

The Light and the Shepherd

John 9-10 · A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of John

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim: Participants discover John's great double portrait: a man born blind who gains his sight and then, under four interrogations, grows step by step into worship, while the men who claim to see argue themselves stone blind; and the Shepherd of Ezekiel 34 arriving in person to gather the sheep his hirelings cast out, laying down his life for them by his own free choice.

Catholic Touchstone: Baptismal illumination and the freedom of the cross. The Church has always read John 9 as baptismal catechesis, anointing, washing in the pool called Sent, and coming back seeing, and still proclaims it at the Lenten scrutinies of those preparing for Baptism (CCC 1216). And John 10:18 is the Church's charter text on the cross as a free act: no one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own accord (CCC 609).

What You Need to Know

Chapter 9 opens with the disciples doing theology over a beggar's head: Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? The question assumes the airtight bookkeeping of retribution, every suffering traceable to a specific sin, and Jesus dismantles it in a sentence: it was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. He does not explain suffering; he repurposes it. Then the method: he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay. The Word who made all things stoops and works in mud, and every reader of Genesis should feel the echo: the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground (Genesis 2:7). St. Irenaeus read it exactly so: the same Hands that fashioned Adam from clay are fashioning eyes from clay, supplying openly what was left unfinished in the womb, the Creator signing his work. Then the command: go, wash in the pool of Siloam, and John steps out of the narrative to translate: which means Sent. The Sent One (the Gospel's favorite title for Jesus, sent by the Father, dozens of times) heals through washing in the pool named Sent. Anointing, water, obedience, illumination: the Fathers could not read this chapter without seeing the font, Augustine most bluntly of all, and the Church still hands this Gospel to her catechumens at the Lenten scrutinies. Note the shape for your group without over-allegorizing: matter, word, washing, sight. That shape has a name.

What follows is the longest sustained comedy in the Gospel, and it is structured as a trial that runs in reverse. Four interrogations: the neighbors, the Pharisees, the parents, the Pharisees again, and across them two trajectories cross like an X. The blind man's christology grows one step per grilling: the man called Jesus (9:11), he is a prophet (9:17), if this man were not from God, he could do nothing (9:33), and finally, Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him (9:38). The authorities, meanwhile, argue themselves backward from we know into incoherence, and their verdict on the most transparent miracle in the Gospel is to excommunicate the evidence: they cast him out. Mark the Greek word hovering over the parents, *apodynamōgos*, put out of the synagogue: the grave exclusion that made them duck the question about their own son. Discipleship in John has a price tag, and chapter 9 prints it. The man's courtroom

performance is a gift to every believer without a theology degree: one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. Testimony, like the Samaritan woman's, is the unanswerable argument. And do not miss the tenderness of the ending: Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him, having gone looking for the man his healing had cost so much, he completes the man's sight: do you believe in the Son of Man? The man worships, *prosekynēsen*, and Jesus receives the prostration without deflecting it, a quiet datum to file beside the loud ones (contrast Revelation 19:10). The chapter's verdict inverts everything: for judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind. The only incurable blindness in John is the kind that says we see.

Chapter 10 begins with truly, truly, no scene change: the Good Shepherd discourse is Jesus' commentary on what the authorities just did to the healed man, and its Old Testament engine is Ezekiel 34, tonight's central live discovery. Ezekiel indicts the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, who dominate the flock and cast out the weak, and then God makes a double promise that no ordinary reading can hold together: I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, God in person, and, I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, the messianic king. God himself, and the Davidic servant, one shepherding. John 10 is the only place the two halves meet: the divine I AM who is also the son of David, standing in the temple, watching Ezekiel's hirelings throw a healed sheep out the door. Two new predicate I AMs for the board: I am the door of the sheep (10:7, 9), the one legitimate entrance, and I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14), where good is *kalos*, good, noble, beautiful, the shepherd worth dying with. And the discourse's drumbeat is the phrase lays down his life, sounding five times across 10:11, 15, 17 and twice in 18, climaxing in the sentence that advances the Hour thread further than anything yet: no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again (10:18). The group discovered last week that the plot waits on the Hour; tonight they hear why from Jesus' own mouth: the cross will be neither accident nor defeat but the freest act ever performed (CCC 609). And 10:16 widens the horizon: other sheep, not of this fold; one flock, one shepherd; the Samaritan harvest of chapter 4 already hints who is coming, and the world is next.

The scene shifts to the feast of the Dedication, Hanukkah, in winter, on Solomon's portico (10:22-23), and here is a quiet gift of the Catholic canon worth one gentle sentence: the origin of this feast, the Maccabean rededication of the temple, is recorded in 1 Maccabees 4, in the books preserved in the Catholic Old Testament. The authorities demand plainness, how long will you keep us in suspense?, and receive more than they asked: I and the Father are one (10:30). The Greek is precise and your teaching must be too: *hen*, neuter, one thing, not *heis*, one person. The sentence is Trinitarian grammar in embryo: distinct persons (I and the Father), one being (are one), guarding simultaneously against Arius (two beings) and against collapsing Father and Son into one person. The stones come out again (the first attempt was 8:59), and the charge is stated with courtroom precision: not for a good work do we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God (10:33). File the triple witness: 5:18, 8:58-59, 10:30-33, two stated charges and the stones' own verdict, never once corrected by Jesus or the narrator. Jesus' Psalm 82 reply (if Scripture called corrupt judges gods, how much less is it blasphemy for the one whom the Father consecrated and sent to say, I am the Son of God) is rabbinic argument from the lesser to the greater: it silences the stones without withdrawing a syllable, and he immediately escalates, the Father is in me and I am in the Father (10:38), and they try to arrest him again, and again he passes from their hands (10:39). Prepare the steelman on 10:30 carefully; its strongest text is John 17, and your group deserves it whole.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- **Ezekiel 34:1-16, 23.** The indictment of the shepherds who feed themselves, and the double promise: I myself will shepherd, and my servant David will shepherd. The central live discovery.
- **Genesis 2:7.** The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground. Read aloud over the clay of 9:6; the Creator's signature.
- **Psalms 23 and Psalm 82:6.** The LORD is my shepherd (leader background), and you are gods (cited by Jesus in the text; know the a fortiori shape of his reply).
- **2 Samuel 5:2 and Micah 5:2-4.** The shepherd-king promised to David's line. Leader background for the double fulfillment.
- **1 Maccabees 4:36-59.** The rededication of the temple: the origin of the feast of 10:22, preserved in the Catholic canon. One gentle sentence in session.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-202), *Against Heresies* 5.15

Irenaeus reads the clay on the blind man's eyes as the Creator's signature: the same Hands that formed man from the dust in the beginning here form eyes from clay, openly supplying what had been left unfinished in the womb. The healing is not only mercy; it is identification. The man who stooped to the mud at Siloam is the God who stooped to the mud in Eden, finishing on a sabbath the work his own fingers began.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Doctor of the Church, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 44*

Augustine will not let the pool's name pass as trivia: the man washed his eyes in the pool that is interpreted Sent, which is to say, Augustine tells his flock, he was baptized in Christ. Anointed, sent to the water, washed, and returned seeing: the blind man is every catechumen, and the chapter is among the Church's oldest pictures of what the font does. He was enlightened, and the Church long ago learned to call Baptism illumination.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), *Doctor of the Church, Homilies on the Gospels, Homily 14*

Preaching on the Good Shepherd as pope, Gregory refuses to let the title stay decorative: the shepherd proved his love, he says, by the only proof that cannot be counterfeited, he laid down his life for his sheep, and the hireling is exposed not by his title but by what he does when the wolf comes. Then Gregory turns the discourse on his own clergy; and every believer can hear it after him: we shepherd some corner of life, a family, a friendship, a responsibility; whose example do we follow when protecting the flock begins to cost?

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 1216.** Baptism is called enlightenment: having received the Word, the true light, the baptized are illuminated. The Church's name for what happened at Siloam.

- **CCC 754.** The Church is the sheepfold whose one and necessary door is Christ, the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, citing this chapter.
- **CCC 609.** Jesus freely laid down his life in an act of perfect love: no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. The cross as freedom, not fate.
- **CCC 242.** The Son is consubstantial with the Father, one in being: Nicaea's word for what the Church reads 10:30 to assert once the verse is taken in its full context; hen by itself means one thing, not one person, and the context supplies the rest.

Thread Watch

THREAD WATCH

The seven signs tally. The drought ends: Sign 6, the man born blind. The traditional count now needs only one more before the cross, and the group may begin speculating about what could top sight for the born-blind. Confirm nothing.

I AM. Two new predicates: the door (10:7, 9) and the good shepherd (10:11, 14). The board now reads: bread, light, door, shepherd. The sentence I AM the ___ is visibly structuring the Gospel; let the group say so themselves.

Light and darkness (MASTERPIECE). Chapter 9 is the thread's great inversion: the blind see and the seeing go blind, and the only incurable blindness is we see (9:41). Name the inversion on the board.

The Hour and the death plot. Mega-advance at 10:18: the appointment is free; no one takes my life, I lay it down of my own accord. And the plot fires twice more, stones at 10:31 and an arrest attempt at 10:39, and twice more closes on air.

The triple witness of enemies. Log the set as a set: 5:18, 8:58-59, 10:30-33. Two spoken charges and one shower of stones, you make yourself God, and never a correction. In a Gospel that so loves to correct, the silence speaks.

Sign-faith versus real faith. The thread's positive exemplar arrives: set the two healed men side by side, the paralytic of chapter 5 who never sought Jesus and told the authorities, and the blind man who grew one step per interrogation into worship. Same healer, opposite trajectories; grace does not bulldoze.

One flock, one shepherd. The bride thread's pastoral key change: 10:16, other sheep, not of this fold. The gathering that began at a Samaritan well is going global.

The Lamb (sealed). Leader knowledge only: the study named for the Lamb has just spent an evening with the Shepherd who lays down his life. The two figures are converging. Say absolutely nothing; Session 13 is close now.

Session Goals

1. Participants can trace the blind man's four-step growth in christology under pressure, and the authorities' mirror descent into blindness.
2. Participants recognize the baptismal shape of Siloam, anointing, water, obedience, illumination, and connect it to CCC 1216 and the Lenten scrutinies.

3. Participants discover Ezekiel 34's double promise and can explain why only Jesus can fulfill both halves at once.
4. Participants can state from 10:18 why the cross is a free act, and connect it to the Hour thread's appointment language.
5. Participants hear the strongest unity-of-purpose reading of 10:30 and weigh it against the hand parallel, the neuter hen, the charge at 10:33, and John 17 read whole.

Time Note (90 minutes)

Opening prayer and Win, 12 minutes. Build, 60 minutes. Send, Live It This Week, and closing prayer, 18 minutes. If running long, the pre-chosen cuts are, in order: Build question 3 on the parents (fold aposynagōgos into question 4 in one sentence), the Dig Deeper on the two healed men (assign it as the week's pondering instead), and the 1 Maccabees note (one sentence maximum anyway). Do not cut: the Genesis 2:7 reading over the clay, the Ezekiel 34 discovery, 10:18, or the steelman. The four interrogations can be read in two blocks rather than four to save minutes.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Lord Jesus, light of the world, you found a man blind from birth and finished with your own hands the work your hands began. Put your fingers on our eyes tonight. Show us where we have been saying we see. And when the wolf comes near anyone in this room this week, be for us what you promised: the good shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep. Amen.

Win (open the conversation)

1. Have you ever had to keep telling the same true story while people tried to talk you out of it? How did you hold your ground?
2. Who has been a shepherd figure in your life, someone who protected you at real cost to themselves? What did it cost them?

Transition: Tonight one beggar receives his sight, and then has to defend it through four interrogations. Watch two lines cross: as he sees more and more, the men who say we see go blinder and blinder.

Build (inductive discovery)

Have someone read John 9:1-7 aloud. Then ask:

Question 1. Start with the disciples' question: who sinned, this man or his parents? What theology hides inside it, and what does Jesus do to that theology? Then the method: why mud, of all things? Leader, read Genesis 2:7 aloud over verse 6. And catch John's footnote in verse 7: what does he stop to translate, and why might that matter? Log the sign.

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The question assumes airtight retribution: every suffering must be somebody's fault, so assign it. Jesus refuses the whole calculus: neither, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. He does not explain the suffering; he repurposes it, which is both less than we want and more. The mud: the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and here the Word made flesh stoops and works in clay again, finishing eyes the womb left unfinished, the Creator signing his work, as St. Irenaeus loved to say. And John halts the story to tell us Siloam means Sent: the Sent One heals through washing in the pool named Sent. Anointing, water, obedience, and a man comes back seeing: hold that shape, matter, word, washing, illumination, because the Church has a name for it, and she still reads this exact chapter to her catechumens in Lent. Log Sign 6; the drought is over.

Question 2. Read 9:8-17. First two interrogations, neighbors and Pharisees. Track the healed man's answers about Jesus: what does he call him in verse 11, and what has he become by verse 17? And note the authorities' problem in verse 16: what splits them?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Verse 11: the man called Jesus, bare acquaintance with a name. Verse 17: he is a prophet, one step up, taken under pressure. His christology is growing one interrogation at a time, and the pressure is the fertilizer. The authorities split on an unresolvable syllogism: this man is not from God, for he

does not keep the sabbath, against, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? The schisma word appears again; the middle keeps collapsing, now inside the leadership itself.

Question 3. Read 9:18-23. The parents confirm the miracle and duck the meaning: he is of age, ask him. John tells us exactly why. What is the threat, and what does it tell us about the price of confessing Jesus in this Gospel?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The threat is *aposynagōgos*: anyone confessing Jesus as Christ was to be put out of the synagogue, which in that world meant grave religious and social exclusion. The parents look at their seeing son and calculate the cost, and the cost wins. John prints discipleship's price tag in the middle of the miracle story on purpose: sight is free; saying who gave it to you is not. Every generation of the Church has its *aposynagōgos*, and the group can probably name this generation's versions.

Question 4. Read 9:24-34, the best courtroom scene in the Gospel. The authorities open with a verdict (give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner) and demand he sign it. Read his answer in verse 25 aloud; why is it unanswerable? Then enjoy verses 27-33: who is teaching whom by the end, and what do the teachers do when they lose?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. He refuses the theology exam and stands on testimony, and testimony cannot be cross-examined out of a man; the Samaritan woman won her town with the same weapon. By verses 30-33 the beggar is lecturing the theologians on their own principles, why, this is a marvel! you do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes, and lands a syllogism they cannot break: if this man were not from God, he could do nothing. Their reply is the argument of the beaten: you were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?, the very retribution theology Jesus demolished in verse 3, followed by the bad shepherd's last resort: they cast him out. Excommunicating the evidence. Remember who threw this sheep out of the pen; the next chapter is about them.

Question 5. Read 9:35-41. Notice the first verb: Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him. What does that seeking tell you? Watch what the man does at verse 38 and, crucially, what Jesus does not do. Then weigh the chapter's closing verdict: what is the only blindness this Gospel treats as incurable? And set this man beside the healed paralytic of chapter 5: same healer, what different endings?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The Shepherd goes looking for the sheep his healing cost so much: the man was expelled for Jesus before he even knew fully who Jesus was, and Jesus does not leave him in the street. Then the completion of his sight: do you believe in the Son of Man?... Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him, and Jesus receives it without the deflection Scripture's angels characteristically supply (Revelation 19:10), a quiet datum beside the loud ones. The verdict: for judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, we see, your guilt remains. The only incurable blindness is the kind that has declared itself sighted; every other kind he can heal with mud. And the comparison:

the paralytic of chapter 5 never sought Jesus, and went and told the authorities; the blind man grew a step per interrogation into worship. Same grace, opposite responses. Log both on the sign-faith line; grace does not bulldoze, and the two healed men prove it in stereo.

Question 6 (live discovery). Chapter 10 opens truly, truly, with no scene change: Jesus is still talking to the men who just threw the sheep out. His words have an engine underneath them. Send the group to Ezekiel 34 and read verses 1-6, 10-16, and 23. Three questions: what are Israel's shepherds indicted for? What does God promise to do about it, and listen closely, who does God say will do the shepherding? Count the answers.

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The indictment: shepherds feeding themselves, clothing themselves with the wool, ruling with force and harshness, not seeking the strayed, scattering the flock, exactly what the group just watched done to a healed beggar. The promise is the discovery, because it comes in two halves that no ordinary reading can hold together: behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep... I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, God in person, no delegate; and then, I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David; he shall feed them. God himself will shepherd, and the Davidic servant will shepherd, one flock, one shepherding, two impossible-to-combine shepherds, unless. Let the group say the unless themselves. The man standing on Solomon's portico is the only figure in Israel's story who can be both promises at once: the divine I AM, and the son of David. Ezekiel wrote the job description six centuries early, and, the Church confesses, it took two natures to fill it.

Question 7. Read 10:7-18. Two new I AM predicates for the board: name them. Then count a phrase: how many times in these verses does Jesus say some form of lays down his life? And read verse 18 twice, slowly, next to what we learned last week about the Hour. What is Jesus telling us, in advance, about how to read his death when it comes?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

I am the door of the sheep, the one legitimate entrance to the fold, and I am the good shepherd, where good is *kalos*, good, noble, beautiful, the shepherd worth following over a cliff. The laying down of his life tolls five times (10:11, 15, 17, and twice in 18), and verse 18 is the study's biggest single advance on the Hour: no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. Last week the group learned the plot waits on the Hour; tonight Jesus explains the waiting from the inside: his death will be neither ambush nor tragedy nor miscarriage of justice merely, but the freest act ever performed, love choosing its hour (CCC 609). When the group reaches the Passion, they must read every scene through this verse. And verse 16 quietly throws the pen doors open: other sheep, that are not of this fold... one flock, one shepherd. The Samaritan harvest already whispers; the world is coming.

Question 8. Read 10:22-33. New feast: the Dedication, Hanukkah, in winter, and here is a small treasure: the story of that feast's origin, the Maccabean rededication of the temple, is preserved in 1 Maccabees, in the Catholic Old Testament. They demand plainness and get 10:30: I and the Father are one. Watch the reaction and read the charge in verse 33 verbatim: what exactly do they accuse him of, and where have we seen this movie before?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The stones come out again (the first attempt was 8:59), and the charge is stated with courtroom precision: not for a good work do we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God. Log the triple witness as a set: 5:18 (making himself equal with God), 8:58-59 (I AM, stones), 10:30-33 (you make yourself God, stones). Two explicit charges (5:18, 10:33) and one reaction whose meaning the stones spell out (8:59), and, in a Gospel so given to correcting misunderstandings, no correction ever comes. The silence is a verdict. But before we rest on it, the other reading of 10:30 deserves its strongest hour, and its best evidence comes from Jesus' own lips later in this Gospel.

Steelman: One in Purpose, Not in Being?

BUILD THE STEELMAN FIRST: present this at full strength

Here is the strongest form of the unity-of-purpose reading, and its best text is John itself. In chapter 17, Jesus will pray for his disciples that they may be one, even as we are one (17:11, 22), and even, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us (17:21). There is the parallel, the argument runs, from Jesus' own mouth: whatever oneness the Father and Son share, believers can share it too, as we are one. But no one imagines the disciples merging into a single divine essence; their oneness is unity of love, will, and mission. Therefore I and the Father are one at 10:30 means exactly that: perfect agreement, perfect alignment of will, the Son doing always what pleases the Father, a moral and missional unity, magnificent but creaturely available. The stones prove only that the crowd overreacted, as crowds do; and Jesus' Psalm 82 reply, where mere human judges are called gods, shows him talking the claim down, not up. State it at full strength; the John 17 parallel is real, and it is the best card in the deck.

Question 9 (press from the text). Four probes. First, the context nobody quotes: read 10:28-29, the two sentences before verse 30. What can no one do to the sheep in Jesus' hand, and what can no one do to the sheep in the Father's hand, and what kind of oneness does that parallel require? Second, the grammar: the Greek says *hen*, neuter, one thing, not *heis*, one person; what does that precision protect on both sides? Third, the Psalm 82 reply: does Jesus retract, and what does he say next, in verse 38? Fourth, the John 17 parallel: read the little word as carefully; what kind of comparison does it make?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

First, the hand parallel: no one shall snatch them out of my hand... no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand, and then, I and the Father are one. The oneness verse 30 asserts is the oneness the argument needs: one omnipotent grip. Agreement cannot make two hands equally un snatchable; only one almighty power held in common can, and omnipotence is not a committee resolution. Verse 30 is the conclusion of a power claim, not a mission statement. Second, the neuter *hen* is exact: one thing, not one person, and the context has just told us what kind of thing, one un snatchable hand, guarding against Arius on one side (two beings) and against collapsing the Father and Son into a single person on the other. Distinct persons, one being: the Council of Nicaea's consubstantial (CCC 242) is the Church's dogmatic reading of this verse in its full context. Third, the Psalm 82 reply is rabbinic argument from the lesser to the greater: if Scripture could call corrupt human judges gods without blasphemy, how much less blasphemous for the one whom the Father

consecrated and sent to say, I am the Son of God. It silences the stones without surrendering an inch, and Jesus immediately escalates: the Father is in me and I am in the Father (10:38), mutual indwelling, at which they try to seize him again. A man talking his claim down does not restate it larger. Fourth, the as of John 17 marks analogy, not identity of mode, and the Fathers said it precisely: believers are one by participation and grace, sharing derivatively in a unity whose original is natural and essential; the Father and Son are one by nature. A family photo can be like its subjects without being them. The 17:21 prayer is in fact the Catholic doctrine of grace in miniature: we are drawn up into a oneness we could never constitute, which is only good news if the original oneness is more than a well-run partnership. The hand that no one can snatch from is the reading; his hostile hearers, for the third time in the set and the second time with stones in hand, heard him correctly.

DIG DEEPER

The two healed men. For the week's pondering: set chapter 5 and chapter 9 side by side like a diptych. Both were long helpless; both were healed on a sabbath, by a word or a touch of mud; both were interrogated by the same authorities. One never sought his healer, and went and told the authorities; the other defended him through four grillings, was cast out for him, and ended on his knees. Same grace, opposite endings. The difference was not in the gift. The question the diptych leaves on your doorstep: which panel are you living in?

Synthesis question. Chapter 9 ends with a blind man worshiping and seeing men blind; chapter 10 ends with stones answering I and the Father are one. Put it in one sentence: what happens when the light of the world actually arrives somewhere?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

It divides. Light does not negotiate with darkness; it reveals what everything already was, and the revelation sorts the room: the beggar who knew he was blind walks out seeing, and the experts who knew they saw walk out blind, and the same sun does both. Judgment in John is not primarily a gavel at the end of time; it is what happens to hearts in the presence of the light, now. And through the sorted crowd moves the Shepherd, gathering, calling by name, going after the ones the hirelings threw out, with the price of the gathering already announced and freely accepted: the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The light divides; the shepherd gathers; and both are the same person, and his Hour is getting close.

Send

1. The blind man's testimony grew under pressure; the parents ducked. When your faith comes up at work, online, or at a family table, which are you closer to, honestly, and what is your aposynagōgos, the cost you are calculating?
2. My sheep hear my voice (10:27). What voices are actually loudest in your week, and what would it take for his to become recognizable in the noise?

Live It This Week

- **Write your one thing.** The blind man's whole apologetic was one sentence: one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see. Write your own version, one sentence, what he has actually done in your life, and say it out loud once a day until it stops feeling strange. That sentence is your Siloam testimony, and someday someone will need to hear it.
- **Train your ear.** Sheep learn the shepherd's voice by exposure, not by studying acoustics. Ten minutes a day this week with John 10 open: read a few verses, be quiet, read them again. Voice recognition is built exactly this slowly, and exactly this surely.
- **Renew your illumination.** John 9 is one of the Church's oldest pictures of Baptism: anointed, washed, sent, seeing. Next time you enter a church, stop at the font, sign yourself slowly, and pray the blind man's three words: Lord, I believe. You were enlightened once; let the water remind your eyes.

Closing Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Lord Jesus, good shepherd, you found the man they cast out, and you find us. We confess every we see we have ever said; heal the blindness we did not know we had. Teach our ears your voice among the voices. And as your Hour draws near in this Gospel, teach us to read everything that is coming by your own word: no one takes your life from you; you lay it down of your own accord, for the sheep, for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture Memory Verse

MEMORIZE THIS WEEK: John 10:11

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (RSV2CE)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used or referenced in Session 9, in order of appearance. Flag these in your Bible before the session.

- **John 9:1-7** · opening reading, who sinned, the clay, Siloam which means Sent; Sign 6
- **Genesis 2:7** · leader reads aloud, formed from the dust; the Creator's signature
- **John 9:8-17** · first interrogations, the man called Jesus, a prophet, the schisma
- **John 9:18-23** · the parents, aposynagōgos, the price tag
- **John 9:24-34** · one thing I know, the beggar teaches the theologians, cast out
- **John 9:35-41** · Jesus finds him, worship accepted, the inversion verdict
- **Ezekiel 34:1-6, 10-16, 23** · live discovery, the bad shepherds and the double promise
- **John 10:1-6** · the figure: thieves, the door, the voice; continuous with chapter 9
- **John 10:7-18** · the door and the good shepherd; lays down his life five times; 10:16 one flock; 10:18 of my own accord
- **Psalms 23, 2 Samuel 5:2, Micah 5:2-4** · leader background, the shepherd-king
- **John 10:22-33** · Hanukkah, I and the Father are one, the stones, the charge verbatim
- **1 Maccabees 4:36-59** · one gentle sentence, the feast's origin in the Catholic canon
- **Psalms 82:6** · cited by Jesus in the text; know the lesser-to-greater shape
- **John 10:34-39** · the reply, the escalation at 10:38, the failed arrest
- **John 17:11, 21-22** · steelman text, that they may be one as we are one; handled in the press
- **CCC 242, 609, 754, 1216** · Catechism connections