

The Reason I Came is to Give Abundant Life

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[0:00] Welcome. Good to see you. This is our second week here in this place. Bear with us. As you can see, we've changed things up again. We're just going to keep trying different things. Is that okay? One thing that we felt as though when we came here last week was that, oh, it doesn't feel as cozy as upstairs. But then, and then upstairs is too cozy. And then it's kind of like, well, what do we do? And actually, this is a nice thing that we did. And I told my wife, I said, hey, how can we make it more cozy? I don't know what that even means. Can we make it? And then she said, say no more.

Say no more. And before you know it, there's a tree. There's a tree. It's an olive tree is what it is. Praise the Lord for Jesus and for Taobao. And so the tree arrived. The staff at church had no idea what this was. None of us did invite it, then it came. And now it's here. It's quite nice. I mean, the olive tree is a beautiful symbol, of course, of our Lord. He spent a lot of time teaching, not to say that I'm here to take his place.

But actually, it just reminds us of just people gathering. And of course, the place, the place, the garden, where he uttered those words, would you, Lord, remove the cup of suffering from me? But not my will, but yours is all that matters. And so feel as though it's nice. It's symbolic. It actually feels nice. And I guess it's not real.

Okay. Just in case you're worrying. But the little Christmas tree back there is real. The little tiny one. So if you want to go and give it a sniff, that one is real. But here we are. We're going to try and figure this out. Okay. It looks like we actually have a few seats. So it feels less crowded than I was worried about.

[1:40] And so I'm glad. Which means we can continue to invite friends until it gets really, really full. Again, Christmas service, December 21st. Please bring. We're going to have this floor and upstairs. And we're going to have a Christmas market. We're going to try to anyway and see how it all goes.

And we're going to have some fun there. Christmas. What is the reason for this season? Of course, it's Jesus. We all know that intellectually. But we've been trying to kind of go through this Advent series. What does the word Advent mean?

It comes from the Latin word Adventist, which means arrival. And so it's actually Jesus is arriving soon. And we are gathered here because one, he arrived and two, he's coming back again. And so what did he come for? What was the reason why he came? And last week, I said he came for a certain reason.

Who remembers what it was? To save. To seek and save the lost. Miss Brown. And you gave a model answer that actually Jesus came to save you, to choose you, to bring you out.

And actually then your dear husband then followed up with an extra bit, which he always does because he always has something to say. Always has something to say. Which was what, Dr. Brown? What did you say? To give us life and life to the full.

[2:46] That's it. To give us life. Jesus came to give us life and life to the full. And so I took that as inspiration for today's sermon. And we're going to talk about that passage. Any points to those who, anyone who knows where that passage is from?

To give life and life to the full. John 10. John 10.10. Easy to remember. John 10.10. So welcome to those who are new, by the way. It's really good to see you. Don't worry. I will only pick on you if I know your name.

Okay? If I don't know your name, then you can relax a little bit. Jesus came to seek and save and to redeem, which was lost.

That's what he came to do. Which is actually different to actually, maybe those outside of the church don't see that. They see Jesus as this strict, or God as this strict God that has rules.

Doesn't like people to have fun. And so when people walk into the church, they're like, hmm, what is the impression I will get of church? And actually, we were talking with our life group on Monday about, what's the thing that separates Christianity from the other religions?

[3:50] And if you were to boil it down to one word, there's one word. What would that be? Anyone, any ideas? I want to pick on someone from my life group just because we talked about it. But what is that word? It begins with G, or Jesus is the word, but it begins with G.

It's the word I would say separates. Grace. I want to answer you. You're just going to go for it. Grace. Grace. If you're going to say, what's the one thing that separates Christianity? It's grace. All the other religions will tell you, hey, this is how you get to heaven.

You do this, you do that, you do this, and you do that, you do it better and better, and eventually you'll climb your way to heaven. But Christianity says, no, you'll never get there, and you don't deserve to be there. Heaven is perfect.

It's paradise. It's 100% pure. So the moment you walk in, it won't be unless you have a secret recipe, a secret weapon, and that is Jesus, and that is the grace of Jesus that comes to save you when you don't deserve it.

That's grace. So here's another challenge. For those of us who have walked in here, maybe for the first time, you're not even a Christian. Do you feel grace? I worry about that because those outside of the church look in and go, I don't see grace.

[4:57] I see judgment. I see hypocrisy. I see rules. But Jesus came to give life and life to the full, right? But often when we look at the body of Christ, the people of Christ, do we see people who are living abundant lives?

Do we see people who are genuinely happy? Sometimes. Sometimes they look miserable. And you wonder, well, why is that? Because Jesus says he came to give life and life to the full.

What is really happiness? One of the ways that Christina and I like to relax, coming from England, as we watch this TV show, and honestly, you're going to judge us a little bit, but it's the Graham Norton show.

Has anyone watched the movie? Yes. Thank you. I mean, he's just a really funny guy. That's really all there is. And so yesterday we were exhausted. And so we decided just to put on something just to kind of just relax.

And Graham Norton and Taylor Swift was on there. Any Swifties in the house? It's my number two on Spotify. It's your number two on Spotify. Wow. And you speak with such pride about this.

[6:12] Well, Danny's got you. Danny did a very embarrassed kind of, but Taylor Swift is not her big main love. BTS is her main one. And she said this one thing that was interesting that caught my eye, which was, she said, well, actually, I've decided that in order for me to have happiness, I have to go and make it myself.

I didn't create the happiness myself. I have to fake it until I make it is really what she's saying. We have this thing. We all have a dream, which is that we would just be happy. You ask any parent, what do you want for your child? I thought they would just be happy.

My question to you today is what does happy mean? What does happy mean? When you think of someone who is happy, what do you think of? What comes to mind?

Jasper, you're nodding. Tell me, tell me a bit more. What's happy to you? Calmness. I like peace. Peace. Secure. Calm.

Anything else? Have love. Have love. Everyone, this is actually my mother. This is Mrs. Tang. She's here, so that's why she's not afraid to speak up. So she's going to be here.

[7:20] So yes, anyway, now that distracts you a little bit. Fulfillment. Fulfillment. It's interesting, when we're looking at the topic of happiness, when you say all I want is for you to be happy, all I want is for me to be happy, what are we talking about?

We're talking that we actually have a purpose that we feel fulfilled. There is purpose in our lives. There is value in our lives. There is coherence in our lives. That actually everything in our lives just seem to work together.

And all of that, really, you can describe as just human flourishing. When everything is working together and you know why you're here, you know who you are, that's when we are truly happy. Here's the problem.

Why are we, actually, put your hand up. Do you feel in this moment right now, I'm not going to embarrass you, who thinks that they are actually genuinely happy in their lives right now? Just eye

test, I don't know, half the room.

Yeah. But here's the thing. Jesus says he came to give life and life to the full. Why are we not happy? Why are we not fully happy?

[8:21] My hypothesis, what I'm going to propose to you today is I think we struggle with that concept of happiness because we misunderstand the context of this passage, what he is actually saying when he says, I've come to give life to the full, who he's actually talking to.

And if we understood that, if we understood what he was trying to say, I think it would set us up well for actually being able to be happy. There's a book that I just started reading. It actually won the book of the year from the Gospel Coalition.

And it's called Everything is Never Enough. And it talks about my favorite, actually not my wife's favorite book in the Bible, which is Ecclesiastes, which tells you a little bit about Christina if you want to know about her.

Okay. So everything is meaningless. Everything is pointless. Everything is vanity. So what's the point? And so you've got this writer of Ecclesiastes who goes into this.

And of course, he ends up with some summaries at the end. And if you haven't read it, I won't spoil it for you. But this book about Ecclesiastes talks about this topic of actually, how do we get that happiness?

[9:23] How do we zoom out in life and actually address the low grade hum that we all have, that anxious feeling that we all have, that burden, that heaviness that we all have, and actually live lives that are lives to the full.

That we can actually say, oh, my life is just abundant. My heart is just abundant right now. How do we get that? I think we need to understand what John 10 is actually saying, because I think the reason why we don't have that is what St. Augustine talked about, which is that we have disordered loves.

We're supposed to love things in a certain order. And if you love things in a certain order, starts with God, then everything will work out and your life will start to flourish. But we have disordered loves. We start loving things that actually aren't good for us. And that's why we have this low grade hum. That's why we have this anxiety. That's why we don't feel like we are truly happy, that we don't truly belong or are flourishing.

In this society here, we settle for things that don't really give us happiness. We settle for counterfeits. We settle for things that are not really good. And then we wonder why we don't have the flourishing life that we're supposed to have.

[10:33] The Westminster catechism is this, that the chief end of man is to glorify him and to enjoy him forever. Yes, Caleb, Taylor Swift and catechisms.

You are an interesting person. But I don't think we enjoy him forever. But it's also because I don't think we glorify him. Right. And so if we're going to figure out what that means, we're going to have to look into scripture and to look into scripture.

I'm going to ask someone from my life group is Dr. Kelvin Lowe, famous orthopedic in Hong Kong. And he's going to come up and he's going to minister to us with the word.

If you're new here, I'd like to introduce you to a tradition we have, which is when we read the Bible, we actually stand. It's a symbol. It's a reminder for us to have reverence and awe for the word of God. Actually, there's nothing that I will say here that will be more important than the word of God. So can I invite Caleb and can I invite you to stand as well? John 10.

[11:34] Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep, and to him the gatekeepers open.

The sheep hears his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, and they do not know the voice of the strangers. This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door, and if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, and I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. This is the word of the Lord.

[12:40] Praise Peter. Please take a seat. Thank you, Kalo. It's on that note. Well, actually, we're going to start a new thing, which is also hand out the Bibles. Bonnie, are there the Bibles at the back? Can we just hand them out? If you feel convicted and guilt-tripped by me, then please hold on to it and open it and read it.

If you have a stone heart, then you can just pass it on and move it on. Welcome to the gathering. We believe in two things, Jesus and paper Bibles. That is it. So we're just going to pass them out because we realize it's very hard to actually get them when you're walking in because it's so cramped.

So we're just going to pass them out and force you to pass the word of God on to someone else. It's another one of our secret tricks is which if you get bored of the sermon, I can trick you into reading the Bible instead. So just feel free.

Open up to John 10. 10. Well, actually, we're going to do John 10 verse 1 to 11, and you can follow along. Okay? Thank you very much, ladies, for passing that out. So, I came to give life and life to the full.

We love that verse. We hold on to it. But the problem is, if you're like me, I'm like, okay, you came to give me life to the full, but I don't really feel it. It's also because Aidan needs a Bible over there. It's all right.

[13:49] I got you, bro. He needs Bible. He needs Jesus. We take that verse. I came to give life and life to the full, but we ignore everything else, and then we wonder why we don't really have life to the full.

So we need to understand the preceding verses to it. I see the Bible there. Who's Jesus talking to is my first question. Brave souls. Who's Jesus talking to? The Pharisees.

I need to rewind your mind a little bit, because actually, when you look at Scripture, you look at where things are. It's very important. So John 10 is where he talks about this, and I'm your shepherd. I'm the door, and I'm all these great things. But you need to know who he's talking to, because once you find out who he's talking to, it changes what he's actually saying.

And then we understand what he's actually saying here. And so John 9, let me just tell you a little bit. There's a man who was born blind. And during that time, if you had a physical ailment, people would look at you and go, not only do you have a physical ailment, you have a spiritual one.

You are a sinner. We're going to cast you out of society because you're blind. Can you imagine that? You were already born blind. You already don't see anything. And now society won't even allow you in because they say that you have committed sins, that you had no pie in some ways.

[14:59] And so that's the person. And then, of course, Jesus comes to save him and actually grant him his sight. It's a fascinating passage because what happens after that is a cat and mouse race because it's like, who healed you?

Jesus, where is he? I don't know. Find him. Are you following him? No. He just helped me with my blindness. Do you follow him? No. But do you? Why are you so interested? So this is passive aggressive conversation that's happening that's really interesting.

And so finally, the man sees. The Pharisees figure out that it is Jesus. And so they confront him and say, and what's their biggest problem? Why did you heal this man on the Sabbath?

I'm going to completely ignore the miracle that you just did. And I'm going to hold on to the fact that you did it on the day that you weren't supposed to. And Jesus is just like, you're blind.

You don't see. And it's on that note that he then jumps into John 10. And so he says this. And so there's a thief and there's a robber.

[16:00] Truly, truly, I say to you again, when we're reading the Bible, if someone says truly, truly, you pay attention. Okay. Because he's saying, hey, this is really serious.

This is in block capital letters that he's saying this now. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way. That man is a thief and a robber. What he's saying is you Pharisees, you false teachers, you are the thieves and you are the robbers. You've been exercising control over these people for so long. So many of them are illiterate and you're the ones who are teaching them how to get to God.

And you're telling them the way to get to God is to satisfy you and your rules and your laws. That's what he's saying. He's saying, actually, you're not giving these sheep life. You are stealing from them and you are a robber in their eyes.

And you weren't supposed to be here and you're not supposed to be doing this. Just think about the political climate in that moment for him to say that. Jesus does not hold back.

[16:59] He is gentle and lowly, as Nathan reminded us during pre-service prayer, but he is also fierce when it comes to the truth. He's also fierce when it comes to love. There is a thief and there is a robber.

Of course, it's not just the Pharisees and the false teachers. The main thief and the main robber, of course, is the enemy himself, Satan. Peter talks about him as a lion who's waiting to pounce.

You're sat here. Can you imagine the moment you walk out? There is a lion just following you, just in your shadows, waiting to pounce on you, to distract you, to pull you away from God.

The gospel says he's the father of lies. He's speaking lies into you. That's why we hold on to this.

That's why we keep coming here, because we have to go, well, what is the truth?

We need to know the truth, because out there, there are so many lies. Deep Seek lies to me all the time. I ask it things and it will tell me some random answers and I'll go to that place and it's not there.

[17:59] And then I'll say, are you sure? And then it will say, oh, sorry, I got it wrong. Like, we don't really know what's true out there anymore. The father of lies is sowing division and distraction.

He is the thief and he is the robber. The problem with that, if we follow him, we won't have the life and life to the full. So that's the second half of that verse 10.

The first half is this. And we're just going to jump to verse 10 first. John 10:10. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and life to the full abundantly.

So first we have to acknowledge there is a thief. He is coming to steal. He's coming to kill. And he's coming to destroy. I think if we can address those things, then I think we'll stand a better chance at understanding how we have this life abundant that God has actually designed and designated for us.

But before that, we have to really focus on what does he steal? What does this thief come and steal? Have a think. What does the thief come to steal? What does the enemy come to steal from society, from us, from humanity? Thoughts?

[19:04] Joy. Absolutely. It steals the joy. That's one. Hmm? Peace. You guys are writing my sermon for me. Thank you, Jackie. Identity.

Let's start with that one. The first thing the thief does is to steal your identity. Because if you don't know who you are and you don't know what you're capable of and you don't know whose you are, then he's got you.

The identity is the key piece. Imagine if you walked out of here and you were fully secure in the fact that your father was the father, your heavenly father was the creator of heaven and earth, in control of everything, the sovereign God.

How would that change the way you behave? Your identity. The problem is we live in a society, actually, we don't quite, society has no answers to tell us who we are, by the way.

All it does is actually show us who we are not and what we do not have. Okay? So the first thing it does is actually, the thief does, is come to steal our identity. When we forget who we are, then actually, we actually also forget who God is.

[20:11] So actually, he comes to steal our identity and because of that, we also don't know who God is. Think about the very first mistake that mankind made, Adam and Eve, when they didn't trust in God. They, at that point, already don't understand the father's heart.

Before the fall, Genesis says, he made man and woman and they were naked and unashamed.

Before the fall, which that means the word shame covers everything that happens after the fall.

And why? They make the mistake. And then what do they do? They hide. They have this thought already from the very beginning that by making a mistake, they're going to be destroyed by God.

And so they are fearful of him. So they hide. Yet God comes and speaks in such an interesting way.

He's not like, I told you not to do that. He asks questions. Just read the Genesis account again and you'll see that actually the God that we have is way more gracious, way more compassionate, way more merciful than we give him credit for.

We all want to, you know, I recently had someone who has spent his whole life trying to hear the voice of God. We are trying to hear the voice of God. Until there was a moment he realized the reason why he couldn't hear the voice of God was because he thought the voice of God would be so much harsher and so much more strict than he thought.

[21 : 31] That actually is the truth. When we realize that actually God is speaking words of love and affirmation, look at the New Testament. Every time he opens up the clouds and speaks, what does he say? This is my beloved with whom I am well pleased.

Who am I? I am the God. I am the Lord your God. I am gracious and compassionate. I am slow to anger. I am abounding in steadfast love. I am quick to forgive. Measure that up with what God says about himself to what your view of God is.

Often it's a very different, very different perception. So if we don't know who God is, then we don't really know ourselves. And that's the problem. Because when we truly understand that we are actually loved, it changes everything.

When was the last time you thought to yourself, I am beloved? What does the word beloved even mean? It just means be loved. When was the last time we were willing to be loved?

To receive the love of the Father? Because in him we find our identity. But the thief comes to steal that identity. And in doing so, he kills peace, joy.

[22 : 42] The word peace is shalom. That we feel everything is well. All is well. And yet we don't feel that. There's this low-grade hum that's going on. There's this constant anxiety that we have.

And that's the thief coming to say, hey, actually, you don't know who you are. You don't know who you belong to. You're not safe. But as followers of Christ, what do we have? We have this peace that surpasses understanding.

This peace that this world cannot give. This peace that doesn't really make sense. So we can sit in those places of tension and go, I still know who I am. I still know what I'm here for.

St. Augustine says this, You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

We don't have this life abundant often because we don't rest in the Lord. C.S. Lewis talks about this desire that's in us that nothing in the world can satisfy. And he makes the logical conclusion, If there is nothing in this world that satisfies this hunger inside us, that means that we were made for something outside of this world.

[23 : 48] And yet we keep going to the things of this world to find that satisfaction. And then we wonder why it's not there. He came to give life and life to the full. Joy he kills.

Joy he kills. The thief of joy, of course, is comparison. Right? And that's what social media, that's what the greatest minds in the world are causing us to do.

We're looking and comparing at what everyone else does. And Hong Kong is just prime target for that because we're so close together. Everywhere you walk, you're told what you don't have, who you don't know, who you are not.

Can you see how we've fallen into the trap of the thief? That he's coming to rob us of our peace, rob us of our joy, and finally, rob us of our hope.

How many people do you meet who are like, you know what? I'm never going to get out of this slump. No one truly understands what I'm going through. I don't think I'll ever get out of this slump.

[24 : 49] I'm hopeless. And then you see society, you see the challenges of mental health, you see the suicide rates going up, and you wonder if only people knew who they were.

If only people knew how much they were loved. If only people had this peace that came from outside of this world. This joy that comes from knowing your purpose, your value.

And yet there is a thief. There is a thief who keeps coming to destroy. And what does it finally destroy? Love. Our relationship with ourselves, first and foremost.

We don't feel comfortable in ourselves anymore. We have relationships with others that are fractured. You see this on a family level. You see this on a societal level. And you see this just our relationship with the world.

Genesis 1.26. What were we supposed to do? We were supposed to come and create culture that glorifies God. We were supposed to have dominion over creation. And yet we have just drained creation's resources.

[25 : 52] Our purpose was to show God's glory through creation. And yet we've decided the only way you can be happy is if you focus on yourself. And if we're honest, we've all tried it.

And we've all failed. Because you realize you cannot actually be truly happy. You can't, so one of the things the book says, Everything is Never Enough, is that you can't achieve happiness by pursuing happiness.

That's not how you do it. You can't achieve satisfaction by focusing just on yourself. The only way that you can truly have that human flourishing is if you focus on something outside of yourself, something that's bigger than yourself.

When your purpose is beyond yourself. And what is that? That is us understanding life is not about us. This world does not revolve around us. But if we can figure out how to obtain access to that love, which is one of sacrifice, one of selfless giving.

You see, the template is here. We know this. John 15, it says, The greatest act of love is what? The one would lay down his life for his friend. And yet we keep chasing this idea of love. The greatest form of love is when I feel completely satisfied and cosy and fulfilled in everything that I need.

[27:03] The one thing that does is deprive us of this abundant life that God is promising us. So the question really is, what do we do? We know there's a thief. He's come to steal, kill and destroy.

But what do we do? And I don't want to leave us here hopeless, just focused on the thief, because that's not Jesus's point either. He points himself, everyone to himself. And he says two things.

The one thing I want to say is, if we're going to have this abundant life, first of all, we have to acknowledge that we are sheep. Okay. We have to acknowledge that. Because we take control of our own lives, and then we wonder why we're not going the way we want to go or why we're lost.

And then we blame God for us not having the abundant life that he promised us. But he says you have the abundant life if you recognize that actually you are sheep. Give me some characteristics and traits of sheep. Aidan, what's the first thing you think of when you think about sheep?

Obedient. Trusting. Well, they just don't know any better. This is what we should be doing.

Obedient. What else is there about sheep, Danny? Brainless.

[28:09] Stupid. Actually, I've been banned by my daughters to use that word at home. So I use the Chinese version, seethal, but... And the complete... Sheep is stupid.

Psalms 23, it says, you know, the shepherd leads them, but then he has to guide them with his rod and staff. Why? Because they get caught in bushes because they walk close to the cliff and then they walk off the cliff.

But here's the interesting thing about sheep is they are helpless, but they are actually also very valuable. Otherwise, why would the shepherd who has 99 still go after the one? Because in those days, I don't think any of us are experts of sheep here.

Paul, you're from... Are you an expert of sheep in any way from Australia? You've seen sheep? I've seen it. You've seen it. Okay, no, actually.

Sorry, I poked fun at Paul. Just for context here, I always poked fun at Paul. But the other is, he's actually a chocolatier. He comes from a family of chocolatiers, so quite the opposite, I guess. But anyway, ask him about chocolate, but not about sheep.

[29:12] Sheep are actually very valuable. From the wool to the skin to the meat. So whilst sheep are helpless and stupid and brainless, they actually also were very valuable to the people of the day.

Jesus is, again, using these analogies to show us there is something about us. And actually, I also too, and I do still sometimes believe that sheep aren't the smartest creatures, but they do have some capacities that actually surprise me.

That actually sheep were able to recognize the sound of their shepherd. If the shepherd sang a song, the sheep within... Now, often, different flocks of sheep would all be together, but if one shepherd sang a song, his sheep would actually respond and actually come out.

Did you know that sheep could actually recognize the face of 50 other sheep? Just, like, I can barely tell the difference between Chinese people. But then, the sheep can actually tell.

Hey, Tommy. Hey, Clive. What's up? How's it going? Good day today. Oh, that's our song. Let's go. Sheep have emotional intelligence.

[30:19] When they lose one of their flock, they would actually go into a time of grieving. They were trusting. They were obedient. So, last week, I was trying to convince you that you are lost, that actually you need saving, because I think some of us sit here thinking that we're sat here entering into the kingdom of God by our own merit, because we went to a good school, because we're doing well, we're impacting society, and that's what's going to make...

And we're going to church. But I'm trying to convince you, no, no, no, no. The only requirement for us to be saved is that we recognize that we need to be saved. The only requirement for us to see is that we acknowledge that we are blind. So, today, I'm going to convince you, if you want the abundant life, you have to be a sheep.

You have to submit and trust the shepherd. That's the only way. And you know that makes sense, because you've tried getting satisfaction in your own ways. And you've tried taking the wheel, and it's not worked.

And so, you know that, actually, the key to this is knowing that there is a shepherd, and that you must follow. If the Lord is your shepherd, you shall lack nothing.

You shall not want. He will lead you to the green pastures, and he will lead you to the still waters. So, number one, you must be a sheep in order to have this abundant life. Number two, is you also must acknowledge that he is the shepherd.

[31 : 34] He talks, actually, what Jesus does here in these 11 verses is lay down this leadership pastoral template of what shepherds should be. He says, actually, the shepherd, the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them.

I wish, I hope, I pray that I get to know more and more names each week, that I can call you by name and cause you to be nervous and have to answer amongst the flock here, because I think that's the only way to lead.

I think that's the only way to shepherd if you know the sheep by name. Of course, if you're here as a visitor, I'd love to know your name so I can ask you a question next week. But Jesus says, I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

If we're going to have this abundant life, we must at least recognize the shepherd's voice. We must recognize his song. But the problem is we don't recognize his song. It says here, it's interesting in verse five, it says, a stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him.

So if a shepherd comes in, a thief or a robber comes into the fold and he calls out the sheep, hey, Tommy, can you come and follow me? They won't, Tommy won't follow him because Tommy doesn't recognize his voice. That's what sheep do, but sometimes I think we're even worse than sheep.

[32 : 44] We actually do follow the voices of strangers. We look at society, we see what other people are doing, we barely know these other people, yet because they're doing it, we do it too. Someone in our company who we know doesn't follow Christ says something, he says, oh, I should do that too.

Isn't that even more stupid than sheep? We do, that's the problem, we do follow the voice of strangers. And so if we're to have that abundant life, we must at least repent of that and going back to actually knowing the voice of our shepherd.

And how do you do that? It's just time. How can you tell the difference between my brother and I and our voices? Because many of you say that we look the same and sound the same, which is an incredible insult to me.

But how do you recognize the difference between us? There's only one person in this room that does, and that is this lady right here. Why? Because she spent time with us. Because she knows us.

She knows one of us is so much more intelligent than the other. And she wishes that she would have just stopped me. But unfortunately, that would have been too much for the Tang Clan.

[33 : 53] The glory would have been too enormous. So we had to balance it out with some stupidity. The only way you will recognize the difference, it's okay, for those of us who know Joe and I a little bit more, you will slowly grow in clarity and in the light and you will see that we look completely different.

Now he might poke fun at my hairstyle, but he just doesn't recognize I'm just a few years ahead of him. But you will see a difference. You will see that actually we talk and act and live and those of us who know us very well all know that we're completely different.

The shepherd knows the sheep, knows who to call and he leads them. And so we must trust. I think sometimes we don't have this abundant life is we don't trust that that's where he's leading us.

Psalm 23, when it says the Lord is your shepherd, he will lead you to the green pastures and to the still waters and we're like, are you sure? Is where you're leading me actually better than where all those other sheep are going?

But it starts with us recognizing that he, and he says this and he kind of answers his own credentials. He says, I am the good shepherd. I am the one who knows.

[35:09] Remember again, he's talking to the Pharisees here. He's like, actually you guys are leading people but you're stealing them away. You're stealing their identity. You're stealing their peace, their joy, their hope. But me, as the good shepherd, I'm willing to lay my life down for you.

So that's why we love this idea when Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. I am for your good. I am here to care for you. But there's one final thing that I wanted to point out here before we go into a time of response and communion is this.

He doesn't just say that I am the good shepherd. He says something else. He actually says, he describes himself in another way. What is it? It's kind of snuck into the passage there. The door. He is the door, which doesn't sound as glamorous as the shepherd. It's just the door. But I think this is important because if we just kept to the shepherd, the Pharisees would have been like, okay, well, that's how you lead.

Okay, well, it becomes human-centered. It becomes actually, all we have to do is find a good shepherd for us to lead. And he will lead us and he will know us by name and he will know the troubles that we have or know the struggles I have at work and with my family and all these things.

[36:18] And as long as I have a good shepherd, as long as I have a good shepherd that I know cares for me, that's going to be enough for me. But if he just stopped there, that wouldn't be enough. That would actually lose the point, which is actually all of this needs to center on Christ.

It would lose that edge because he needs to say this. And actually, it's interesting in verse six, this figure of speech Jesus used with them, they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus is trying to teach them. He's saying, look, you guys don't actually know your sheep. You don't care for your sheep like I do. You won't lay down your sheep, lay down your life for your sheep like I will. And then they still don't understand because they still think it's going to be about them being better and better.

But then when he changes, he's like, I forget, scrap that, I am the door. Which on the surface sounds even more confusing until you realize why Jesus really came.

The only way that we can have life to the full is if we go through him. John 14, he says later that I am the way, the truth, and the life. What does that mean? That means I am the only real and living way.

[37:27] If you think about the doors in the Bible, what's the very first door that we see in the Bible? Any ideas? The very first door, we're blocked out.

Josh, have you got an idea? No, no, no. Before that, all day before that, Eden, the Garden of Eden. They make the mistake. They say, can God really be trusted? I don't think I'm going to trust him. I don't think I'm going to obey him. I'm going to eat that apple. And there, mankind is blocked out of the garden via a door. Of course, this door is quite threatening.

It's two swinging swords ready to chop us in half. The first time there was a separation between humanity and God. And from that point, you cannot get so close to this holy God.

Because just being in his presence, as it says in Exodus, you would die. You can't even look at his face. So the only way is if very, very select people once a year would go into this door, go through this curtain into the holy of holies.

[38:31] Because we, through our consequence, through the decisions that we made, we've been separated. We are on the outside of the door. Until Jesus comes and says, I am the door.

through what I'm going to do on the cross, I will tear that veil wide open so that now you can have access to the Father through me.

You don't have abundant life because you've gone through the wrong door. There are so many doors in Hong Kong.

There are so many doors we can get distracted with. Our work is the biggest door. Our studies, our exams, which are good things, but there are so many doors. So Jesus comes out with this analogy and says, actually, there is only really one door.

If you go through that door, you will drink and you will never be thirsty again. Just like he spoke to the woman by the well in John 4. But every other door you go through, the drinks that you're going to have there, you will end up more thirsty.

[39:35] And we all know the feeling of drinking some of those things and how good it is in that moment. But then we end up thirsty again so quickly. And it's interesting.

And the enemy's greatest success is he'll tease you to have a little bit of this and you'll have it. And then actually the worst thing he can do is give it to you. And once you get it, you want more. And then you want more and more.

And then you want more and more and more. Jesus says, go through me. I am the only door. I am the only real and living way. Think about Exodus again.

Think about the Passover. Actually, it was the first song that we sang. That it was the door that was protecting us. Can I just, this is where I'll finish. Can we take us back to that moment in Exodus where every family starts to receive news that, hey, the firstborn is going to pass away unless you go behind this door.

Actually, sacrifice a lamb, use some of the blood and cover the door with the blood. If you ever thought, why didn't God just punish the people just without the door? He could have just said, hey, all the firstborns, Thanos time.

[40:46] But he didn't. He gave people a chance. He gave people, hey, actually, if you trust me, you have to walk through this door. And of course, imagine you, one of the people or your families being one of the families that say, hey, get in.

We need to hide behind this door. We need to cover this door with the blood of this lamb. And imagine just sitting there, not knowing why you were doing it. Not knowing why all this happened. And so you just sat in silence, waiting.

Because you know something's happened and you've seen enough plagues to go, something, this God is for real, something is happening, let's just wait. And then you start hearing the screams in the rest of the village. You start hearing the other houses that didn't do the same thing that you guys did, that didn't cover their doors with the blood of the lamb.

And you start hearing screaming. And what will you just be saying? Thank goodness for the door. Thank goodness for what we did. See, the reason why I think God gives us a chance that he actually tells us to go behind the door and not just do this is because it requires us to actually step through.

It requires us to put our trust in him. And not just in what we do by stepping through, but by the blood of the lamb. And then suddenly Jesus says, I am the door.

[41:55] in Genesis, you see the first door that bans mankind from the presence of God. And then at the very end in Revelation, you see Jesus again saying, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

You have been lukewarm. I want to spit you out of my mouth. You're neither hot nor cold. But I still stand at the door. Would you just open up?

Would you open up? Would you be with me? And if you are with me, then you will have life and life to the full. Don't listen to the voice of the thief or the robber anymore.

Don't go. Don't keep going through the wrong doors. There is only one. There is only one. And that is me. And if you come in, if you open that door, I will come in and I will sit and eat with you. that by restoring the relationship, that by reconciling man to his creator. The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I came to give life and life to the full.

[43:06] Would we remind ourselves that we are truly sheep in the best way? That if we trust him, he will lead us to the green pastures, he will lead us to the still waters, we would have the peace that surpasses understanding this world cannot give.

We will have the joy. Why? Because we are simply in his presence, because we are with our shepherd, our good shepherd who knows our name. And how do we get to him?

There is only one door. He is both the shepherd and the door. He leads us to the door and then we realize he is the door. And in his final prayer before he goes, sat under an olive tree, likely, maybe, he says this, I pray that they would have eternal life, which is what?

To know you. John 17:3. That's it. Last week I said there are some of us who are guilty of following Christ or coming to church because we see him as a post life insurance policy.

I'm just going to give up 90 minutes of my time per week to ensure that I have eternity with him until we realize that actually we can have access to that now.

[44:21] That eternal life begins now because it's a relationship with him, the good shepherd that calls our name and grants us access. I was just asking the Lord, is there anything I missed?

Is there anything that you want to say to your people? And I was just reminded of you later in this passage. In chapter 10 he says this, I'm the good shepherd and I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep and I

have other sheep that are not of this fold.

I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. For this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. He came to be the good shepherd and there are sheep out there that actually would know his voice if they heard his voice but they haven't had a chance yet because they are not in this fold.

Do you realize that that's speaking about us? He was in a Jewish context there where those were like we're the chosen people but he says there are sheep that are not of the fold just yet and so that's why I came to seek and save the lost and they will recognize my voice and so that's why I must go.

[45 : 55] That's why I must lay down my life. Hey do you think that I don't have control of my own life is what he's saying? Do you think they could really take my life if I didn't want them to? No I came to give my life so that those sheep on the outside would come in.

That's the beauty, that's the sacrifice of Jesus. So I would be remiss if I didn't remind us here that we made it in but there are still sheep outside not of this fold.

We don't get to hear the truth and the good news of Jesus who actually if they had a chance to hear his voice to hear the news they would recognize it and I say that for one reason and one reason only.

Who do you need to go share this with? Who in your life right now would actually recognize his voice if they heard it? Who don't know it just yet?

Let us follow in the way of our shepherd that we would not just settle here and that person that name that face that has just come to mind for you right now go to them and share the love of Jesus with them.

[47 : 16] Later he says that actually everyone that is in my hand cannot be snatched away. He is that strong. So you can go in full confidence knowing that Alex is not you that does it, it's him that does it. Would you go?

Would we go? Brothers and sisters, may the Lord be with you as you go from here, as we gather and as we scatter. Will the Spirit of the Lord be with you. See you next week.