Other sheep

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Preacher: Rev Donald Lamont

[0:00] Will you turn with me now for a little time as we seek to meditate together in a portion we have read from the New Testament, the Gospel of Christ by John, chapter 10, and words we have in verse 16.

John's Gospel, chapter 10, verse 16, and other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.
Because this 10th chapter of John's Gospel, my friends, is one of the great chapters of the Gospels in which our Lord with the utmost clarity defines his own role in the word as the good shepherd.
And of course central to that role would be the sacrifice of himself in the interest and for the sake of his flock.
I am, he says in verse 11, I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
And in verse 18, no man taketh it from me, but I lay down of myself, I have power to lay down, and I have power to take it again.
[1:28] Now, Lord's teachings, as we discover from the Gospels, was simplicity itself. He was heard by ordinary folks with the greatest interest, for we read that the common people heard him gladly with joy and delight.

His teaching was in a manner directed, as we know, to a pastoral people who, and they used language which was understandable to them, and he borrowed widely from natural objects around him with which they were accustomed, so that his message would stick in their minds.
One thinks, for instance, of the parable of the soul, to mention only one of these instances. This was a picture to which they could immediately relate.
They could appreciate the different types of ground into which the seed fell, and what happened when it fell into this kind of ground.
They knew what hard ground meant, what stony ground meant, what thorn-strewn ground meant, and what good ground meant. And the picture which he draws in this chapter of a shepherd and his flock would find, I believe, an immediate response from them, and they could easily grasp it as it related to their own pastoral activities.
[3:00] For instance, my sheep is a term that would be profoundly meaningful to a people who almost universally had their own flock, were the shepherds of their own flock, and were not simply hirelings.

They knew very well what our Lord would have meant when he made reference to hirelings in verses 12 and 13.
The hireling pleads because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. They are not his own.
So the term, my sheep, would be readily understood by them.
And of course, our Lord's reference to other sheep would also be quickly grasped and understood by these pastoral people, for they would recall the one that had wandered from the safety of the flock, the rebel sheep that perhaps so persistently separated itself from the group and from the shepherd's protective care, and found its way into distant parts until it was quite lost.
And Jesus is merely stating here, then also I must bring. He is stating something that every concerned and true shepherd among themselves would say in relation to the wandering members of their flocks.
[4:28] Now, of course, his purpose in all this, as the chapter so eloquently and clearly shows, was to focus attention on the special mission for which he himself was in the world, and how that mission would be accomplished, and what the effect or the outcome of that mission would be in relation to men and women in the world to the end of time.

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His work as the good shepherd would continue to be effectual until there was, as we are told, one fold and one shepherd.
So we have the, in these words, we have the ongoing activity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ amongst men and women in the world.
And in these words of old text, I suggest that, first of all, he is referring to the divine relationship with regard to the, as yet, unregenerate and unconverted and unsaved amongst mankind.
You see, he had been speaking about my sheep, and now he is speaking about other sheep I have. And he is very clearly making reference to those who are as yet, and regenerate with regard to their relationship to God.
[5:56] And in the words which he uses here, we have, for one thing, the eye of God scrutinizing, and only the eye of God.

The eye of God is, if you like, cutting a straight line down through the ranks of mankind when Jesus says, other sheep I have which are not of this fold.
This doesn't belong to any one of us, to any of the children of men, to make this distinction. It belongs to God alone. God knows who are his.
God knows who will be his. In the fullness of his own time. We can only submit ourselves to the word of God, to the authority of that word.
For the apostle says in Ephesians chapter 1, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in it, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him, in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself.
[7:17] That is as far as we can go. Only God can make a straight line down through the ranks of mankind and say, other sheep I have which are not of this fold.

It doesn't concern us. What concerns the church of God is to preach the gospel to every creature, not to make distinction.
That is not the concern. And that is not the work or the duty of the church at all. So we remember that it is the eye of omniscience that is here scrutinizing the sons of men, when Jesus says, other sheep I have.
But in these words also we notice that the ownership of God is depicted. You see, our Lord says, other sheep I have.
I have them. So you ask perhaps, if he doesn't have them, ask my sheep, in what sense are we to understand his having them? I suppose that we could say that he has them by virtue of their creatorship.
[8:30] He created all men. And in that sense we are all the offspring of God, without exception. But I suggest that that is not the meaning of these words.

But rather that he is saying, I have them in covenant. They have actually been given to me in covenant. The father, he says in his chapter of the self, the father who gave them to me.
He is greater than all. No man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. It is very evident from his teaching in the gospel. That he had a people given to him in covenant.
And there are those who were given to him in covenant. Who are not yet his sheep. They are his other sheep. The eye of omission is scrutinizing the seed.
The ownership of God is depicted in his words. Other sheep, I have. They belong to me in this unique sense. I have them in covenant.
[9:37] You see also that the intervention of God is emphasized. Them also I must bring. He himself is going to intervene. He always does, of course.

This is the great teaching of the word of God. It is the power of God, the intervention of God that takes place all the time that is taking place.
This is the great teaching we have, for instance, in Ephesians chapter 2. You have been brought to life. You have been brought to life. Who were dead in trespasses and sins. And you remember how he goes on to unfold that doctrine of the grace of God at work in the lives of men.
By grace you are saved through faith, but not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. God, by his spirit and in different ways, he intervenes in order to bring men and women to faith in Christ.
And, of course, we have the overall sovereignty of God, supposed, in these words. You see, the first person, Singler, comes to the forefront here. Others say, I have.

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[10:49] Them also I must bring. And it is the glory of our gospel. The glory of the teachings of the word of God. That God is sovereign.

And not just in every other sphere of life, but sovereign in a sphere of grace. He does his sovereign will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.
So the divine relationship is said before us in these remarkable words. The second principle thing we see here is the divine initiative.
And I want to enlarge a little more on this. The divine initiative them also I must bring. You see, this is the great immovable confidence of the church and the people of God.
That Christ himself is active in his church. On himself he is building his church. And no power in hell or on earth will remove that work.
[11:56] And so he says here with regard to his initiative, them also I must bring. And it is right and proper that we should perhaps ask ourselves several questions in relation to the initiative of our God in this work.

How does he bring men and women to himself? Well, of course, we have to follow strictly what the divine word itself says in that connection.
He brings them to himself by the convicting activity of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus said before he left the world, when he, the Comforter or the Holy Spirit, when he has come, what will he do?
He will reprove the world of sin. He will convict the world of sin. And the Lord hadn't been long ascended to heaven when this event actually happened because the Holy Spirit descended mightily on the day of Pentecost and immediately began this activity.
A vast number who were congregated there were pricked in their heart. He was reproving men and women. And that has continued until this day.
[13:21] The old catechism, as you know, says that effectual calling. And it is with effectual calling that we are dealing here. That effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit.

Whereby convincing us of our sin. Enlightening our mind. He does persuade and enable us to accept Jesus Christ.
And so then, he brings his sheep to himself by the convicting activity of the Holy Spirit. I suggest that he does it also in another way.
He affects his work. He takes the initiative in bringing men and women to himself. Sometimes by the dramatic intervention of God's providence.
There is of frequency, there is reference made to the dramatic way by which the Apostle Paul was brought to repentance and to faith.
[14:21] How God met him on the road to Damascus. And how he submitted and bowed himself to that voice that spoke to him. It is hard for you to kick against God's.

There is another remarkable instance of the dramatic intervention of God in providence. When we read of the account of the Philippian jailer. Where God spoke so powerfully on that occasion.
That perhaps the most dramatic intervention of all. With regard to our Lord's intervention. God's intervention in bringing a sinner to himself.
Is on Calvary itself. Where our Lord Jesus Christ was offering himself an oblation.
For the sins of men. At that awesome moment. In the history of the world. In that dramatic providential event.
[15:28] There was one man. Who saw. The light of the glorious gospel. Of Jesus Christ. And to whom Jesus said.

Verily. You will be with me today in paradise. It is not always that God operates. In such dramatic ways.
In bringing sinners to himself. But he does. On occasion. Them also I must bring. By the convicting activities of the Holy Spirit. By the dramatic intervention of God's providence.
He also works by the sanctifying testimony. The sanctified testimony of God's believing people. Yes indeed. He works through this means.
You he says. Are my witnesses. You are my witnesses. In Jerusalem. And in Samaria. And in Judea. And to the uttermost parts of the earth. You are the ones through.
[16:29] Whom men and women. Are to see. The power of the gospel. And the influence of that gospel. It is through your instrumentality.

That I am going to bring them. To an interest. In the things that concern. Their destiny. And their happiness. And so.

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I must. Bring them. He works. By the sanctifying testimony. Of the sanctified testimony. Of God's believing people.
But above all. He brings them to himself. And he works this work. By the utmost foolishness.
Of preaching the word. I say. The utmost foolishness. Of preaching the word. Because this.
[17:26] Is how the world at large. Regards. The preaching of the word. It is utter foolishness. But it has pleased God.

By the very foolishness. Of this activity. To do what? To tickle men's fancy. Not at all. But to save them.
That believe. By all means. My dear friends. Let us have better preachers. And let us have better preachers. But let us never dispense.
With the God-centered. Activity. Whereby. He brings. Men and women. To himself. That is the preaching of the word. Let us never despise.
The preaching of the word. Because it is the God-centered operation. By which Christ. Brings men and women. To repentance. To faith. And to new obedience.
[18:25] I must. Bring them. Those other sheep. Have to be brought in. And I must do as this. O Lord and Savior Jesus. Christ. But he does it through.

Various means. And I have mentioned. Some of those. Means. Some of those instruments. See that we give the attention. See my friend. That you give the proper attention.
To these. Means. By which Christ works. In our midst. In your life. And in our midst. The divine relationship. Other sheep I have.
The divine initiative. With regard to. Those other sheep. I must. He says. Bring them. I must bring them. I must work effectually.
So that they are brought. Into my fold. And to be among. My sheep. The third principle thing. That we have in these words. Is simply. The divine result.
[19:22] Of the divine. Of the divine activity. Of the divine initiative. Of the divine. And we have a divine result. In these words. Of our Lord. They shall.

Hear. My voice. They shall. Hear. My voice. It isn't that they may hear it. All of them. Who are the other sheep.
All of them. Who are in that covenant. They shall. Hear. My voice. They will. Effectually. And savingly. Hear.
My voice. And rejoice in it. And you ask perhaps. What are some. Of the marks. Of the hearing of faith. What are some of the evidences.
That I can. Reduce in myself. As that I am. Hearing the. Voice of the good shepherd. The voice of Christ. Speaking to me. In his word. In his gospel.
[20:17] In the events of providence. Are there certain marks. That I can look for. Which would bring me to believe. That I am hearing. The voice of Christ.

In whatever means. He condescend to you. I believe there are. There is certainly. This mark. That we could. Indicate. And that is.
A vital. Interest. In the things of God. A vital. Interest. As distinct. From. A superficial interest.
A vital interest. In what. God is saying. And the way. In which he is. Saying it to us. If you read the acts. The eighth chapter.
In the acts of the apostle. You will find there. An account of. Philip the evangelist. Being directed. By God's spirit. To go down. Into. The desert. There he met a man.
[21:14] The. You know. From Ethiopia. Who was. Returning from Jerusalem. After having. Worsifed. In Jerusalem. Him. And he was. Reading the old testament. He was reading the book of Isaiah.

The prophecy. And he was reading about. The passion. Of our Lord. And Philip. Thrown here. To him. At the instigation of the spirit. And asked him. Understandest thou.
What thou readest. Now I don't think. We can. Say that this was the first time. That the Ethiopian. Had read this passage. After all.
He had been up to Jerusalem. To worship. We are assuming. That he. Was a convert. To Judaism. He was up there. Worshipping. He knew the old testament. He had previously.
No doubt. Read it. Here he was. At this point. In his life. And he was. Passled. Beyond measure. Of whom. Is a prophet. Writing.

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[22:10] Of himself. Or some other man. You see. There was a vital. Interest. Aroused. With regard. To the things of God. In the mind. And in the heart.

Of that man. A mark. Of. I suggest. Of the hearing of faith. And we know of course. The sequel. To that interview. He had with Philip.
So there is this mark. With regard. To the hearing of faith. The hearing. Of. The voice of the good shepherd. But not only is there this mark.
I suggest. That there is also another. There is a felt sense. Of the emptiness. Of life. Although perhaps.
We have everything. That we could wish for. With regard to material things. In life. Surrounded with all the comforts. And the blessings. And the richness of life.
[23:06] Yet. We come to a point. Where there is a felt sense. Of the emptiness. Of everything. Vanity of vanities. All is vanity. Why?

Well I think we have an indication of this. In the tenth chapter. Of the gospel of Mark. A man who felt. Something like this. We refer to him.
As the rich young ruler. He came to our Lord Jesus Christ. And he asked him a question. Good master. What good thing. Must I do.
To inherit eternal life. And obviously. He asked that question. Because there was a felt. Sense of emptiness. In his life. But the tragedy of the man.
Is that he rejected. The advice. Which Jesus gave to him. And went away sorrowful. Because he had great riches. He had no lack. With regard.
[24:04] To material things. But. There was a felt. Sense of emptiness. A void in his life. Which he felt. Had to be filled. The tragedy is.

That he turned away from it. This I think. Is a mark. Of the hearing of faith. A vital interest. In the things of God. A felt sense. Of the emptiness.
Of life. Another mark. Of the hearing of faith. Is surely a deepening hunger. For the truth. And word of God. An ongoing. And deepening hunger.
For the truth of God. For the word of God. For the manner. Of that word. In John chapter 6. At verse 34. We hear. Those devout followers. Of our Lord.
Saying to him. Lord. Evermore. Give us this bread. They were dissatisfied. With the measure. Of what they were getting.
[24:59] They wanted more. They had a taste. For the heavenly manner. And so they prayed. Lord. Evermore. Satisfy our hunger. Evermore. Give us this bread.

It is a mark. Of the hearing of faith. Of the man who. The woman who come. And who sit. At the footstool of Christ. Listening. To the gracious words.
That proceed. From him. Another. Mark surely. Of the hearing of faith. Of the hearing of. The voice of the good shepherd. Is a desire to.
Restructure. And reform. One's life. A desire to restructure. One's life. To reform. One's life. On the basis.
Of divine principles. On the prodigal. When he came to himself. He had this thought. Immediately instilled. Into his mind. I will arise.
[25:57] I will go to my father. And I will say unto him. I have sinned. Against heaven. Make me. As one of thine higher servants. Restructure. And reform my life.

In accordance. With the principles. Of heaven. And he is really. Is something that is true. Of every hearing. Child of God. When he is hearing.
For the good of his soul. And of course. We cannot pass from this. Without. Mentioning one other mark. And that is of course. Of readiness. To do. God's thing. Rather than one's own.
We have a classical. Case of this. In the. In Saul of Tarsus. Where he asks the question. Lord. What wilt thou. Have me do.
I have been doing. My own thing. My own will. To this moment. In my life. But now. Things have to be different. No longer. Must I do.
[26:53] My own will. Not my will anymore. But thine be done. And so. What wilt thou. Have me do. A true mark. Of the hearing of faith.

A true mark. Of one. Who is. Giving attention. To the voice. Of the shepherd. And listening. To the shepherd's voice. And attending. To what.

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He is saying. Other sheep. I have then. Which are not of this fold. Them also. I must bring. And they shall hear. My voice.
Now just. In a word. My friends. What was. The immediate effect. Of such. Teaching. As we have here. I think it is.
Tremendously. Important. To see this. In order. To the. Proper. Application. Of. These words. To ourselves. And this is something.
[27:48] That we should. Always be. Concerned with. That we make. A proper. Application. Of the word of God. To our own. Persons. What then.

Was the. Immediate effect. Of this. Teaching. On the part of. Our Lord. In this chapter. The first thing. Was this. There was.
An immediate. Division. Among the people. Verse 19. There was a division. Then. Among the people. Because. Of him. And because.
Of what he was teaching. And this. In the. This is a. Sad. Case. With regard. To. Humanity. That. Down.
Through the centuries. This. Is how things. Have always been. There is. Always. A division. Among the people. Because of him. Jesus Christ.
[28:47] Is a divisive force. In the world. Of mankind. In the last. Chapter. Of the Acts. Of the Apostle. I had. You read. In that chapter.

You will. Find the Apostle. Paul. In Rome. Having arrived. In Rome. And he called. The people. Principally. The Jews. To doubt. Around him. To explain.
To them. The demands. Of the gospel. The claims. Of the gospel. And we read. Towards. The end. Of that chapter. Some. Believe. The word. And some.
Believe. Not. You see. There was a division. Among the people. How is it. My friend. With regard. To ourselves. Do you find.
That there is a. Division. In your own mind. Before God. This morning. With regard. To what. Jesus Christ. The Lord. Of glory. Is saying. In his words. Other sheep.
[29:40] I have. Them also. I must bring. And they shall hear. My voice. There was a division. Among the people. But then. There was not only.

A division. Among the people. But there was. A rejecting. Of. His. Doctrine. As we see. From. Chapter. From verse. 31. There was a rejecting.
Of his gospel. Then the Jews. Took up stones. Again. To stone him. And what could more. Eloquently. Testify. To the rejecting.
Of the doctrine. Which he had. Preached to them. Than that they. Wanted to stone him. They wanted to be. Rid of them. What he was telling them. Was anathema. To them.
And there is. There are teachings. In the word of God. Which are anathema. To men and women. Make no mistake. About it. There was a division.
[30:34] Among the people. There was a rejecting. Of his doctrine. But. There is even something. I suggest. More sobering. Still. In the context.

And that is. That there was. A withdrawment. Of his presence. There was a. Withdrawment. Of Christ's presence. Verse 39. Therefore. They sought. Again.
To take him. But he escaped. Out of their hand. And went away. Again. Beyond Jordan. Into the place. Where Jonah. First baptized. And there. He abode. He actually.
Withdrew. From this. Unbelieving. People. Who rejected. And repudiated. His doctrine. His word. And would have. None of them. Can that. Possibly.
Happen. To any one. Of ourselves. It can indeed. We cannot say. Where or when. But where there is. A persistent. Rejecting.
[31:28] Of the gospel. Of the grace. Of our saviour. And a rejecting. And a repudiating. Of the saviour himself. Then there may. And we believe. There comes a time. When he is no longer.

Found. When he can no longer. Be found. When he withdraws. His gracious presence. But let me. Not finish on that note. On that. Sombre note.
Let me finish. On this note. There was also. An acceptance. Of his testimony. Among. Some of the people. And many resorted.
And to him. Verse 41. And said. John did no miracle. But all things. That John spake of. This man. Were true. And many. Believed. On him.

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There. There. This would be our hope. And this would be our prayer. My friend. For ourselves. And for all. Who are met.
[32:20] As we are this day. Who are gathered. At his footstool. And are listening. To the gracious words. Proceeding from his lips. Are confronted. With the invitation.

Which he is extending. To us. To come unto him. All of us. Who labor. And who. And who are heavy laden. So that we might find rest. And that we might find.
That rest. In. Believing. Upon him. Resorting to him. Trusting in him. Laying hold upon him. Believing on the only.
Begotten son. Of God. And then. We shall. Become. My sheep. From being the other sheep. We shall become. My sheep.
And be in. The fold. Of our Lord. And our Saviour. Jesus Christ. God grant. My friend. That when the books. Are opened. Up yonder. That no one.
[33:18] In his house. Today. That their. Names. Would be missing. From that book. That all. Would be found. In the Lamb's. Book of life.

And in the fold. Of the good shepherd. Amen. May God add his blessing. To our meditation together. Shall we unite in prayer. Oh Lord. Our God.
We bless thee. For the testimony. Of thy word. We rejoice. In thy. Sovereign work. Amongst men. And thy commitment.
To men and women. Who. Whom the father. Gave to thee. In covenant. And we pray. Oh God. That we may see. That work advancing. More and more. In our society.
And throughout the world. That the other sheep. Who were given to thee. Would be. Brought. Into the fold. So that they too. Would rejoice.
[34:15] In. Being. Under the care. And the scrutiny. Of the good shepherd. Of that fold. Be with us. We pray thee. Throughout the day. Come into our midst again.

When we. Look forward. To meeting. And worshiping. Together in the evening. And glorify thy name. In all our ways. And in all our doings. And graciously.
Hide thy face. From all our sin. In Jesus name. Amen.

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