



A good shepherd guides his sheep along right paths, not just for the sake of the sheep, but for the sake of his own reputation as a shepherd. In the land of Israel where David was a shepherd, the terrain was rocky and treacherous in many places. For sheep to be able to graze in the green pastures we read about last week, the shepherd had to know the lay of the land and lead the sheep to a specific place along a certain path. In the same way, God has a path laid out for each of us that will lead us to walk in ever increasing righteousness, both for our good and for His glory.

Read: Psalm 23:3

What does the world tell us about the paths available to reach God?

What can we infer about the other paths available to us, when we contrast them with “paths of righteousness” or “the right paths?” Where do those other paths lead?

Think of a time when you were not walking a right path. Where was it leading you? How did God lead you to a right path from there? Share with your small group or a trusted friend, if you feel comfortable.

Read: John 10:2-5; John 10:27

What do we see is critical for the sheep to recognize and follow the shepherd?

How do the sheep get to know their shepherd’s voice so intimately?

Do you know your shepherd so well that you can distinguish between His voice and a voice trying to lead you astray?

Psalm 23 states that the shepherd leads us along right paths for his own name's sake.

How does the path the sheep follow reflect on the shepherd? His care? His abilities?

What does the path you're currently walking say about the shepherd you follow?

Live it out:

What will you do this week to more deeply familiarize yourself with the Good Shepherd's voice? Make a plan and put reminders in your calendar or share your plan with a friend.

What path is the Good Shepherd calling you to walk?

What path is He calling you to leave behind?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for being our Good Shepherd. We trust that you have a good path in mind for us to follow, that you go before us, and that you will lead us to a place that you have already prepared. Help us to know your voice so intimately that we recognize it immediately, and give us the courage and obedience to follow your voice, no matter where it leads. Amen.