**I AM: I Am the Good Shepherd**

***Senior Pastor Chris Kam***

# “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” (John 10:1-5)

# “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own 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. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” (John 10:11-18)

# Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all[c]; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” (John 10: 25-30)

# Introduction

The shepherd and the sheep is a common analogy for a king and his subject. Many great men in the Bible are shepherd, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. From the passage, we see some characteristics of the shepherd and the sheep.

The characteristics of a good shepherd:

* Lead his sheep. (John 10: 3)
* Lay down his life for his sheep. (John 10: 11)
* Knows his sheep. (John 10: 14, 3)
* He looks for the lost sheep. Jesus as the Good Shepherd calls out to the lost sheep or the gentiles. (John 10: 16)

The characteristics of sheep:

* Dumb, directionless and defence-less.
* Listen to the shepherd’s voice. (John 10: 4, 27)
* Follow the shepherd. (John 10: 4, 27)

The Bible refers to us as sheep 200 times.

**![C:\Users\TayP\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\RV8Y74S1\light-bulb-and-a-star-15838-large[1].png]()The Big Idea: “My sheep listen to my voice.”**

What is the difference between a believer and a non-believer? The believer has a personal relationship with the good shepherd who is Jesus. That is the privilege of a believer. We will listen to his voice and we recognize his voice.

Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. (John 8:47)

Do we belong to God? If we do, we can hear what God says. Relationship always has communication, in fact, a 2-way communication. Relationship is always 2 ways. God speaks to us from the Bible but He also speaks to us personally. When it comes to making a decision, there is a difference between a believer and a non-believer. The non-believer will gather all the possible facts and make a best guess decision. The believer takes it one step further. He will weight all the facts but he will take it to God to find out what God thinks. If we want to make an important decision, do we not want to ask God who knows the future and everything? Is Jesus our shepherd?

# You Have It

We have the ability to hear the voice of God. We are all wired to relate to someone higher who created us. It is an instinct we have as we are made in the image of God. God is a community consisting of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead. There is communication and relationship. Now that we are created in His image, God also wants us to relate to Him. He is a hearing and speaking God. He wants to communicate with us, to talk to us and to listen to us. That makes us human. We have to ability to communicate our deepest feelings with God. This separates us from the animal kingdom. As human being, we have a need to communicate.

We want to communicate with our dogs and babies. Some mothers are able to identify the cries of their babies. If we, created in the image of God, desire so much to communicate, how much more does our Father who created us? It is the nature of God the Father to communicate.

God wants to communicate with us and we have it.

# You can Learn It

Children are taught how to communicate. We can teach babies words, grammar, what to say and when to say. We teach them how to communicate with other human beings. God has a way for us to communicate with Him and that is prayer. God wants to teach us how to pray. The disciples saw Jesus communicating with God and they wanted Jesus to teach the how to do it. When it comes to talking to God, not only we have it, we must also learn it.

Jesus taught the disciples how to pray by giving them a model of a prayer. Many of us when we go to God, we bring a to-do list. We only have 5 minutes and rush through the list within the time. The first half of prayer is telling God. There is a second half is listening to God. For any communication to be meaningful, somebody has to talk and somebody has to listen and vice versa. Imagine we picked up a call where the caller talked non-stop for 10 minutes and then hang up. We did not even get a chance to say anything to talk and respond. This must be how God feel most of the time. All we are interested in is to tell him what we want but not what He thinks. We must learn to listen to what God has to say.

There was a person who was going through a hard time lamented that he prayed but God did not answer him. He prayed only when he was in desperation and never during other times. In other words, he was praying at his own convenience. He presented his to-do list to God. He did not even linger around to wait for God. The problem is we want to hear God but we do not set an appointment to hear Him. We rush. We do not make time for God.

There is nothing magical about hearing God. We must make an appointment with Him alone. Make time to read the Bible and pray. That is the first fundamental method He speaks to us. Then we also set aside specific time to listen to Him and then journal our thoughts. If we begin to write, we slow down to hear the voice of God.

If we are not doing out devotion regularly, do consider starting it.

# You can Grow and Mature in It

Not only do we have the capacity to communicate, we can learn it, we can grow and mature in it. Children often say things they should not say. They are very honest. We need to train our children how and when to say something. Even adults sometimes say things that should not be said.

Not everything we hear is from God. A lot of it has to do with our background, our religious upbringing, and our church experience. We have this idea that God only works in a specific way. We need to grow in maturity so as not to limit God. We hear many voices, including the voice of God, the voice of the devil and even our own voices. Sometimes we pray in hope of confirming the voice of our own flesh. We must guard against this and the way to do it is to know the Word of God. The Word of God never contradicts itself. That is why our daily devotion in God is so important. It equips us to discern the voice of God. Anything that contradicts the Word of God is not of God.

There is another group of people who swings to the other side of the pendulum. They believe God instructs them about everything in life. We know that as parents we give the liberty for our children to make their own decisions. We want them to grow up and mature and make wise decisions.

God can speak throughout the day. However, He may stop speaking because He has spoken and He wants us to grow up. To someone very close to us, we understand them without talking to them. In the same way, there are things we do not have to pray about when we are clear what God’s answer will be. When we know the Word of God, it saves us time. It saves us heartache. We cannot say God did not tell us. When we choose to ignore God, we mess up our lives, we waste time and we have broken relationships.

There are people who do not want to spend time with the Word of God. They look for shortcut by flipping the Bible and pointing with the finger. Do not practice Bible roulette.

One step further from listening to the voice of God is to release the Word to the others. Listen to the Word of God not just for ourselves, but also for our family, our Cell Groups.



*Sermon summary and prayer points contributed by Loong*



SERMON: I Am the Shepherd

**Pray:**

* We will have a habit of daily devotion when pray to God and we wait on God.
* We will set aside time to learn how to communicate to God in an even deeper level.
* We will accord high priority in the Word of God so we are able to discern the voice of God from the other noises.
* We can recognize the voice of God and be sensitive to His voice.
* We will hear clearly the voice of God and be obedient.

***My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:27-28)***

**MINISTRIES and EVENTS: #Twenty35**

**Pray:**

* ThisGen (those above 35) will embrace and love the NextGen (#Twenty35) group.
* There will be mutual understanding and wholesome communication between ThisGen and NextGen.
* Matured and humble leaders will be nurtured and raised from the NextGen.
* ThisGen will show the way with love and patience.
* Everyone in church will clearly understand the reason for #Twenty35 and lend support
* No one will feel left out in the great big family of God.

***Don’t be harsh or impatient with an older man. Talk to him as you would your own father, and to the younger men as your brothers. Reverently honour an older woman as you would your mother, and the younger women as sisters. (1 Timothy 5:1-2 MSG)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Domestic Violence

*Thousands of domestic violence victims suffer silently under the tyranny of their family members. They have not the courage to report the abuse. They do not know where to turn to for help. Sarawak Chief Minister, Tan Sri Adenan Satem allocated RM2 million to help abuse wives to file divorce from their abusive husbands.*

**Pray:**

* God will tear down the enemy’s plan to attack the family.
* Couples will learn the true meaning of a matrimonial union and treat each other right. They will seek professional help before things get serious.
* The perpetrator will learn that violence does not solve any problems and resort to more productive matters to address any issues faced.
* Victims will have the courage to seek help and break free from the powerless victim mindset.
* Children will not be affected so they will not continue the vicious cycle of emulating their parents when they grow up.
* The authorities will work together with NGOs to help the victims.
* Restoration, forgiveness and healing for all involved.

***You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror. (Psalm 10:17-18)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: United States Presidential Election 2016**

*Americans will elect the 45th President and the 48th Vice President of the United States on 08/11/2016 (Tue). Even with many other candidates running, it is believed the race is between the Democrat and Republican candidates.*

**Pray:**

* There will be a free and fair election.
* There will be no untoward incidents.
* The winning candidate will be able to lead the nation with the people’s interest in mind.
* The president elect will be able to handle relevant issues, both domestic and international with boldness, tact and reason.
* The new president will be a positive influence to the world stage.

***The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. (Proverbs 16:33)***