He's setting His face toward the cross on your behalf. He doesn't flee. He doesn't scatter. He runs. He's bent on doing God's will, the Father's will, to take our greatest problem, our sin problem, that deserves God's wrath, and He absorbs it on the cross and then validates that that death is sufficient through His resurrection.

You won't hear any other good news like that news this week or ever. Notice what He does. Notice what He does as the door and the shepherd. He provides. He provides satisfaction. Verse 10, look, the thief, he's coming to kill and steal and destroy, but He's coming to give abundant life. He's coming to give abundant life. Listen. So oftentimes, so oftentimes, we feel like God's a killjoy God, that He's holding out on us, that ... Listen. If God will take care of your eternal destiny, don't you think that He's interested in your daily activities? Don't you think He's set up a path to go on, where there's joy and fullness of life? Hard ... Life's still hard. You're still going to die, but there's a fullness that comes. Following Jesus, it's absolutely amazing.

We think of Jesus and God as this restrictive, well, He's just ... He's got rules. He's got regulations, and He restricts, He restricts all of my joy. He's a killjoy God, right? Jesus is saying, "No, I've come to give life abundantly." I mean, this is the problem even in the garden, when you've got Adam and Eve. They've been told a thousand things they could do, one thing they shouldn't do, and that's the one thing that they wanted to do. That's the human heart, isn't it? I mean, think about that portrait in the garden. Adam and Eve, presence of God, naming the animals, walking, enjoying fellowship with God.

This is what He wants. He wants you to enjoy fellowship with God. The restrictions, the restrictions that are set in certain places ... Look, when you're riding one of the roller coasters at the State Fair, and you make it, when it says, "Do not unhook this seat while you're riding this machine that was put up last week," you don't argue with the guy. You keep locked in, right? You're restricted, but it's for your good, isn't it? Don't look at His restrictions as bad. Look at them for your good.

Listen. This fullness of life, it's not easy, but it's full. It's not free of pain, but it's full in the pain. It's not free of suffering, but full of promises to endure the suffering. It's not a life with all that you want, but it's a life with all that you need, because He is the Good Shepherd.

Quickly, let's turn to Jesus for salvation. Let's trust Jesus for soul satisfaction. Let's trust Him for salvation, but let's also turn to Him for soul satisfaction.

Last, let me close with this one. Jesus, He does. He protects and He provides, but He propels His people on mission. He propels His people on mission. Notice in verse 16, now, what happens here. Notice in verse 16, He says, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold, and I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, so there will be one flock and one shepherd." What's going on here? Listen.

What Jesus is saying is that there are people from every race and ethnicity and every tribe and every tongue that is of the sheepfold of God. All right, this is what He's saying. He's saying that I ... He's not saying, "I hope to bring them in." He says, "I must bring them in, and one day there's going to be one shepherd and one flock."

The beauty of the Gospel is that it breaks down all racial barriers and all ethnic barriers, and it brings us together because, not that we look alike on the outside, but because we look alike on the inside, because the heart's been transformed by the power of the Gospel. He says ... Notice what He says. Watch the language. He gets real specific here. Watch this. In verse 17, He says, "For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay my life down, that I may take it up again." That's the first time ... He's talked about this shepherd language in 11 and 14, and He says, "The shepherd lays his life down." The shepherd lays his life down.

Now here, He gets real specific with saying twice about the resurrection. He says in verse 17, "I lay my life down, and I take my life up again." We all have authority to take our life in some way and laying it down. Jesus is the one that's saying, "Listen, I've got authority," in verse 18, "not only to lay it down. I've got authority to take it up." We don't have that authority to take it up. Only Jesus does. Because His ... The language gets stronger here. Do you feel the tension? "I have authority," He says, "to lay my life down, and I have authority to take my life up again."

He's so committed to bringing every tongue and tribe and nation to the throne of God for the worship of God that He's validating that statement with this statement. He's saying, "Listen, listen. I must bring all my sheep home." If He says, "I must," He means He will. The question, the question this morning to us, is how ... because Jesus is there physically saying this. How is Jesus going to bring every tongue, tribe, and nation, ethnicity, and race to the throne of God? How's He going to do that? He's ascended bodily, physically, right?

I believe the means through which He must bring all people to Himself is through you and through me, broken, fighting sin, redeemed individuals, living life on mission. I believe the means through which He's going to do this is through people, through people, not programs, not strategies, through people opening their mouth and sharing the good news of the Gospel, men like Peter Cameron Scott.

Peter Cameron Scott was born in Scotland in 1867. Peter Cameron Scott went to Africa to be a missionary. He's there. He gets really, really sick, has to go back home to Britain. As he goes back home, he gets well. He takes his brother, John, back to Africa. Many were on the outskirts of the coast of Africa at this time, trying to get the Gospel in and plant churches. Well, his brother gets really sick. John gets really sick. As he is sick, Peter ends up burying his brother alone. Stirred through that death ... Funerals always stir you, unlike weddings stir you in a different way. As he's burying his brother, John, he's renewed in this message of the Gospel, but he gets sick again.

He has to go back home again. As he's back home, he's downcast in his soul. One day, he's at Westminster Abbey, walking there, observing many folks that have been buried there. He comes upon the tombstone of David Livingstone. David Livingstone was a pioneer medical missionary, one who loved the Lord, who did great work in Africa. David Livingstone's tombstone, this picture I want to show you ... It's a lot of things written on it, but what is written on the far left side of his tombstone is John 10:16.

Peter [Cameron Scott] sees this verse on the tombstone of David Livingstone. As he reads it, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice," he's propelled to go back, not to the coastland of Africa, but into the inland part of Africa. He starts a mission movement of church planting called Africa Inland Mission, which last year celebrated its 120th year. I called them on Friday, as I was studying. They're in Atlanta, Georgia. As I'm talking to one of the folks, leaders, at this, and he's telling me about the vision of Peter Scott, that it was birthed out of seeing this tombstone, this verse that we studied this morning.

This one man, propelled by one verse, goes to the inland part of Africa, and today, 121 years later, today, over two million have come to faith and thousands of churches have been planted. Amen! That's good news. That's good, right? One verse, one man, it's on a tombstone, and it propels him to go back. Listen. Let this verse this morning, let this verse, propel you on mission. Let's take this Gospel. Let's take this Gospel to our neighbors, and let's take this Gospel to the nations.

Jesus says, "I must." If He says, "I must," He will. It's fascinating how they respond. It's a glimpse of hope, is it not? Because a division ... Look. You share this good news, a division's going to break out. This is normal Christian living, right? But you can be winsome in the midst of disagreement. Notice the hope, right? I mean, you've got the extreme, extreme sides of this thing. One's saying, "Dude, that guy's got a demon." The other guy's, "Man, he's insane." And then, and then one, a few others said, "These aren't the words of one who's oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open blind eyes?"

Oh, look, He can open blind eyes, and He can come back from the dead. He can change your life, and He can change this city, and He can change this nation. He can change the world, one heart at a time. Blind folks, who can see with these eyes, but are blind here. The Gospel invades the heart, transforming. You're born again. It gives you new eyes to see reality, strength for everyday living, and an eternity, an eternity where you escape God's wrath, and you spend eternity in the presence of God, basking in His joy, ever-increasing joy, ever-increasing joy, in the presence of King Jesus forever. May that day come sooner than later. Let's pray.

Father, we love You. Thank You for today. Thanks for the opportunity to walk through this incredible text. Thank You, Jesus, for being a shepherd. Thank You, Jesus, for being the door. Thank You, Jesus, for just being so caring of all the language that's used to describe you, a shepherd. You care so much for us. God, I pray that, as those that are in this room that, God, are ... They don't know You yet as shepherd, that God, You would open their eyes, that they would see You as the door, the entrance door into a relationship with You, to know You, to love You, to be loved by You, to be called a child, a daughter, a son of God, not based on anything that we've done or accomplished, but based on what You've accomplished through Your Son's work, His great work.

God, would You be so kind to do that? Father, as we even take our offering this morning, would You give us hearts of gratitude that You're the One. You're the ultimate giver. You have given so much. May that even be an act of worship this morning to You. May You be pleased with that. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.



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