

Wolves, Sheep, and Shepherds 101

John 10:11 - 12

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

Wolves are everything that sheep are not. Wolves are sneaky and given to craftiness. They are mean and unloving. Mess with them and they will show their teeth. Wolves are pleased to bite and, as our verse discloses, they are fierce. They will devour sheep. When measured purely by the world's wisdom, they are smarter than sheep. Wolves seem to be born with the idea that they may freely feed on sheep. Sheep seem to share this understanding. Sheep are no match for wolves.

Sheep are not predators, they are prey. Sheep do not bite they are bitten. There are no recorded deaths due to sheep bites. Their teeth do not amount to much as offensive weapons. They are without claws. They are not good at fleeing and are much too stupid to hide. They show very little native ability as leaders. Sheep are made to be led. Since they are actually unlikely to know where they are, they are kind of fuzzy about where they should be. They tend to go astray - sometimes taking all of their friends and acquaintances with them. They are designed to be followers. When under threat, they tend to bunch up into a big pile. If they are blessed to have a home, the likelihood is that they will be unable to find it without aid. Sheep need a lot of help. If left entirely to their own endowments and merits, sheep would have a very limited future.

People are a lot like sheep. Actually, we are a bit worse off. Sheep are stupid, but one has the feeling that they know it. Sadly, sheep have the advantage over us there. We exult in our supposed abilities. We have the solutions to our own problems. While we are bright enough, in some cases, to see the dangers in and about us, we imagine that we have the resources to protect and fix ourselves. We might actually abandon our current status and find a better situation but sadly, we do not really know where we are. Because we have never seen light, we are unaware of the darkness. As a consequence, we have all gone astray (Isa. 53:6). All the while, as we are immersed in muddle and error, wolves gleefully and ravenously circle about us.

How kind is the Father then, that seeing the hopelessness of our condition, He should purchase us at great price and consent to be our Good Shepherd (Heb. 13:20). He has become a wall around us. He controls access to us. He is the

gate. He has given us His Word as a guide and His Spirit to interpret truth and provide direction for us. The Good Shepherd is equipped to deal with the wolves. He also corrects and protects His Flock, and we receive the greatest comfort from this (Psa. 23:4). He leads our earthly journey through pleasant places and provides for our every need (Psa. 23:2)! Though we are prone to wander, he assures that none of us are ultimately lost (John 18:9). Finally, He will take all His sheep home (Psa. 23:6) to a place without wolves.

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