Jesus, the Good Shepherd
Read John 10:1-13

God had promised that Messiah would be His eternal, perfect shepherd for His people. He would diligently, selflessly, completely care for all the needs of His flock.

But when Jesus Messiah came, the existing shepherds of God's sheep, the Jewish leaders, refused to recognize Him. John 9 records that when Jesus publicly healed a man born blind, the Jewish leaders were embarrassed by such an undeniable miracle. In frustration, they threw the healed man out of the synagogue.

This led to a confrontation between Jesus and the leaders. Jesus characterized them as hired hands. The sheep didn't truly matter to them. Like the wicked shepherds in Ezekiel 34 above, they only cared about themselves, not the sheep entrusted to them. When danger came, they ran away.

Not so with Jesus. In the face of danger, His only concern was the sheep. He would willingly make the ultimate sacrifice to provide for them and protect them:

> *"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."*
> (John 10:11, NASB)

Like the false shepherds of Ezekiel, these leaders wanted only to shepherd themselves. They fed on the sheep and used them for their own enrichment. Jesus said this about such leaders:

> *"All who came before Me are thieves and robbers…*
> *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."* (John 10:8, 10a, NASB)

As the good shepherd, Jesus' only concern was the welfare of His flock.

> *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* (John 10:10b)

Jesus puts our welfare above His own. His love for us is not shallow, limited, or selfish. There is nothing He wouldn't do to protect us and provide the very best for us. His own comfort and His very life are not too high a price to pay.

He makes Himself "the gate" or "the door" to the sheepfold. That is, He puts His own body between us and danger. He protects His people with all He is.