

Read: John 10:11-18

Listen to Your Shepherd's Voice

John 10:14,16

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me... They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In a little town in Croatia (a country in Europe very far away from the United States), villagers raise sheep. They send their sheep out to graze in the morning, and then they call their sheep home at night. You'd think that would be a big mess—hundreds or even thousands of sheep all coming back to the village at the same time and trying to find their shepherds!

But it isn't because the sheep only listen to their own shepherd's voice. In fact, if a husband and wife each have their own sheep, the wife's sheep won't come when the husband calls, and vice versa. The sheep only listen to the voice of their shepherd, because he's the one who watches over them, protects them, and even puts himself in harm's way to keep them safe.

In today's reading, Jesus calls himself our Good Shepherd. He watches over us. He knows each one of us by name. He protects us from the devil, who "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). He even put himself in harm's way to keep us safe, laying down his life for us on the cross.

Someday you'll be in heaven with Jesus and able to perfectly appreciate what he did for you, but what about your life right now? You can't see Jesus, and even though you know he's always there watching over you and protecting you, sometimes it seems like he's really far away. When life is hard, when it seems like everything is going wrong, when your friends make fun of you for being a Christian, what good is a good shepherd that you can't even see?

It's true that you can't see your Good Shepherd here on this earth, but you can still *hear* him speaking to you through his Word. As you read and study the Bible, you come to know his voice better and better. When it comes to making decisions—choosing how you're going to behave—you don't have to be distracted by all the other voices around you. They aren't the voice of your Shepherd, and they aren't the voices that are important.

So listen to the voice of your Good Shepherd! He's the one who loves you, the one you can always trust, the one you'll finally get to see face-to-face in heaven someday. He's the one who loves you so much he laid down his life for you, and he's always worth listening to!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Whose voice should we listen to?
- As the Good Shepherd, who does Jesus protect us from?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Name two ways you can better learn what your Good Shepherd's voice sounds like.
- Do you like being compared to sheep? Why or why not?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- TRUE or FALSE: The voice of the Good Shepherd can be heard in the voices of your mom or dad.
- Name two voices in your life right now that are distracting you from the voice of your good shepherd.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for being our good shepherd and calling us to be your sheep. Help us to keep reading and studying your Word so that we can learn better and listen better to your voice. Amen.

Hymn: CW 375:1,3 – The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The King of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness fails me never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever.

Confused and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me
And on his shoulder gently laid
And home, rejoicing, brought me.