

## One Flock, One Shepherd by Rev Kole Akinboboye

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (John 10:14-16)

There are a couple of highlights I want to bring our attention to in this passage. The first is that there is a **good shepherd**. This implies that there is in all probability a bad shepherd, or there is somebody masquerading about as a shepherd who is not a shepherd. The bible calls such a person a hireling, somebody who shepherds for a salary or for a gain, and there are many of these type in Nigeria, Africa and indeed everywhere. People who are serving God for gain. They leave the sheep once the enemy comes. But the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

So one of the things we want to deal with is that we all know who we are talking about. This is the person we want to focus on in this sharing. This sharing is not about the preacher. It is not about us. We want to find Him. We want to know Him.

The Lord says that **I have sheep** – though he does not call them good sheep, we can safely assume that if there is a good shepherd, then there would be good sheep. We are told that this sheep are people who follow the shepherd. They are not goats. It is very difficult to handle goats. Those of you who are into animal husbandry know what I am talking about. Goats are stubborn, unruly and generally disorderly. We are sheep not dogs.

This sheep are known to the Shepherd. He says, **I know my sheep**. There are those who may say they are mine and they are not. I know my sheep. The fourth point I want to pick up is that Jesus says my sheep know me, they know me deeply. They are just not flocking aimlessly around me but indeed they know me intensely. They are just casual in their relationship with me.

The knowledge which the sheep has of the shepherd is comparable to the knowledge I have of the father. It says I know the Father. He compared the relationship between the sheep and Himself to the one he has with the father. The depth of intimacy and knowledge between the Father and His Son is what Jesus expects to have with His own sheep.

Jesus said that He has other sheep which are not presently in this fold which must be brought in. They may be in mosques. They may be in false churches. They may even be in true churches but are not yet His sheep. All these must be brought in to the fold.

What is the single, most critical distinguishing factor that makes for the identification of His sheep? Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice”. The ability to hear the Master is what identifies you as His sheep.

Then He also says that there will be one flock and one shepherd. At the moment, we do not have one flock and one shepherd but I believe that the day is coming before the Lord’s return that there will be on earth one flock and one shepherd. Today we have many flocks. Some of them are not even flocks at all. Today we have many shepherds but they are not shepherding under the great shepherd. We have

shepherds of money, shepherds of iniquity, shepherds of the occult. I mean, how do you explain a situation where a man of God is accused of homosexuality? How do you explain a situation where a pastor is accused of armed robbery? I am aware of one pastor like that who was warned by another pastor that if he dared venture into another raid that he would lose his life. This warning was served on him on his hospital bed where he was being treated for a gunshot wound. I hear that when this pastor –robber preaches fire fall falls. Indeed, the next time he went out on another expedition, he was shot and he died.

So we have all kinds of shepherds but the Lord says there will be only one shepherd. We have all kinds of sheep but the Lord says there will be only one type of sheep – his sheep. This is the crux of the matter and the heart of our discussion today. This is the summary of creation. This is the summary of the gospel. I believe that this is the reason for our existence. May the Lord use you to gather His sheep into his fold in Jesus name.

What is it that makes a man to become His sheep? I am not looking at the matter of being born again as I want to go deeper. What qualifies a man to enter into that one flock that we are talking about? There are three things that come to mind but I will focus on one. The issue of ownership. When a shepherd buys a sheep, he pays for it and brings it into the sheepfold. The second aspect is simple. When a shepherd buys a sheep, the sheep begins to get to know the shepherd. His eyes begin to lock into the person of the shepherd. This is when revelation begins to take place. This is similar to a child who has no clue who his mother is except as in the passing of time when his eyes begin to open to that fact. He will discern the mother from the smell and the voice long before the eyes open and a deep relationship between mother and child develops.

When you buy a sheep, a sheep begins to have a revelation that this is my shepherd. The third aspect is the aspect of relationship. First is ownership, then is revelation, thereafter you find relationship. Psalm 103:7 says “He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.” The children of Israel saw great miracles and other acts of our great God but they never knew His ways. Moses knew the ways of God. At a time Moses told the Lord that all the miracles were too ordinary that he wanted to know the ways of God. Ex 33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee. There are many people who know about God but who do not know God. There are preachers of theology who can talk Hebrew and Greek and deal with all the exegesis of the bible but who do not know Him.

This knowledge of God will come to you in at least three levels. It will first come at the level of divine ownership. Second, you will begin to experience a revelation of God that grows in your spirit as you grow in faith. Then it comes at the level of relationship.

Today I will start with divine ownership. This is when you know that you are owned by God. Until you settle the issue of divine ownership, you cannot go far in life in your walk with God. You have to settle that once and for all. Who owns you? Who is in charge of your life? You have to settle that quickly and urgently. Do you own yourself? I have news for you. You do not own yourself. Some of you think you own your life but you do not. It is not true. Your breath is not in your hands it is in the hands of God.

I have settled this matter in my life. There are seven aspects of divine ownership that I regularly pray into my life every time. These are areas you as well can use to settle the matter of divine ownership.

The first is the issue of creation. God owns you by creation. This is very important. Gen 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." When I was a small child I used to day dream. I used to wonder what went on before my ancestors were born. I will trace it back to God then I will ask myself "before God, what existed? When there was no God, what was the earth like?" I always get stuck at this point. Our God is the pre-existent One. The One who was before all else was. The One who created time and who existed before time began. Hallelujah!

It cannot be explained what it was before time. Before the earth was formed, before the planets, God was! The human mind cannot fathom this. What occupied space? What was in the atmosphere before time began? When there was no matter and when there was no time, what was the situation up there? I cannot understand it.

I recall a man, George Washington Carver, who was having a great time in prayers with God in the US and he went to God with a question, "why did You create the world?" God told him "it is too much for your brain. You cannot understand it." So he went to take one groundnut and asked the same question, "Why did you create this groundnut?" To this God gave him 300 uses of the groundnut which he published in a book by the same title. It was as if God was saying "your brain cannot process why and how I created the world but your brain can process the uses of the groundnut. Go and write it down."

God created man from the dusts of the earth. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen 2:7). Everything you are today is because God created you. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1-3)

**I rubber stamp the ownership of God upon my life.** Maybe because I am a scientist but when I pray I start from the sub-atomic level of my body. I say "Lord, I thank you for every neutron, every proton, and every electron in my body. I confess that you created every neutron, every proton and every electron in my body. You own them all". Then I go forward to say, "Lord, every atom in my body belongs to you". Then I continue, "Lord, every molecule in my body belongs to you. Lord every compound in my body belongs to you. Lord, every cell in my body belongs to you." I say "every tissue in my body belongs to you. Every organ in my body belongs to you. Every system in my body belongs to you, whether it is the cardio-vascular or the respiratory or whatever, they all belong to you." My entire body belongs to God because He created me. Look, let me tell you. You have to know who owns your life. You have to tell the world and the forces of hell that God is the owner of your life and He is in charge of your body. You have to tell your body that God owns your life.

Let your body hear the voice of the Lord. The bible says, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD" (Jer 22:29). You have to speak so your own 'earth' can hear. You have to tell your body to hear the voice of God. You have to tell yourself to hear the word of God.

Your soul belongs to God. Your spirit belongs to God. It is important to secure this understanding. You have to enforce this so the devil knows who you belong to.

I recall I went to preach in Port Harcourt many years ago and in the night I heard some strange movement in the realm of the spirit. If you are spiritual, you know what I am talking about. The forces of darkness will usually want to check you out to know who you really belong to when you go to preach in a new territory. These forces want to know whether you have the authority to address them at all, talk less of driving them out of their hiding places. So they came in the night to check us out and I began to pray, albeit violently. I went out of the hotel praying and I asked those forces just two questions. I said, "Come-o, were where you when the Lord created the heavens and earth?" Satanic forces have no answer to this question because they were nowhere at creation. The second question: "Where were you when Jesus died on the cross of Calvary?" Satan and his angels have no answer to these two questions. So let's settle once and for all that our body belongs to God.

Secondly, **if you are the firstborn of your mother, you belong to God.** In Numbers 18:15 the bible says, "Everything that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem." Now what it says is that anything that opens the womb belongs to God, whether man or animal. Usually, the animal has to be sacrificed. But in man's case, he would not be burnt in sacrifice but rather he would be redeemed. Someone will have to pay the price for this man to live.

So because I am the firstborn of my mother, I carry the rubberstamp of God upon my life. How many firstborns are in the house today? But let me encourage those of you who are not the firstborn of your mothers. Numbers 3:12 says "And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine." Here we see that the Levites were taken by God in place of the firstborn. So if you have a call of God on your life, if you have a God-ordained priesthood – one that is recognised by God, then you belong to God. The Levites are the lowest level of priests, which means that if God recognises the Levites then however small your call may seemingly appear, you have the stamp of the firstborn upon your life.

Do you recall that Reuben was firstborn but because he went to defile his father's concubine, he was cursed? Gen 49:3 "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." The right of the firstborn is not automatic. Reuben was unstable and eventually lost his position because of sin. May you not be unstable as Reuben.

He was eventually replaced with Joseph who was the 11<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob. Joseph took the position of the firstborn. Do you get what I am saying? Ultimately, Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's children were promoted by Jacob into the class of the firstborn, enjoying the same rights as Reuben would have had. If we stay on that story, even Manasseh, Joseph's firstborn, was replaced by Ephraim through the crossing of the arms of Jacob in prayer.

The concept of firstborn in the bible is not therefore merely physical but highly spiritual. May the Lord give to you the anointing of the firstborn in Jesus name. When you are the firstborn, you inherit something. The firstborn are inheritors. He has an ownership of God and God owns him particularly. That is why the church is called “the general assembly and **church of the firstborn**”. If you belong to this church, you can boast in God about it.

I pray over this matter all the time. I still prayed on it today. I let the devil know that he has no claim over me because God owns my life. The devil is very legalistic so you need to know your rights in the law of God which you are to use to fight the devil off your life. You tell him, you don't own me because I belong to God.

Thirdly, the ownership of our lives was transferred from the devil to God at salvation. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1Co 6:20). I keep saying that at the cross God paid the devil a currency the devil could not refuse so as to claim ownership over my life. You know there are some properties you have that you say you will never sell. Not until real money is offered for it, then you will sell it off! People relocate from the homes they built for themselves when someone makes an offer they cannot resist. An American doctor was walking the streets in his country wearing a top made with Adire, a native African textile design, when someone saw him, stopped him and offered to buy it for a \$1,000. Immediately, he removed the top and handed it over. Jesus paid the devil a currency he could not resist to secure your freedom. That price was his blood, a currency the devil could not refuse. If you read the parable of the great pearl (Matt. 13:44-46) from the perspective of God being the One who found the treasure, you will see that it was God who “went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” He did this out of joy. Praise God!

There is something God saw in you from eternity and he took every step to buy you back for Himself. Jesus is the price that was paid. Many of us do not know what God did for us. The Father paid a very heavy price to set us free from the clutches of the evil one. It is my prayer that the Lord will help you to receive and walk in this revelation.

If you have a call to serve God, then please know that God owns you. This divine ownership is a very serious thing. If you are not owned by God, you cannot be a part of the sheepfold. If you are not a part of the sheepfold, you cannot know the Shepherd. Divine ownership is what gives you access to the sheepfold. It is what gives you access to the Shepherd. One major problem today in the church is that many people know religion but they do not know this God. They know bible but they do not know Him. They have not encountered Him. My wife often recites a Yoruba proverb *Eni ko o mo. Eni mo o ko*. Those who challenge God, do not know Who they are up against. Those who know Him, do not dare challenge Him. My prayer is that the Lord will give you a divine encounter so that when you talk about Jesus, you are not talking about somebody “up there” or somebody in the bible but rather, somebody who is so real to you because you have met with Him.

Zec 2:8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. We are the apple of God's eyes.

