



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

November 29, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

KNOWING THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

His sheep follow him because they know his voice.

John 10:4

READ John 10:1-10

When I was a boy living on a ranch in Tennessee, I spent glorious afternoons roaming with my best friend. We'd hike into the woods, ride ponies, visit the rodeo arena, and venture into the barn to watch the cowboys work the horses. But whenever I heard my dad's whistle—that clear sound slicing through the wind and all the other clatter—I'd immediately drop whatever I was doing and head home. The signal was unmistakable, and I knew I was being called by my father. Decades later, I'd still recognize that whistle.

Jesus told His disciples that He was the Shepherd, and His followers were the sheep. "The sheep listen to [the shepherd's] voice," He said. "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:3). In a time when numerous leaders and teachers sought to confuse Christ's disciples by asserting their authority, He declared that His loving voice could still be heard clearly, more distinctly than all the others. "His sheep follow [the shepherd], because they know his voice" (v. 4).

May we be careful as we listen for Jesus' voice and avoid foolishly dismissing it, for the fundamental truth remains: The Shepherd speaks clearly, and His sheep hear His voice. Perhaps through a verse of Scripture, the words of a believing friend, or the nudge of the Spirit—Jesus speaks, and we do hear.

By **Winn Collier**

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, I need to be reminded that You're speaking, and that I do hear You. Help me pay attention. Help me to listen and respond. Amen

How do you think you've complicated hearing God's voice? What's the Shepherd saying to you today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Much of Jesus' teaching was down to earth and practical, so it's understandable why people were enthralled with it. We see this in John 10 when Christ speaks of shepherding and sheep, which were commonly understood in the life of the ancient Israelites. It also echoed back to Israel's past relationship with God. In the Old Testament, Psalm 23:1 launches the imagery of God as Israel's shepherd. That theme is revisited in Jeremiah 23:1-8; Ezekiel 34; and Zechariah 10:2-12. Jesus also pursued the shepherd/sheep motif in Luke 15 in His three parables about lost things (a sheep, a coin, and a son). – By **Arthur Jackson**

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