

Week of May 3, 2026 - I AM The Good Shepherd | Small Group Lesson 4

Connect

Why do you think Jesus symbolically refers to himself as the good shepherd and to his disciples as sheep? Can you think of other metaphors that also depict Jesus and his followers?

Verses - John 10:11–18, 27–30 (CSB)

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. 13 This happens because he is a hired hand and doesn’t care about the sheep. 14 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 But I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

27 “My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

Study & Apply

1. In what ways do the "good shepherd" and the "hired hand" differ? What do you think is the most significant distinction between them? How can the examples of both figures influence how you lead or serve your family, small group, and ministry? (vv.11-13)
2. Jesus, the good shepherd, describes his relationship with his disciples as one of mutual knowing. What does it mean for Jesus to know his disciples and for them to know him? As a follower of Jesus, how do you know that you know him, and how do you deepen your knowledge of him? (v.14)
3. Jesus mentions the need to bring "the other sheep." Who are these individuals? Why does he need to bring them? Are you open to reaching out to and welcoming people who might not match your small group's usual profile? What should inspire your acceptance of them into your group? (v.16)
4. What is the most profound act of love Jesus demonstrates toward his disciples? Why is this act a reason the Father loves him? Can you show the same degree of love to those close to you? (vv.14, 17-18)
5. According to Jesus in vv.27-30, what is the basis for his disciples' eternal security? How do you know you are secure in him?
6. What are some ways you and your small group can plan to share with non-believers that Jesus is "the good shepherd"? Share outreach ideas with your group, then pray about practicing at least one of them.

Minister to one another through sharing specific prayer requests.

Lesson PDF: gotbc.org/sg1826p Lesson verses: gotbc.org/sg1826