

Series: Do You Hear What I Hear? / Sermon: Who Are You Listening to?

Community Group Discussion Questions

Opening Question: Besides eating, what is your favorite Thanksgiving tradition?

Tell them: This week we looked at the fundamental illustration of the Christian life; that of sheep and a shepherd. In the famous illustration in John 10:1-18, the followers of Christ are sheep, and He is our shepherd. And the sheep's hearing is central to that illustration. Let's take a look at John 10:1-18.

Read Passage

Tell them: There are six characters to consider in this passage: The sheep, the Shepherd, the stranger, the hired hand, the thief and the wolf. **Ask them:** *What do we learn about the sheep in this passage? (the sheep listen for provision and protection).*

Ask them: *What do we learn about the hired hand? (see verse 10:12)*

Ask them: *What do we learn about the wolf? (divides and scatters)*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said it like this: The difference between the shepherd and the hired hand is one cares about his own skin and the other sacrifices His skin for the flock.

He talked about how a big insult in 2020 has been to call people 'sheep.' He said humanity generally sees itself as superior and beyond needing a shepherd, so they call those they disagree with sheep.

Ask them: *Why do you think sheep would be considered an insult in our current political climate?*

Tell them: We are all living in the same year, in the same country, watching the same news, yet we all hear something different. This has been going on for centuries. John 10:19 – 29 reveals how even Jesus wasn't heard correctly by everyone. Let's take a look.

Read Passage

Ask them: *What did the different people think about Jesus' when they heard him? (some say he is demon possessed, a mad man, others think his miracles prove that isn't true)*

Ask them: *Does the idea of being a sheep insult you? If so, why?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that if you think that you largely know what's best for your life, then you likely don't know Jesus as well as you thought you did. And because of that you may have made the mistake of following a hired hand rather than the Good Shepherd.

Ask them: *What do you think about that idea?*

Ask them: *What are your thoughts on how the Good Shepherd might sound different than the hired hands in our current climate?*

Ask them: *What are some of the most important times of life to listen?*

Childhood

Teen years

College/Apprenticeship

Premarital counseling

New parenthood

Financial planning

End of life conversations

Ask them: *Have you had trouble listening during any of these times? What were the result?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that this passage in John has demonstrated that who we listen to not only directs our life but reveals who and whose we are. He said that the definition of evil is when those in positions of leadership and trust look to divide and devour for their own appetites and profit. Good parents, good pastors, good public servants, and good friends are good not

because they aren't evil, hired hands are that. No, they are good because they are echoes of our Good Shepherd, Jesus.

Ask them: *In what ways might we listen to the wrong voices? And how can we protect ourselves from falling for the imitations and forgeries around us?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael talked about echo chambers, where there is no breadth of opinion or thought, and we only hear what we already feel or believe. He said that these echo chambers, run by wolves, lure sheep into them with a false sense of safety and security, with promises of the free-est of speech and the safest of communities that lacks diversity. He said, "Wolves hate diversity and wolves use fear as a weapon to combat it."

Ask them: *What do you think about that idea?*

Tell them: Last week Pastor Michael asked the staff to list the things that are wrong with the church. Their answers included that it is:

*Prideful, immature, self-centered, a country club, idolatrous,
judgemental, unloving, too political, undevoted, compromised
materialistic, untrusting, greedy, lazy*

Ask them: *Would you agree about these descriptors of the trouble with the church today?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that these problems are symptoms of hearing problems. The church doesn't listen to the Good Shepherd because the church doesn't know how good He really is. And a church that doesn't know the difference between the voice of the Shepherd and the hired hands (or wolves) is a gullible church.

He said that when you follow the Good Shepherd, you listen to the only voice that tells you to love your neighbor as yourself, love your enemies, and lay down your life for your friends.

Ask them: *Why do you need a shepherd in your life?*

Ask them: *What causes you the most fear in your life?*

Ask them: *What generates the most noise in your life?*

Tell them: This week I encourage you to practice listening to the Good Shepherd. Remember, that His voice is always moving you towards love for those who love you and those who hate you, those who are different from you and even those who disagree with you.

Consider reading Psalm 23 each night before you go to bed, just as a reminder to listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Think about the idea of why you need a shepherd in your life.

Pray to God about your fears.

Notice what generates the most noise in your life and find ways to turn the unneeded noise down.