

## Focus on John 10:11–18

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Sarah S. Henrich

As described here, this model shepherd has a task that may surprise the flock as it defines itself. Jesus declares that he (and the Father who directs his work, as in John 8:28; 10:18) has “other” sheep who will recognize him as their leader. The task of gathering the sheep requires that Jesus know them, for they may be hidden, scattered, “other” than humans have anticipated. Jesus’ death enables him to return to the Father and send the Spirit that will continue and extend this task of shepherding God’s people (John 7:39).

### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Stephen A. Cooper

The issue of the oneness of believers arises from Jesus’ saying here about the “other sheep that do not belong to this fold” (v. 16). Although in its original setting this verse probably referred to “the calling of the Gentiles”—as Calvin observed—our present, twenty-first-century context requires that we expand this image. The “other sheep” of today must be determined by the setting in which the word is preached and heard. Who are “other” for us? This line of questioning brings the affluent churches of the developed world into discomfiting reflections on the “other” in our midst. The key point is that these “others” are Christ’s sheep, just as we are, and they too recognize his voice.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Nancy R. Blakely

Sometimes we go astray, just like sheep. Sheep that are ill may follow the voice of a stranger. Sheep wander off and fall into ravines. There are many voices out there vying for our attention. Many distractions lure us from the path. Jesus promises that he will never let us go. His voice will bring us back. We belong to him. This is a strong word of reassurance to us in our struggles to be faithful. In our choices each day as we practice our faith by saying yes to some voices and saying no to others, Jesus is there, going before us and leading us.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”

Barbara J. Essex

The good shepherd does not merely care for the sheep, but also gathers the flock. Those who see, hear, and believe in Jesus belong to the community; thus, the door is wide open to the outcasts of the day—sinners, lepers, women, Samaritans, tax collectors, and more. Jesus is concerned for the individual welfare of each sheep (knows each by name) *and* for the communal destiny of the flock (gathers into the fold)! Our emptiness and anxiety can be relieved, because we have one who knows us and cares for us, is willing to die for us, and is our constant companion—the Good Shepherd.