

May 7, 2006

## "Shepherds and Thieves"

### Knowing our Savior's voice will keep us safe.

**Key Verse: John 10:4 (NIV)**

His sheep follow Him because they know His voice."

**Bible Passage: John 10:1-10 (NIV)**

*"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

### **Lesson Thought**

My first memory is my mother's voice. I had crawled under a chair and had become firmly stuck there. To this day, I can still hear the sound of my mother's comforting voice over my crying as she came to gently pull me out. Jesus reminded his disciples that sheep listen to the shepherd's voice and know and follow only him. Using this illustration, Jesus warned His disciples about other voices than His, voices of thieves and strangers, who would try to lead them away from Him, their Shepherd. How would they know the difference between His voice and those other voices? By knowing the Shepherd's voice and following only Him. One way to know our Shepherd's voice is to study and memorize God's Word. Psalm 119:11 says, *"I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."* As we study and memorize, the Bible, we come to recognize the voice of our Shepherd and are

able tell the difference between His voice and the voice of those who want to lead us away from God.

**Application: what does this lesson say to us today?**

1) Do you read and study God's Word daily, listening to His voice with your whole heart? Can you identify the Shepherd's voice among all the other voices calling out for your time, money, and thoughts? Are you staying so close to the Savior, enjoying His very presence and Voice minute by minute, that the sound of those other voices has no pull on you? Pray: "Lord Jesus, I want to know Your voice, and to put Your ways in my heart. Help me to know and follow only your Voice."

2) Is it hard to distinguish between right and wrong, between God's peace and the world's peace, between the voice of the Shepherds and the voice of strangers? What do you need to do in order to know the voice of the Shepherd? What changes do you need to make in your daily routine so you will have time to read the Bible and pray with Jesus each day?

**Family Activities: putting the lesson into action**

1) Memorizing Scripture "by heart" is one way to help us know the voice of the Shepherd. Using hand motions can make memorizing a little easier. Use the following hand motions to memorize the Scripture verse for this week

"John 10:4 - mouth "John"; make numbers 10 and 4 with your fingers

"His" - point upward

"sheep" - pat the air about knee high

"follow Him" - move both hands in the same direction

"because they know" - hands over your heart

"His" - point upward

"Voice". - hands around mouth

"John 10:4" - mouth "John"; make numbers 10 and 4 with your fingers

2) Practice "saying" John 10:4 without words, using only the hand motions learned above. Go over the verse before a meal each day before saying Grace. Be sure to always say the Scripture passage at the beginning and at the end of the verse.

**Suggestions for further study**

Romans 10

Psalm 63

*Bonnie Russell*