

## JESUS IS CALLING HIS SHEEP

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...” (John 10:27) Do you hear the voice of Jesus? Is He calling you? Are you Jesus’ sheep? Is Jesus your shepherd?

Hello I’m Larry Murdock.

Not everyone hears the voice of Jesus, the “voice of truth.” You hear this broadcast; you read the Bible; you may hear other preachers issue the call of Jesus; but you do not follow the voice. Why? You are not one of His sheep! That’s right!

Oh, you ARE a sheep; you do follow a shepherd, but that shepherd is not Jesus, the good shepherd. You see, you are also hearing the voice of the prince of this world. Jesus called Satan the “prince of this world” three times in the New Testament book of John. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) Furthermore, Jesus’ apostle Paul called Satan “the prince of the power of the air” and Paul identified him as “the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2) So you see, being disobedient to Jesus means that you are obedient to another shepherd who is also calling you.

Satan offers you the world with all of its allurements, temptations that appeal to your lust, your dark desires. Remember Satan’s temptation of Jesus? Satan had the power to show Jesus the world in a matter of moments. “The devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," [Satan] said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.” (Matthew 4:8-11 NIV)

“According to the devil, a person must live in sin to have a good time. Consequently, we humans view a world filled with drugs, alcohol, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and the works of the flesh listed in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, chapter five. Those characteristics do not bring forth the best life. Genuine happiness is found in goodness, righteousness, obedience to God, purity of heart and faithfulness. Yes, sin may bring temporary pleasure.

The Bible speaks of the “fleeting pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:25 NIV). But like alcoholic drinks “at the end it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder” (Proverbs 23:32).” (The above paragraph adapted from Alan Highers, Spiritual Sword, Jan 2025.)

Hearing the call of Jesus is not just a matter of the ears. That’s right! It is a matter of the heart. It was the heart of Jesus that resisted Satan. And if you are resisting Satan and the pleasures of sin, then perhaps your heart is changing so as to be more like the good shepherd who calls you. Perhaps that is why you are interested in hearing the call of Jesus. You are tired of sin and shame! You are convinced that you are headed in the wrong direction! You are searching for a different life than the life of darkness you are living. Deep down inside you is the image after which God made you. You need to change! But you do not know how!

Jesus has the answer from His Bible: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” (Matthew 4:10) This was Jesus’ answer to Satan when offered the world. Jesus lifted His eyes toward what he had already experienced with His heavenly Father. Jesus’ sheep have done the same thing. They lift their eyes from this world, and believe in heaven; there is life after death. They wish to worship the God of heaven because they believe that after this passing world is done, there is an everlasting one with the Creator.

Jesus’ apostle Paul put this human longing this way, “We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal [*in us*] may be swallowed up by life.” (2 Corinthians 5:1-4 NIV) Yes, we have a longing to live forever! This is the inner longing of Jesus’ sheep, who eagerly hear His voice!

On the other hand, the children of disobedience are walking by the beat of a different drum. That cadence is shortsighted, earthly, devilish, wicked! Jesus’ half-brother James described this drum beat as a “wisdom” that is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. “For where you have envy and selfish ambition,” James

wrote, “there you find disorder and every evil practice.” (James 3:15-16 NIV) Strangely enough, James was talking about envy and selfish ambition among church people! That’s right! Can Jesus’ sheep also be disobedient?

And so, we humans are children: Humble children of obedience who will hear the call of Jesus or willful children of disobedience who hear the voice of Satan. And as James points out, even when we think we are following Christ, if we are not forewarned and knowledgeable, we may be following the voices of our own selfish, demonic desires.

But still Jesus is calling to the people of the world who are His sheep.

Jesus’ sheep are those who believe in the eternal God. Do you believe in God? Jesus’ sheep trust Jesus and His words. Do you trust what Jesus teaches? Jesus’ sheep believe in eternity. Do you believe in heaven and hell? Jesus’ sheep confess their sins. Do you know that you are lost without the shepherd? Jesus’ sheep will pay the cost of following Jesus. Cost?

You mean there is a price to pay to answer the call of Jesus Christ? Jesus said to those who first heard His call, “Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him” (Matthew 4:19 NIV). A little further down the coast Jesus saw two brothers, James and John. “Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him” (Matthew 4:22 NIV). Leaving nets, a boat, and a father are costs. You may have to leave something behind to answer the call of Jesus.

Surely, we will leave our sins. But we may leave some kind of livelihood. I once knew of a man who sold liquor from his store. When he decided to follow Christ that man emptied every bottle of liquor in his store, pouring it out into the gutter of the street. In the ancient city of Ephesus, “Many of those [citizens] who believed [in Christ] came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:18-20 NIV). One silver drachma was worth a days wage! Ancient Ephesus was known for its sorcery. No doubt the scrolls were valuable because they contained magical incantations and secret formulas for living a superstitious life. What superstitions will you give

up when you answer the call of the shepherd? What cherished beliefs will you give up when you answer the call of Jesus?

Jesus' apostle Paul was an influential Jewish man; he was well-known by the name of Saul, of Tarsus. Paul described himself as a man who had reasons for confidence. He was "circumcised on the eighth day [following his birth], of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, [Paul described himself as] "a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ" (Philippians 3:4-7 NIV). Yes, Saul of Tarsus gave up his position, his job, his influence, in order to follow Jesus Christ. What will it cost you to become a Christian? Do you estimate that Christ is of more value to you than anything else?

The early disciples echo the call of Jesus. For instance, fisherman Peter warned and pleaded with people, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:40-41 NIV). When Peter said "save yourselves" he was issuing the call of Jesus. After hearing the call of Christ it is up to us! What will we do? Will we accept the call to repentance and obedience to Jesus Christ? Following Christ is to obey Christ. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15). The apostle John also wrote, "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did" (1 John 2:3-6 NIV).

If you are Jesus' sheep then answer His call. Repent of your sins, confess your faith, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, according to God's promise. Please do not delay. Find a church of Christ near you; they can help begin following the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.