

**J**esus began to explain how much he loved his followers and cared for their safety. How could he help them to understand? He began to talk about himself as a shepherd and his followers as sheep.

He said, 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd is even willing to give up his life to protect the sheep. \* A person who is paid to look after the sheep will not do this – when they see a wolf coming, they just run away and leave the sheep, with no one to protect them. This is because someone who is just paid to look after the sheep as a job is not truly the shepherd, and does not own the sheep. \*

'But I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep very well. My sheep also know me and hear my voice when I call them. I lay down my life for my sheep by standing between them and the wolf, so that they are safe. I have some other sheep that you have not met yet. I must call them, and they will listen to my voice, too. Then there will be one flock, with one shepherd.

'This is why the Father loves me – because I am ready to die for my sheep, but I am also ready to be raised to life again. No one takes my life from me; I choose to lay it down. I have the power to lay my life down, and I have the power to take it up again. This is God's plan and I am going to live it out.'

**John 10.11-18**



\* See Share the Word.