

## **John 10:1-10**

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

### **SERMON**

When Jesus says “verily verily I say unto you” he means, “listen up, this next bit is really important. Jesus says “see that healing of a blind person, just now?”...that’s what being the Good Shepherd looks like.

Dr. Karoline Lewis’s doctoral dissertation advocates connecting the healing to Jesus’ words about being the Good Shepherd paves the way for her present teaching that John chapter 10 and John chapter nine must be taken together—and what possibilities that opens!

Back we go to the Gospel reading during Lent... The podcasters put it to us this way...Do you want to know what abundant life and Good Shepherding are about? Ask the person born blind.

First off, the disciples want to make a case study from someone born blind. Jesus isn't having it. Nor does Jesus riff on shepherding because it's a nice theoretical concept.

The one born blind hears Jesus' voice. Jesus puts a dirt and saliva poultice on eyes that don't see. Jesus sends him to a pool to wash; and he sees. His recognition of Jesus gradually focuses...at first the healer is a random person, later a prophet, and then messiah, God's anointed. That last claim gets the healed one chucked out of the synagogue. Then the shepherd comes looking for this displaced person...and he takes him in. You can be forgiven if lines from the Shepherd's Psalm come to mind just now.

Dr. Lewis and her colleagues Professors Joy J. Moore and Matt Skinner sketch the parallels for us. Jesus anoints, heals, and protects this person, born blind. People see, people are healed, people are fed, people find community, and even the dead are raised!

It's a joy to hear the stories many of you share about how God shows up in your life. People come alongside to help and comfort when you need it most. You might experience a strong inner guidance about decisions you need to make. You might have been spared from injury or even death. You might have experienced that still small voice assuring you that you're not alone even as you feel you're in the valley and shadow of death.

We can inquire of the one born blind what abundant life and Good Shepherding look like. We can also ask each other and give thanks to God whose Goodness clings to our lives every single day.