

John 10:1–21 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To help us see Jesus as the royal, self-sacrificing shepherd so that we will follow him through whatever happens to the full life.

Sermon Refresher: We're like sheep who need a real shepherd to lead us to real life.

- Jesus is the real shepherd because he's the king who lays down his life for the sheep. That makes him unlike the pretenders who steal, kill, and destroy.
- Jesus leads us to real life, because he gives a full life that connects with God through hardship. That's unlike the pretend fullness that has a hard time dealing with suffering.

Discussion:

1. Charles contrasted seeing Jesus as a cuddly Mr. Rogers vs. the royal shepherd. Do you find that there are ways you're prone to see Jesus as Mr. Rogers? If that's not entirely biblical, where do you think that view comes from?
2. What makes Jesus the real shepherd is that he lays down his life for the sheep. How does that definition affect how we look at leaders today, both in the church and in the wider culture?
3. Charles talked in his sermon about the prosperity gospel. According to Kate Bowler, "the prosperity gospel is the belief that God grants health and wealth to those with the right kind of faith."¹ In her interview with *Christianity Today*, she explains, "Prosperity gospel makes everyone feel special. It makes everyone feel uniquely chosen. Every detail of your life is God's ultimate concern."²
 - a. What's attractive to you about the prosperity gospel?
 - b. What's wrong with the prosperity gospel?

¹ Kate Bowler, "[Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me](#)," *New York Times*, Feb. 13, 2016.

² Morgan Lee, "[On Dying and Reckoning with the Prosperity Gospel](#)," *Christianity Today*, Feb. 23, 2016.

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- c. What will help you fight against the prosperity gospel temptation in your own life?
4. Kate Bowler's prayer for her cancer is "that it somehow makes me more of who God intended me to be. I mean that I could somehow be more myself than I would have been without it."³
 - a. How do you feel about facing hardship, even suffering premature death, if that process makes us more of who God intends us to be?
 - b. What are some ways that we might experience the abundant life through and in the midst of suffering?
5. John 10 paints a wonderful picture of knowing the good shepherd personally. He calls us by name, and we hear his voice and follow him (10:3–4). But often that doesn't feel true in our experience, where God can feel distant.
 - How can you cultivate hearing Jesus's voice in your life? What role could God's Word play in that?
6. Read Psalm 23 aloud as a group.
 - How does God show himself as the real shepherd? How do you read this in light of Jesus laying down his life?
 - What does real life look like according to this psalm? How is it life to the full? How does that intersect with hardship?

³ Lee, "On Dying and Reckoning."