

Lesson 44

God's Animal Kingdom Classroom

Sheep



The sheep is an animal of contrasts. It can be very tough and hardy, yet it can die quickly of stress. It can climb steep slopes, yet it can become trapped in a small ditch if it is on its back. The sheep can be

stubborn, yet it can also be very willing to follow the shepherd.

What can we learn from the sheep?

The sheep teaches us about our relationship with Jesus our Savior.

We are like sheep. We think we are strong and tough. We think we can climb any mountain and conquer any problem. The truth is that we are weak and delicate and foolish in our sinful ways. Our only strength and protection is Jesus and the salvation that He earned for us on the cross. Jesus is like a shepherd to us and we are His sheep.

Jesus teaches us about how He is the shepherd and we are His sheep in John 10:11, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*

What a beautiful picture Jesus shows us. Only the owner of the sheep cares enough to really know each sheep and its needs. Only the owner of the sheep loves them enough to sacrifice his life for his sheep. If not for the shepherd, the flock of sheep would quickly die of neglect and attack by enemies. If not for Jesus our Good Shepherd, we also would quickly die of neglect and attack by Satan and sin. Instead, Jesus knows our every need and provides for us. Jesus gave His life for us so that our sins would be forgiven and we can have eternal life. Jesus takes care of us in this life and in the life to come in heaven.

Another picture of how Jesus is our Good Shepherd comes from Psalm 23, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

We are very special and blessed to be called sheep in God's flock. What a wonderful life we have with so wonderful a shepherd to watch over us and protect us. One day we will see our Good Shepherd face to face and live with Him forever in heaven where every day will be joyful and peaceful.

