

April 26, 2026

Knowing That Voice

Ezekiel 34:11–16 & John 10:1–10

“I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.” (Ezekiel 34:11)

“The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out...he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.” (John 10:3-4)

There are some voices you can recognize without seeing the speaker. For instance, a mother calling her child across a playground, a friend greeting you from behind, or a spouse saying your name in a crowded room. You don't need to analyze these voices; you just know them. **This recognition comes from the relationships we build.** In John 10, Jesus says, “The sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” Ezekiel 34 further emphasizes the importance of this voice by showing us that God Himself promises to come, seek, rescue, gather, heal, and feed His flock. The essence of this message is that life becomes clearer, safer, and more hopeful when we learn to recognize the voice of the Shepherd and follow him.

In Ezekiel 34:11-12, we see the Shepherd who comes looking. God doesn't wait for lost sheep to find their way home. He says, *“I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.”* This is not a distant God. This is a God who steps into the hills and valleys of our lives, and says, “I'm coming for you.”

Why does His voice matter? Because it is the voice that reaches out to us when everything else pushes us away.

- When shame says, “Hide,” His voice responds, “Where are you? I'm here.”
- When fear tells us, “You're alone,” His voice reassures, “I will rescue you.”
- When confusion claims, “You'll never find your way,” His voice guides us, “Follow Me.”

The Shepherd's voice is always one that seeks to connect.

The true shepherd comes in openly, calls each of his sheep by their name, and leads them out. It's not a distant or vague relationship. The Shepherd knows His sheep personally. He knows their voices, their fears, their habits, and their struggles.

The sheep also recognize His voice and follow Him not because they're forced, but because they understand Him. They have learned the sound of safety. That raises a question for us. Whose voice are we listening to? Because there are many voices that call out to us. We hear voices all the time promising us all sorts of things. But only a few of them are the voice of the Shepherd.

Some voices lead us into even more fear. Some push us toward misplaced pride or jealousy. Some tell us that we're on our own, that no one wants to help, and that everything depends on us. And if we listen to those voices long enough, they begin to shape the way we see ourselves and the world.

The voice of the Good Shepherd is different. It doesn't deny the reality of danger or suffering, but He reminds us that we belong to Him. That's what we hear in **Psalm 23**. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. The Shepherd is the one who heals and feeds (Ezekiel 34:15–16). God promises: "I will tend them." "I will bind up the injured." "I will strengthen the weak." The Shepherd's voice is not harsh. His voice heals. His voice restores. His voice nourishes.

His voice leads us out (John 10:4). Jesus doesn't just call us; He leads us out—from old patterns, destructive habits, shame, and fear. He guides us away from the confines we've created for ourselves and into green pastures, still waters, abundant life, and deeper trust. He doesn't shove us or drive us; He leads us gently, and **we follow because His voice is familiar.**

He is the Shepherd who protects (John 10:1, 8, 10). Jesus warns us about other voices: thieves, strangers, and destroyers—voices that promise freedom but deliver bondage; voices that appear spiritual yet lead to emptiness. The Shepherd's voice always leads to life, whereas the thief's voice leads to loss. The voice of the Shepherd brings peace, hope, courage, and compassion. In contrast, other voices often result in fear, shame, confusion, despair, self-hatred, and isolation.

We can better understand His voice by nurturing a close relationship with Him through Scripture, prayer, worship, community, and quiet moments. As we deepen our walk with Him, His voice becomes clearer and more unmistakable. **We start to recognize His call, prompting us to reach out to those who are scattered and have not yet experienced the Shepherd's provision.**

His voice calls us to guide others who are feeling lost due to loneliness, anxiety, addiction, broken families, church hurt, disappointment, spiritual confusion, the pressure to perform, and the fear of not measuring up.

Some individuals are scattered physically, while others are scattered emotionally or spiritually. The truth is, scattered people rarely announce that they are scattered. They smile. They show up. They hide the ache. **But God sees them.** He sees the teenager who feels invisible. He sees the single parent carrying more than they can hold. He sees the elderly person who hasn't had a real conversation in weeks. He sees the man who feels like a failure. He sees the woman who feels forgotten. **If God sees them, we must see them too.**

Jesus does not shout from a distance; He moves toward those who are scattered: the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus the tax collector, the leper whom no one would touch, the demoniac whom no one could help, the sinners no one would welcome, and the disciples hiding in fear. **As His followers, God sends us to reach the scattered individuals (John 10:3–4).** We are not called to wait for people to come to us; we are called to go where they already are. Found people find people, and loved people love others. We simply need the heart of the Shepherd by actively reaching out to them! The Shepherd is speaking. The question is: Are we listening? And even more—are we following?

Lord, give us Your eyes to see the scattered, Your heart to love them, Your courage to go to them, and Your voice to call them home. Make us a church that goes where You go. Amen.