

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of July 17, 2016

John 10:7-9

These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.

Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."

Connection Questions:

1. In John 10:8 Jesus says, "All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them." Read John chapter 10 and discuss who you think the thieves and bandits are. What are the issues Jesus is having with the people he is referring to?
2. It is important for the writer of John that his listeners know Jesus and God are connected. How is John's theme addressed in John 10 through Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees?
3. Why are the Pharisees threatened by Jesus' message?
4. How is the Pharisees' understanding of God different from Jesus' portrayal of God?

5. How can some of our religious practices today distort the image of God that Jesus' was portraying in John?

6. There is some evidence from the Mediterranean practice of shepherding that has the shepherd lying down across an entrance of an enclosure that the sheep are put in at night to keep them from straying. What might a shepherd laying down at an entrance point of an enclosure for sheep tell us about God?

7. How might hired help tending sheep be different from the way a good shepherd tends sheep?

8. Discuss some images you may have heard from others that portray God in a manner different from how God is described in the Gospel of John.

9. Do you think Jesus' description of the thieves and bandits is focused on how God separates people at judgement or is this just a description of a group of people who fail to understand God's nature?

10. What does John 10 tell us about God's ultimate judgement of people?