

**Song:** *You See Me*

Can I invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to John 10:11-18; that's page 1666 in the Blue Bible in front of you. Please follow along with me as I read.

*Jesus said, "I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.*

*14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

We are continuing in our series through John, looking at Jesus' *I AM* statements, and I began with our Scripture this morning, because I want it to frame what I am about to say. This past Monday, we received the news that David MacGregor, one of our young adults, had died by suicide. It's been a tough week for many of us--this kind of news hits like a sledgehammer--nothing prepares us to receive it.

A number of years ago, I can remember standing with a friend in a public place, and in the span of a few minutes, three or four people that he knew came up and hugged him as they went upon their way. I joked with my friend that he must be someone really important; I'll never forget his reply. He said, "*Mark, there's two kinds of people in this world--people who love me, and people who don't know me yet.*" That sentiment could easily be applied to David MacGregor.

David was the kind of person that everyone loved--he was enthusiastic, energetic, kind, thoughtful, ready to serve, ready to give, quick to love and to laugh. David was so invested in friendships, and he practically grew up in our church--he went through our youth ministry, he was connected in our young adults community, he interned in our children's ministry-- he was one of our own.

David had an extensive group of friends at our church that he was really tight with, one of whom is Cody. Cody and David loved to remind me that their first memory of me was connected to the first time we all played soccer together. The year before I was hired at the church, while they were still in high school, Dave Sattler and Keith Whitaker held a soccer practice for anyone who was interested in playing on the church team.

So I came out, geared up, and ran around with a bunch of guys that included David and Cody--I didn't know them and they didn't know me. At one point I was running down the wing chasing after the ball, and as good defenders, Cody and David were trying to stop me. And the way they tell the story, as I went by them I elbowed Cody square in the face. I can neither confirm, nor deny, that the incident ever took place. But David and Cody took great delight in telling people that their pastor elbows people in the face--*so watch out everyone!*

A few years after I'd been hired, and the elbowing incident had been forgiven, David told me that he and two of his friends had gone to a Halloween party dressed up like three of our pastors. The three pastors in question were Shane Gould, Dave Sattler, and yours truly.

The one who dressed up like Shane made sure he was carefully manicured, not a hair was out of place, and he wore a bright pastel sweater--likely a soft mauve. The one who dressed up like Sattler made sure that he dressed very manly--nothing fancy, no pastels, nothing that might confuse him with Shane. But it was David who decided to go dressed up as me. David went sporting black running tights, a microfiber running shirt, bright running shoes and gloves. I suspect that will be the first and last time anyone goes to a Halloween party dressed as me.

About six weeks ago, David had a psychotic break and was quickly admitted into care at Lions Gate Hospital. When I say that David had a psychotic break, what I mean is that David's mind broke with objective reality. What David began to experience was very real to him, but his mind was no longer capable of seeing and perceiving reality as it really was--he was no longer able to reason.

Mental illness affects all of us--some of us suffer from mental illness ourselves, others of us have walked with those who are suffering--mental illness affects all of us. And mental illness is absolutely unique--no two people have the identical story or experience. And that's why we need to talk about it, to bring it into the light, to love and support those who suffer, and advocate for whatever help is needed.

A week ago Friday, David left the Hospital unannounced and for the next few days, nobody knew where he was. When David's friends found out that he had gone missing, they organized search parties--they drove all over the city, dropping by shelters, scouring the streets, looking for their friend. They did what any good shepherd would do--their love compelled them to act--they continued to search until they received word that David's body had been found--the mental illness had taken his life.

I don't know what triggered the break in David's mind. I don't know what was going through his mind when he left the hospital. But what I do know is that David belonged to the Lord--fully and completely. What I do know is that right now David is with the Lord: his mind has been restored, His heart is at rest, and he is seeing everything clearly.

Paul writes, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"*

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*<sup>1</sup> David is with the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 8:31, 33-35, 38-39

Jesus is the Good Shepherd--Jesus saw, knew, and loved David. Before David was conceived, Jesus knew his name, Jesus knew the family he would be born into, He knew the date of David's birth, Jesus even knew about the final weeks, days, and hours of David's life.

Jesus said, "*I AM the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--and I lay down my life for the sheep.*" *I know my sheep, and my sheep know Me.* David knew that Jesus loved him, that Jesus laid down His own life so that he could become a part of God family. Even in David's final moments, Jesus was with him--and now that David is with the Lord, he will never be lost again.

It's at times like this that we are thrust into grief, sadness, anger, confusion--we can be so disoriented that everything seems to be up for grabs. But it's in these moments that faith, that what we know to be true about God, keeps us grounded.

I have questions--we all have questions. But this one moment in David's life no more defined his life than this one moment defines whether God is good, loving, or strong. God is present, God is sovereign, He is loving and good. Both pleasure and pain have a place in this broken world--a world that Jesus is working to heal and restore.

This Monday (tomorrow) at 1 p.m. we are going to gather here to celebrate David's life, and to remind one another that we have not seen the last of David--because he is with the Lord, a reunion is coming.

I want to encourage all of us to do something this morning, those of us who knew David well and those who did not--I want to encourage you to run to Jesus with whatever you may be thinking, feeling, and experiencing these days. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 describes God as the *God of all Comfort* in a world filled with difficulty, pain, and loss. He doesn't answer all our questions or prevent all of our difficulties but He comforts us in our troubles, He offers compassion in the presence of pain.

John 10 is an absolutely brilliant chapter, and in it, Jesus makes an absolutely brilliant claim: **I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD**. I've been meditating on this passage all week in the light of David's death, and while there is much that I could say, there are just a few things that I feel compelled by the Spirit to say.

In this *I AM* statement, Jesus applies to Himself a metaphor that was applied to God all through the Old Testament. It's important to hear the exclusive claim that Jesus is making. He didn't say, "*I am one of many shepherds,*" or even "*I am a good shepherd;*" He said, "*I am the good shepherd.*" Jesus made this claim because He understood His true nature; He came as God in the flesh. He is **the** Good Shepherd, the True Shepherd, the archetype of all shepherds, the Shepherd from whom all other shepherds derive their authority--this is what Jesus is claiming.

But this morning I only want to answer one question--it's a personal question: *what would it mean for Jesus to be your shepherd today?*

**illus:** Let me back up a little bit and try to get at the answer by way of some dialogue. I've got a blank white board in front of us, and with your help I'd like to fill it up with some descriptive words. Let's

talk together about what a real-live shepherd of sheep does. What does a shepherd do? What makes a good shepherd good? If you have an answer, shout it out. **(talk back)**

These are some very good answers--while many of us may not be cut out to look after real-live sheep, at the very least, I think we all have some sense of what a shepherd is supposed to do. And among your answers, I can see the three words that the Spirit has put on my heart to share with you this morning. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, sees, knows, and loves (red circle the words).

Let me take a moment and repeat this truth again, but in a way that I trust will penetrate the intellect move to your heart. Jesus doesn't just see--*He sees you*. Jesus doesn't just know--*He knows you*. Jesus doesn't just love--*He loves you*.

When I was a young boy I used to think it would be great to be invisible, largely because you could get away with almost anything. You could eat that cookie before dinner without Mom seeing, you could go into your brother's room and he would be none the wiser, you could sneak into the Whitecaps game without buying a ticket. To my young mind invisibility sounded like invincibility; now that I'm older I know better.

Being able to turn invisibility on and off would be a neat party trick, but I've encountered far too many people who feel invisible as they walk through life--and they experience a pain like no other. The one who is "invisible" is the one who is unseen, unknown, and unloved. I wonder, *have you ever felt invisible in your family?* Some of you grew up in homes where you weren't talented enough, or troubled enough, to gain your parents' attention.

I wonder, *have you ever felt invisible in your school?* It's a sad reality that with hundreds of students crowded into tiny hallways, some can slip through the crowds virtually unseen and unknown. *Have you ever felt invisible in your workplace, in your church, or to the opposite sex?* There is no pain like the pain of being invisible.

*Have you ever felt invisible to God?* I suspect most of us have asked grappled with this question; I have no doubt that some of you are thinking these thoughts today: *maybe God doesn't see me, doesn't know me, doesn't love me*. My dear brothers and sisters, if you have ears to hear then hear the word of the Lord: Jesus doesn't just see--*He sees you*. Jesus doesn't just know--*He knows you*. Jesus doesn't just love--*He loves you*.

In the time remaining, let's consider each of these three--seeing, knowing, and loving--for each one described how Jesus, the Good Shepherd, actively moves towards us. Let's begin with *Seeing*.

### 1. He Sees You:

**illus:** My daughter sees everything--nothing escapes her field of view. Sometimes I'll come downstairs, dressed and ready for the day, and Anna will say, "*Dad, you're not wearing that are you?*" Whether it's the eagle flying overhead, the person singing in the car next to us, or the flower that is just starting to bloom--Anna notices everything.

And this has made it difficult for Anna to focus--in noticing everything all the time, it's a challenge for her to really see one thing, or to hear what we were saying to her. So Naomi and I found a technique that we used when she was younger that helped us communicate with her. What we'd do is crouch down until we were

eye to eye, and we would cup her face in our hands so that we filled her field of view--and that's how we would talk, face-to-face.

I can remember walking to school with Anna one morning, I don't recall what we were talking about, but I wanted her to hear something and so I crouched down and assumed the position. But before I could move my hands to her face, she moved her hands to mine. *Dad, I need you to see me, and I need to see you.* There we were, in the middle of the schoolyard, talking face-to-face and heart-to-heart.

Perhaps you've never thought of Jesus in this way. You can probably imagine Him looking down through binoculars--seeing you from a distance. But I want you to grab ahold of a very different image: Jesus crouching down until the two of you are eye to eye, face to face, heart to heart. I want you to picture Jesus, cupping His hands around your face until He fills your field of view. *Jesus sees you.*

So what is it that Jesus sees? He sees your past and your present. He sees your future and so He's out in front of you, leading the way, shaping the path, and shaping you on the the path. He sees the smorgasboard of priorities that are arranged before you, and He's gently nudging you with His shepherd's staff--*this is the way, walk in it.*

Because Jesus is a Good Shepherd, He sees the green pasture that you need, He sees what will satisfy your hunger, He sees what will quench your thirst and He is faithful to provide. He sees when you need rest, and He invites you to make Him your resting place--to lie down, to release your burdens, to trust Him. *Jesus sees you,* and secondly,

## 2. He **Knows** You:

At one point my younger brother Chris had six sheep on his property--I couldn't tell them apart. They all had four legs, two ears, and a tail--all of them were white--they all looked the same. But my brother knew them. They all had names: the ram's name was Dodge, the two females were Snowball and Buttercup and the three lambs were Henrik, Daniel, and Trooper.

They all had personalities, Chris told me. Dodge was outgoing and unafraid. Snowball was a little pushy, and Buttercup was nervous. Some of the sheep would bleat loudly, others much quietly. He knew their tendencies because he watched them, he fed them, he sheared them, he spent time with them. I would stand at the fence and call them by name, but they looked at me with suspicion--when Chris called, they would come.

In John 10:14-15, Jesus said, "*I know my sheep*". What Jesus is saying is that He knows us intimately, thoroughly. And His knowledge is not like that of a scientist--observing bacteria under a microscope. His knowledge is born of love--like a loving mother interacting with her child, or husband gazing lovingly at his wife--his knowledge is born of love.

Psalm 139 says, *You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand*

*upon me...For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*<sup>2</sup>

Jesus knows you--He knows what makes you tick, what makes you unique, your personality, your strengths, weaknesses, your fears, your longings, your secret scars, your future--Jesus knows you-- He is the Good Shepherd who shepherds from up close.

I want you to look again at vs. 14 and 15. Jesus said, *I know my sheep **and** my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father.*” Jesus compares this “knowing” between Him and us to what goes on between Him and the Father. This “knowing” is not a one way street. *Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, so too I know my sheep and my sheep know me.*

**We can know Jesus intimately.** He is not distant, He has made Himself known both the Word and Spirit. Jesus has radically identified with us, taking on our humanity, and we can radically identify with Him. *Jesus sees you, He knows you, and...*

### 3. He Loves You:

As I said before, all of Jesus' seeing and knowing is born of love, but in John 10, there is one central aspect of love that Jesus highlights. vs. 11 reads, “**I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.** *The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*”

Within the metaphor Jesus is presenting, He invites us to imagine a flock under attack. Last week Pastor Keith talked about Jesus being the Gate. 1st Century sheep pens were walled on 4 sides but they did not have gates--the only thing to prevent sheep from going out, or predators from coming in was the shepherd. When wolves approached the pen, the shepherd would plant himself in the middle of the gate and use stones and staff to beat them back.<sup>3</sup>

We all know that it is one thing to be willing, and another thing to act. Jesus was willing to lay down His life, and His love compelled Him all the way to the cross. In vs. 17-18, Jesus says, “*I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*”

Love is really all about choice isn't it? What we choose reveals what we love. So the question is, *what does Jesus' choice reveal?* What does Jesus love? *Jesus loves you*--He went to the cross shouldering our brokenness, our pain, our sin, our rebellion, and He put it to death on the cross. He didn't have to, He wasn't forced to, we didn't deserve to be rescued--but His love compelled Him to act on our behalf.

Jesus said, “*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me...and I lay down my life for the sheep... I lay down my life—only to take it up again.*” This wasn't a heroic sentiment, it was a prophetic word, a promise that was sealed on the day Jesus died--a day that has come to be known as Good Friday.

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<sup>2</sup> Psalm 139:1-5, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 291.

David MacGregor died on a Friday, so too did Jesus. Jesus laid down His own life in death but He took it back up again in resurrection. And because of these twin realities, Jesus' death and resurrection, David and the rest of us have a great and blessed hope--life after death. David has already entered into this reality, and this reality waits for all who place their trust in Jesus.

Jesus doesn't just see--*He sees you*. Jesus doesn't just know--*He knows you*. Jesus doesn't just love--*He loves you*. Will you let Him shepherd you today?

**Pray**

**Song:** *Through and Through*

**Benediction**