



Daily Verse and Comment

[John 10:9](#)

(9) I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

New King James Version

A significant title of [Jesus Christ](#) is "the Good Shepherd" ([John 10:11](#), 14), and it is a perfect description for what He does in personally knowing and caring for His sheep. As part of this title, He mentions one of His primary activities in the latter half of [John 10:9](#): "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

The matter of "finding pasture" is a critical part of what a shepherd does for his sheep. Sheep are the farthest thing from being self-sufficient. They cannot make it on their own for very long, though they are seemingly oblivious to this. Left to themselves, they will not thrive because they require constant attention and direction. More than any other class of livestock, they are dependent on outside intervention, which is one reason why Jesus refers to Christians—us—as sheep: Without Him to lead, provide, and protect us, we would be in real trouble.

As Phillip Keller details in his book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, when sheep are left to their own ways, they cause utter desolation. Since sheep are so docile, we do not typically think of them as destructive animals, but their destructiveness lies in the fact that they are creatures of habit. Stubbornly following their habitual nature, they do not consider the future. Sheep will follow the same trails until the trails become ruts, and they will continue to walk those ruts until they have carved gullies in the midst of their pastureland. They will graze an area, day after day, until it has been turned into a wasteland. They will nibble the grass down to its roots, leading to the erosion of what may have been prime topsoil. In addition, they will pollute those same fields until they are rife with parasites and disease.

Sheep have their favorite spots, to which they will return repeatedly, quickly contaminating those areas. If great care is not taken, disease can run amok through an entire flock. If sheep are left to themselves, this is guaranteed to happen, which is why they require a shepherd's constant management and oversight.

To keep a flock well-fed and free of disease, as well as to maintain his pastures, a skilled shepherd keeps his flock on the move, slowly but continually. He frequently changes where they pasture, gradually moving them throughout all of his fields. In this way, he ensures that his flock has the best food and enough of it. He makes sure that he returns to an area only after the life cycles of the various parasites have run their courses, so the flock does not continually re-infect itself. The longer the sheep remain in the same place, the more the shepherd incurs the risk that they will malnourish and sicken themselves or those around them.

Since Christ refers to the church as a flock, and to individuals as sheep ([Matthew 26:31](#); [Luke 12:32](#); [John 10:16](#)), we can be sure that He will be doing something similar with His church. Left to ourselves, we tend to develop habits that can be destructive, whether to ourselves or those in our environment. Even with the best of intentions, we [sin](#), and our sins pollute and can cause an environment of disease. We consume, but without a wise Shepherd overseeing what we consume, there is tremendous danger to ourselves and those around us.

Thus, when we find that the circumstances of our lives are changing, we do not have to fear that things are actually out of control. They may just be out of *our* control. When we are under the ownership and care of the Good Shepherd, He changes our circumstances and keeps our lives from becoming static.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[The Shepherd's Guidance \(Part One\)](#)

Related Topics:

[Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd](#)

[Sheep as Most Dependent of All Animals](#)

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