

- I. **Ice breaker:** If you know the origins of your name share that with the group. How did you come to be named what you are named? (Share your story...)
- II. **Read** today's scripture out loud, slowly, either in unison or using a designated reader and move into scripture quiet reflection. (3 minutes)

<sup>1</sup> "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. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. <sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. <sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father —and I lay down my life for the sheep. John 10:1-15

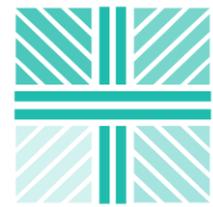
**Scripture quiet reflection:** (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to personally reflect on this week's scripture. Have a paper and pen available.

1. **Read.** Read through the passage silently.
2. **Reflect.** Notice any words or phrases that particularly draw your attention and stand out to you.  
How do these words/phrases speak directly to you and your present situation? Write your insights.
3. **Respond.** As God has spoken to you in the Scripture, respond back to God in prayer. What do you want to say to God? What else does God want to say to you?

### III. Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion. (20-30 minutes)

1. There is tremendous significance in knowing God's heart for you. Discuss together what mental images come to mind when you consider the heart of God for you? Another way of asking is this: Does God like you?
2. The truth of John 10 means that you have a living shepherd. "Christianity is not merely being saved from sin and death and judgment... it's at least that. It also means having a living shepherd to lead you, to guide you, to heal you, to protect you, and to help you love."
  - Share examples of how you experience the shepherd as one who:
    - a. leads you
    - b. guides you



- c. heals you
  - d. protects you
  - e. helps you to love
3. “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
- Contrast the shepherd to thieves, robbers, and wolves.
  - How would you describe thieves, robbers and wolves and how are they active in our society today? How are they active in your own life personally?
  - How do sheep find their shepherd? How do you distinguish the voice of the true shepherd from the voice of thieves, robbers, and wolves?
4. Author Curt Thompson says: “We all are born into the world --looking for someone—looking for us, and that we remain in this mode of searching for the rest of our lives.”
- When somebody is looking for you and they call your name, when that person is of great relational value to you, their calling of your name means so much.
  - We all ask unspoken questions: Is anyone looking for me? Does anybody want me? Does anybody value me? Share together how these fundamental questions are being answered in your relationship with the Lord. Share together how you struggle to believe the answer from both God and people at times.
  - Is there someone in your life who does not know how valuable they are to God or others that you can talk to about the love of the ‘Good Shepherd’ over a cup of coffee or by inviting them to a Christmas concert or service at COS?
5. About Sheep: “Among the animal kingdom, sheep seem to have come out on the short end. From all accounts, they have limited intelligence. When it comes to finding food, they are definitely uncreative. As creatures of habit, they will follow paths to desolate places even though not far away is excellent forage. Sheep are also given to listless wandering. There are accounts of their walking into an open fire. Shepherds confirm that they are timid and stubborn. They can be frightened by the most ridiculous things, while at other times, nothing can move them. They are absolutely defenseless.” And while we’re like sheep, Jesus now refers to himself as the gate for the sheep pen. This is where we see an expansion of the metaphors. The watchman motif has disappeared and its now about 1 flock and it belongs to the shepherd who serves as the gate. And this shepherd who is serving as the gate would ensure that the sheep were safe. If any sheep were going to leave or if any wolf was going to come in, it’s going to cross, it’s going to come in contact with the shepherd. -SC
- And this begs the question. What’s your gateway? What’s your entry point for the abundant life? What’s your gateway? What relationship, which person, which place, what set of circumstances, which habits, or which investments are you banking on for that deep satisfaction?
  - Describe the difference between the hired hand and the good shepherd.



- How does the reality that Jesus knows you by name and has laid down his life for you help you to look to Him for abundant life instead of temporary gateways?
6. “The hired hand loves his life more than the sheep. But Jesus loves the sheep more than his life.” -John Piper  
The good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep. And Jesus says I am the good shepherd. Now the word good, doesn’t simply mean morally respectable, or ethically noble, it often means beautiful. The beautiful shepherd!
- This is how you know your heart is getting soft when you find beauty in who Jesus is. Discuss together: Do you find beauty in who Jesus is? Or is he/Christianity just useful to you?
  - Spend time praying for a growing appreciation for the beauty of the Good Shepherd who calls you by name!

### THE 7 RHYTHMS OF ROOTED



Daily Devotion



Prayer



Repentance



Sacrificial Generosity



Serve the Community



Share Your Story



Worship