**I Am The Good Shepherd**

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[**Part 1 of 2**](https://maninthemirror.org/2020/02/03/i-am-the-good-shepherd-part-2/)

**By Guest Writer Zach Van Dyke, Pastor at Summit Church**

How does Jesus feel about you? When He looks at you, what happens to Him emotionally? Have you ever thought about that—how Jesus feels about you?

Is He embarrassed by you?

Is He frustrated with you?

Is He disappointed?

Or does He like you? Do you think He wants to spend time with you? Do you make Him feel joy?

When Jesus looks at you, does He long to be closer to you? Does He wish you would trust Him more?

Can we ever *really* know how Jesus feels about us?

In [John 10:11-15 (NIV)](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2010.11-15), Jesus says:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

**When Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd,” He gets very personal.**He is telling us how He feels about us—and how He feels about us begins with knowing us. *Really* knowing us.

Douglas MacMillan, a Scottish pastor who for 12 years had been an actual real-life shepherd, wrote a book titled, *The Lord Our Shepherd*. In this book, he tells a story of being on a train with a friend who was also a shepherd.

Three weeks before this, his shepherd friend had sold some of his lambs. As they pulled out of the train station, they passed a flock of sheep, which was right beside the tracks. His friend said, “Look! There are four of my lambs!”

Now MacMillan’s response was not, “Sure. Yeah, those are your little lambies.” No, he knew this guy was telling the truth because he too was a shepherd and shepherds know their sheep!

In his book, he also talked about how when he was a shepherd and would go out with his flock, he would make sure to make eye contact with every single one of them.

And as he watched over them—as they scattered about to graze—he would find high ground or a ridge to look out for danger. Often times, a fox or a wolf would make its way toward his flock and after scaring the danger away, he said he would make eye contact with each of his sheep again to make sure not one was lost. He knew his sheep.

And when Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd,” He is telling us that how He feels about us starts with Him knowing us. Knowing us apart from all others. Making eye contact.

Jesus knows you. Jesus knows how we were created. He was there. **He knows that, like sheep, we are dependent creatures. We were designed with a need for Him and others, and that is core to who we are.** He never intended for us to be independent of Him or of relationships with each other.

And if we’re to understand reality as it actually is, we are also dependent on a perspective beyond our current context. We need a shepherd whose perspective is much broader than our limited view as sheep.

[Isaiah 53:6a](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2053.6a) says, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.” He knows that we are sheep and that, without a shepherd, we’re lost to all kinds of damning lies and fall into deadly choices.

Jesus once looked out into a crowd and the Scripture says, “He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” ([Matthew 9:36](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%209.36)). Life is so hard, and left to ourselves, it’s too much for us.

We’re also dependent when it comes to our worth, because we cannot give ourselves worth. I know a lot of pop psychology says you just need to love yourself. It doesn’t matter what others think of you. You just have to believe in yourself. You have worth because you’re you. But what’s to say that you are worth it?

Think about one of the talent competitions on TV. You see a lot of people who have told themselves they can sing… who can’t. When we see these people fight with the judges about their talent, you and I don’t say, “Oh wow, look at what great self-esteem they’ve got.” No!

The truth is you can’t just say, “I’m a great singer.” You have to be told that by an expert in singing.

A couple years ago, when it was out in theater, my wife and I went to see *The Greatest Showman*, and I thought it was okay. But I didn’t*love* it because although the intended message was that people have value and worth, I felt what it offered was actually a pretty shallow understanding of worth.

The outsiders in the film were validated because a selfish man used them to make money and they got applause from strangers who liked gawking at them. And when the selfish man abandoned them, they gave *themselves* worth. But their worth is so much greater than what they could give themselves.

One of the songs from that film, *This Is Me*, is sung by the bearded-lady, and it has some compelling lyrics:

I am not a stranger to the dark. Hide away, they say, ’cause we don’t want your broken parts. I’ve learned to be ashamed of all my scars. Run away, they say, no one’ll love you as you are. But I won’t let them break me down to dust. I know that there’s a place for us, for we are glorious. When the sharpest words wanna cut me down, I’m gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out. I am brave, I am bruised, I am who I’m meant to be. This is me. Look out ’cause here I come. And I’m marching on to the beat I drum. I’m not scared to be seen. I make no apologies. This is me.

And there is something that rings so true about these words—but not because I declare I’m brave, not because I make no apologies for who I am. Rather, because we *are* glorious; that is truth.

**But here’s the thing: we cannot bestow that glory on ourselves. We can’t just say, “I’m glorious.” We have to be told that from an *expert* in glory. And when Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd,” an expert in glory is telling us we are glorious.**

Jesus told a parable about a lost sheep and how the shepherd left 99 sheep to go find that one. Do you know what that means? The One who is glory says you’re glorious. You matter to God. Jesus is crazy about you.

How does Jesus feel about you? You…yes, *you* specifically, have value and worth, along with all the sheep around you.

Think about it. If the one lamb who wandered off was sacrificed for the greater good, then each individual in the group would feel pretty insecure. Each one would know that he is of little *real* value to the shepherd. So if one wanders off and gets lost, he might as well be dead, because no one is going after him.

**But when the shepherd pays a high price to find the one, he offers the profoundest security and worth to the many. Because the *one* matters, *you* matter.**

When Jesus looks at you, no matter how far you’ve wandered off, He is overwhelmed with love for you—enough to come after you. You are glorious to the One who is glory!

Because of this, you can serve God in confidence, coming before the throne of grace knowing you are fully known and fully loved.

Leaders, there’s another application for us as well. I do well to remember that I’m a sheep. But as a pastor, I’m also called to be a shepherd. In fact, in the Greek, the word for “shepherd” and “pastor” are the same word—“poimen.” **As a pastor or a men’s leader, you are called to be like a shepherd to his flock.**

What does that look like?

When Jesus Christ says, “I am the good shepherd,” He is telling us how He feels about us—that He knows us, that He understands sheep need to be cared for so specifically and are prone to wander, and that kind of deep caring leads Him to be very protective of the sheep. So protective, in fact, that He says, “I lay down my life for the sheep.”

**Consider these questions with your leadership team:** Do you take time to really know your men? Do they know how you feel about them—that you care about them *personally?* When they are at risk, are you protective over them and their souls? When one wanders off, do you go after him?

And do you really know *each other*? Do you care about the other leaders on your team in this way?

The truth is that even the best ministry programs, curriculum, and events will be found lacking without a foundation of care, connection, and authentic relationships.

**Commit to, as a team, knowing and shepherding your men—and each other—into deeper dependence on Jesus, the ultimate Good Shepherd.**

***THE BIG IDEA:****Because you are fully known and fully loved by the Good Shepherd, you’re free to shepherd others.*