

Jesus teaches us today what it means to be a Christian; how He wants us to see Him. Being a Christian isn't about possessing superior knowledge, as if we just knew more stuff than unbelievers. If that were the case, our Lord would've said, "I am the Good and Wise philosopher. Follow me and learn alot." Likewise He doesn't come to make good sheep, better sheep or He would've said, "I am the good trainer." Instead He likens Himself to a Shepherd, **I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

How Jesus wants you to see Him, a kind, loving shepherd who cares so much for His sheep, He will die for them. Consider how sheep, lambs aren't highly valued animals to the world. They can't defend themselves, they can't take care of themselves, they can't bind up their wounds, they aren't very bright; helpless, hopeless, defenseless creatures. This is you.

He will be relentless to care for you, defend you, gives all He has that you would have an inheritance; that foolish, sinful, unworthy sheep and lambs, don't deserve or could ever merit on their own. That is why He offered up His life on the cross, an atoning sacrifice for your sins.

By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us. John writes. **By this we know love.** Let's start by telling the truth: we love a tiny fragment of the world's population. I didn't lose a wink of sleep over the Syrian women and children who died because of chemical weapons.

I don't feel a twinge of guilt when I eat my dinner and know there are hungry, homeless families.

Over 50k people worldwide died last night, even people shot in the inner city a few miles away but I didn't shed a single tear over them while I had my morning cup of coffee; you didn't either.

Do we care? Yes. Are we concerned? Probably. Do we want things to change? We all hope. But do we love these people? No, not really. Notice: I didn't say, "Should we love these people?" Of course we should. In a perfect world, we'd love every man, woman, child. With our whole heart. But we don't. Not because we're hardhearted monsters, but because we're ordinary people. Ordinary people love a minuscule amount of the world's population.

Think of love this way: love is welcoming others into our little world. Our little world begins with our own bodies. Only one person is welcome there: our spouse. But our little world goes beyond our body. It includes those in our home, those we welcome at our table, family and friends. But our little world is still bigger: it includes those with whom we work with, play with, our media groups, and people here.

The closer someone is to the little world of me, the more I love them. The farther away, the less I love. Our love is as much geographical as anything. If your next-door neighbor is murdered tonight, you'll exclaim, "O dear God, poor Joe! How horrible." But when the Mexican mafia guns down ten people on the streets of Juarez tonight, or another shooting in the city, you'll just pop some popcorn and continue watching Netflix or won't even pause on your social media. You don't love those people; they're far away, not in your world.

I say all this for one reason, one reason only: to try and get through your thick heads just how different your love is from the love of God.

The women and children who died in Syria: God knit together every one of them in the womb, breathed life into them, laughed as they played; smiled as they grew; not only cared they died horrific deaths; He loved them.

From the untouchable living on the streets of India to the millionaire in NY; from the farmer in Germany to the escort in Vegas; you cannot fathom the depth of His individualistic love. From homeless to billionaire. Love for: Every. Single. One. Every single one, even the likes of you, was on the mind of the Good Shepherd when He laid down His life, bled and died.

Every single one, the object of God's daily mercy and compassion.

Every single one, known, loved, cherished by the Creator.

He know the number of hairs on their heads. He knows the number of cells in their bodies. He knows their dreams, their fears, their shame.

He welcomes every one into His home and desires they listen to His voice and so feed at His table. He desires all to become part of the body of His Son, united in Him, never be separated.

Don't you realize you're as precious to Him as any queen or saint or martyr whose ever been born. He loves specifically, uniquely you.

That's true love. Not like ours. We try—and fail—to imitate that love. Some of us do better than others. So be it. But even as you fail, and try again, and seek to enlarge your own little worlds of love, you rest in the immense love of the Good Shepherd. We await that time, in the new heavens, new earth, we will look every man, woman, child in the eye, and sincerely, echo the words of our Lord as we say, "Dear brother, dear sister, I love you."

Dear God, enlarge our hearts. Expand our love. Fill us with your love, for without it, we all are lost sheep who will perish... Lead us by Your voice, to follow where You lead to green pastures here, tend to us, bind up our wounds, feed us....You have a Good Shepherd that **goodness and mercy shall followed you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**