

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.



Blessings

In a recent Instagram post by “ernestcleogrant,” he urged that we should pray for our pastor. Specifically, he stated that we should:

- *Pray for their courage* - leadership is tough and some conversations and decisions are difficult.
- *Pray for their endurance* - that they may be healthy, faithful and full of love.

- *Pray for their mind* - they carry heavy burdens as people share their pain with them.
- *Pray for their family* - their spouse and children feel the effects of their ministry.
- *Pray for their marriage* - a pastor can lead their church and may neglect their home.
- *Pray for their walk with God* - they can preach and still feel spiritually dry.

As we celebrate the Aloha Reception to bid Pastor Stan and Amy a fond “Alooooohaaaa” and to welcome Pastor Jason and Alli to “be blessed and be a blessing,” this is a reminder that we need to support our pastor and his family through diligent prayer.

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Romans 12:12*

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Rediscovering the Familiar: Your Shepherd's Voice

Learning to recognize the One who calls us by name.

by Alli Oshiro

Imagine the voice of the person you love most in this world. Now picture yourself standing in a crowded room, surrounded by the constant hum of conversations. Voices overlap. Laughter fills the air. The room is full of noise. Then, somewhere across the room, the person you love says your name. You hear it immediately.

You've come to know their voice so well that you can distinguish it from all the others. Familiarity has made their voice unmistakable.

It's similar to our relationship with the Lord. In John 10, He describes Himself as the Good Shepherd whose sheep know His voice. In a world filled with competing voices all calling for our attention, His invitation is not simply to hear Him, but to know Him so well that we recognize His voice above all the rest.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

John 10:10 is one of the most familiar verses in Scripture. It appears on journals, water bottles, and memory cards, yet its familiarity can sometimes cause us to overlook the richness of Jesus' words. When we examine the passage in context, we discover a deeper invitation into the heart of our Good Shepherd.

In John 10:1–10, Jesus uses the imagery of a shepherd and his sheep to reveal profound truths about Himself, spiritual leadership, and God's relationship with His people. Context is essential. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees immediately after healing the man born blind in John 9. Though these religious leaders knew the Scriptures, they could not recognize the Messiah standing before them.

Jesus begins by describing a sheepfold—a protected enclosure where several shepherds would keep their flocks overnight. Each shepherd's sheep recognized only his voice and followed him when he called. This familiar picture illustrates the intimate relationship God desires with each of us. When there are multiple voices calling, do we recognize our shepherd's voice?

Jesus warns that anyone who enters the sheepfold another way is "a thief and a robber." He warns that there will be false shepherds who seek their own gain,



*"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."
John 10:27*

Rediscovering the Familiar: Your Shepherd's Voice - cont.

deceiving and harming the sheep. By contrast, the true Shepherd enters through the door, knows His sheep by name, and lovingly leads them to safety.

This imagery becomes even more meaningful when connected to the blind man in John 9. The Pharisees rejected and cast him out, but Jesus sought him, revealed Himself to him, and restored him. False shepherds discard people; the Good Shepherd pursues them with deep love.

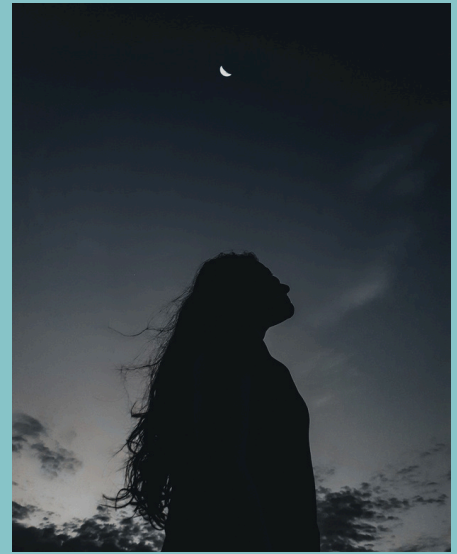
Jesus then declares, "I am the door." In ancient sheepfolds, shepherds would sometimes sleep across the entrance, becoming the gate that protected the flock. Just as the shepherd protected the flock, Jesus alone is the way to security and abundant life.

John 10:10 reminds us, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." While this verse certainly applies to Satan's work, Jesus is also confronting the Pharisees, whose pride and misuse of authority wounded the very people they were called to shepherd.

Jesus offers something entirely different: abundant life. This abundance is more than a future promise of eternity—it is a rich, daily relationship with Christ. He provides both the protection of the sheepfold and the nourishment of the pasture.

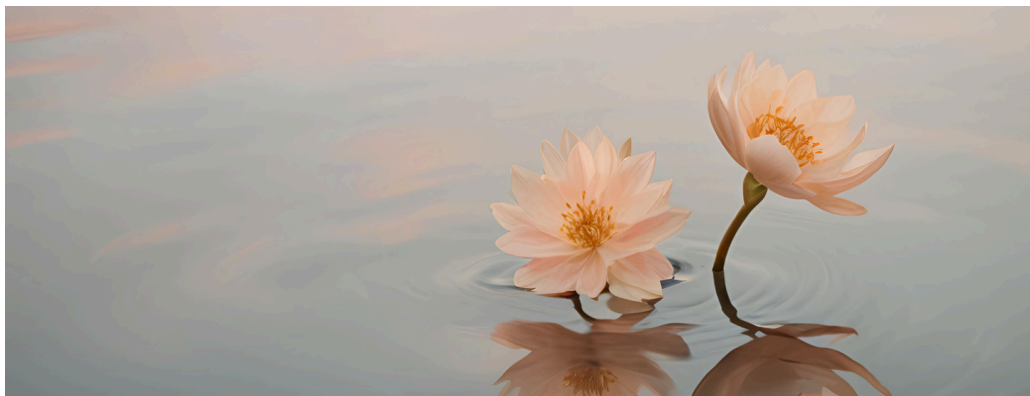
The invitation is simple: bring everything to the Shepherd. Filter your decisions, relationships, fears, and hopes through Him. Nothing is too broken or too heavy for His care. Jesus is the Door, and through Him we find the hope, guidance, and abundant life our hearts were created for.

This month's challenge: Which voices have I been listening to most, and do they sound like my Shepherd?



"For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him."

Psalm 62:5



Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

¹Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

²Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

³Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.



"The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."

-C.S. Lewis



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