

I Am A Sheep; Matthew 18:10-14

I. Sheep

A. Characteristics

1. Social

- a) Sheep are social animals
- b) They will usually stay together in a group while grazing
- c) A sheep will become highly agitated if it is separated from the group
- d) It is the banding together in large groups which protects sheep from predators

2. Follow the leader

- a) Sheep have a strong instinct to follow the sheep in front of them
- b) When one sheep decides to go somewhere, the rest of the flock usually follows, even if it is not a good "decision."
- c) For example, sheep will follow each other to slaughter. If one sheep jumps over a cliff, the others are likely to follow.
- d) Even from birth, lambs are conditioned to follow the older members of the flock. This instinct is "hard-wired" into sheep

3. Flocking

- a) After fleeing from attack, sheep will reform their group and look at the predator.
- b) They use their natural herding instinct to band together for safety.
- c) A sheep that is by itself is vulnerable to attack

B. There is a reason the Bible compares us to sheep

II. Lost

A. A sheep has no sense of direction

1. We hear stories of how dogs travel hundreds, even thousands of miles to get home
2. Not so with sheep (or man)
3. Normally it is a life changing event that brings us into the arms of God
4. Proverbs 12:15; The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

B. Without "advice" we are lost children

1. If left to our own devices we would all end up selfish, petulant children who only want what pleases us (what I want versus what God wants)
2. Proverbs 14:12; There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
3. Matthew 9:36; When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

C. We have a Shepherd

1. John 10:11–15; 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

D. We have this thought process (and rightly so) that we owe people who have saved our life

1. "White Christmas" with Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye
2. The Bible even mentions this idea

3. Romans 5:7–8; 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 4. John 15:13; Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.
- E. Jesus gave up His life so that we would no longer be lost!

III. Defenseless

A. Sheep are prey

1. They have no natural defenses
2. Their eyes are set so a sheep has a 360 degree field of vision with just a slight turn of its head
3. A sheep has no defensive weapon built into its frame
4. It does not have the gift of speed to outrun a predator
5. It has no sense of cunning to out-think its killer
6. It has no chameleon like ability to deceive its stalker
7. Even its very cries are only a signal for the enemy to close in for the kill

B. We may think of ourselves as the top of the food chain, but for Satan, we are only prey

1. There is only one defense against the Father of Lies... The truth
2. John 14:6; Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

C. The deception is that we think more of the things in this world than we do of its Creator

1. 1 John 2:16; For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.
2. On our own, we are defenseless against this attack, but with Jesus, we have weapons to defend ourselves
3. Romans 1:28–32; 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
4. The idea that anything on this earth is worth worshipping is very foreign to me now (although it once was the way I lived)
5. The mind set on the world is hostile to God (Romans 8:7)

D. Jesus gave up his throne for an earthy life and death so that we would not be defenseless against Satan

IV. Enemies

- A. A sheep is surrounded by enemies, even the forces of nature can be fatal when the sheep is alone
- B. Warner Bros. cartoon Ralph Coyote and Sam Sheepdog
- C. It would almost seem that in these days just about everything is an enemy to Christ and Christianity
- D. If we are separated from the flock then we are easy prey for the enemies
- E. A coal outside of the fire doesn’t stay hot for long
 1. The coal, without the influence of the fire, starts to take on the coolness of the air that surrounds it

2. We, without the flame of the “flock”, start to take on the characteristics of the world around us

3. Friends with the world means we are enemies of God (James 4:4)

V. I Am A Sheep

A. We must know who we are, sheep who belong to the Good Shepherd

B. We must know our weaknesses

1. Lost without the flock

2. Defenseless without the Shepherd

3. Constantly surrounded by enemies

C. We must choose the Great Shepherd

D. Hebrews 13:20–21; 20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.