

**Sermon Series: “The Good News for Life”**  
***The Good Shepherd Defined***  
**Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.**  
**Sunday, August 23, 2020**

Have you ever seen a good worker? A good worker knows his or her role is not only to do his or her job, but often willing to do whatever else is required to make the job happen. E.g., I recall when I was in college I met a guy who worked for a landscape company who had a very demanding owner of the business. This owner had a reputation for firing his workers after a few weeks of employment. He told me how he had managed not only to keep his job but also become one of the owners’ favorite employees—he hustled constantly. When something needed to be done, or looked to be needed done, he did not wait for the owner to tell him what to do, but he took initiative and immediately attacked the problem. He may not have solved the problem, but he would not sit around waiting for someone come along and solve it for him. He showed the owner he was not a hired hand, but someone who took personal ownership of the work. E.g., I know of a teenager who worked at a business and he worked so hard and did not complain but was willing to help where needed that the adults in the business often sung his praises. That is the difference, again, between a hired hand and someone who takes ownership of the business. Wouldn’t it be nice to work with someone like that? Wouldn’t it be nice to have someone who cared for our lives like that? Today we will see there is such a person.

READ John 10:11-21 (pp. 103-104)

**CONTEXT:** Jesus has just told about two types of leaders sheep— or someone— can follow— someone who comes only to kill, steal, and destroy, or Himself, who gives safe pasture to the sheep, the abundant life.

READ vv 12-13. “Jesus defined His role as the Good Shepherd in two ways. First, He defined it by what His role is *not*— a hired hand who flees at the first sign of trouble.” Have you ever seen someone who flees at the first sign of trouble? Often we don’t think much of them. E.g., I recall on a *Seinfeld* episode that George was dating this woman and there was a child’s birthday party they were attending when all of a sudden someone cried out, “Fire!” and George immediately took off to get out of the house, knocking over an elderly woman in a walker on the way out. In the show his girlfriend was not impressed with George, and even though we can laugh at it, we also see this as an act of cowardice. We see similar things today. E.g., I recall hearing about a wife who left her husband and two daughters when life was getting tough for her with her family commitments and the husband was the one who raised his daughters— and he did a wonderful job, and brought them up in the church. Sometimes even pastors can lose sight of what it means to be a good shepherd of others. E.g., I recall a pastor who was called by a bishop to visit a wealthy gentleman who was terminally ill, and the reason for the visit was not to inquire about his spiritual state, whether he knew Jesus as Lord and Savior or whether he needed pastoral counsel, but rather to request that the gentleman leave the church in his will. There is nothing wrong with leaving the church in one’s will, but to make such a visit for that purpose at that time seems to miss what God would want from a pastor at that time.

READ v 11, 14-18. “The second way Jesus defines His role as the Good Shepherd is by what He *is*— the One who lays down His life for the safety of the sheep, and He does so willingly.” We always seem to notice when people make great sacrifices for us, even laying down their lives for us. E.g., this week Nathan and Emily and I were driving in Metairie on W. Esplanade by E.J. Hospital when

Nathan noticed the name of a street by the hospital called “Healthcare Heroes”. In June it was reported online that nearly 600 healthcare workers in the U.S. had lost their lives to COVID-19. They are truly heroes, and Yungsil’s husband Kevin, a nurse at E.J. Hospital, is one of them. We see good shepherds, people who reach out to help others in ways that is far more than a “hired hand”, but people who really care for others. E.g., even though they have gotten a bad rap in the media, police are good shepherds. The killing of George Floyd last May was a tragedy, and should never have happened, but the police involved in that represent the very small minority of police officers. People don’t become police officers to become multi-millionaires, but because they care about protecting and serving communities, and their job is a very dangerous one. I recall a police officer who pulled over a car and walked up to the driver’s window, and the driver pulled out a gun and shot the officer and drove off; by God’s grace, the police officer’s wife had purchased for him a bullet-proof vest, and he was wearing that when he was shot, and he was not harmed. Police officers have to make split-second decisions, where they don’t know what a person is pulling out of his or her pocket or glove compartment. Ministers are also called to be pastors, and even to lay down their lives for their sheep. E.g., I recall a pastor in China who shared the gospel with people who fled from North Korea, and the North Koreans found out about him, and threatened his life, but he continued ministering to North Koreans; this pastor made an agreement with his wife that he would not tell her where he was going so she would not get in trouble, and one day he got a call from someone in need, and he went to meet the person and it was a set-up and he was killed. He lay down his life for the sheep to hear the good news. That is what Jesus did for you and me— He took our place on the cross, He took on our curse for disobeying the law (Galatians 3:10-14). It is interesting that there are many theologians and pastors who reject this idea of substitutionary atonement, because why would God require the life of an innocent person for a sacrifice of sins? Two things are missing in

their thinking: first, that God the Father was asking this of God the Son— so God Himself bore this curse; second, as Jesus says in our text three times, He freely of His own volition gave up His life. This is an amazing love, and it is strikingly expressed in Romans 5:6-8/

“If Jesus is *really* like the Good Shepherd, then what is the appropriate response to Him?” At least two things: worship Him for this incredible love, that we truly have a God who is *not* a hired hand, but One who loves us and will give all to redeem us and keep us safe with Him; second, mimic Him. I have heard that the greatest flattery is to have someone who mimics you; this is true in our worship of Jesus, that we are like Him and lay down our lives to bring the gospel to others and serve them in His name. We are to love as He loves. I have heard that real love is not simply loving those who will love you back. The secular world knows that type of love well. The Christian idea of love is to love the unloveable. That when people mock us or curse us or give us “the finger” or spit in our face, we are to love them. That is the way our Savior Jesus loves.