

The image shows the words "I am" written in a dark, textured, brush-like script font. The letter "I" is a simple vertical line, while "am" is more fluid and cursive. The background is a light, pale green color.

## LEADERS GUIDE – September 29

**ICEBREAKER: If you could instantly become an expert on one topic, what would it be?**

*PRIMARY PASSAGE*

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### **John 10:11-21: I Am The Good Shepherd**

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup> “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup> The Jews who heard these words were again divided. <sup>20</sup> Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

<sup>21</sup> But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

### WHAT IS GOING ON:

**1.) For those that were at group last week, share what is happening in John 9 and 10. How was Jesus interacting with the Pharisees? What did he claim?** Jesus explained to the Pharisees are not who they think they are. The Pharisees were the religious elite of the day and in their eyes, they believed that they were in good standing with God, but Jesus' firmly tells them that their faith is in the wrong place. Their confidence must move from their performance to Jesus' performance. He then claims "I AM The Gate" and that eternal life and abundant life is found only through Jesus Christ.

### WHAT DOES JESUS CLAIM?

**2.) In vv. 11-18, Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd and describes why. This is a stark contrast to Ezekiel 34:1-16 where God condemns the leaders of Israel for being bad shepherds and promises the future Good Shepherd. Take a moment and read each of these passages and compare the descriptions of good and bad leadership. Also, how is Jesus the fulfillment of God's promise in Ez. 34:11-16?** Once two people read each of these passages, spend time allowing people to share observations. In Ezekiel, God condemns bad leadership because they were selfish, they didn't care for the weak or sick, didn't seek the lost, and ruled them harshly. Contrast, Jesus' promises to love and serve us even to the point of laying down his life (foreshadowing of the cross), seeking the lost, protecting the sheep, having an intimate relationship with the sheep.

**3.) In John 10:11-18, what description of Jesus' role as the Good Shephard stands out the most to you and why?** Give people time to share. Each person will be drawn to a different description. The one that you can't miss is Jesus' decision to lay his life down for us. This is an amazing opportunity to share the Gospel if there is anyone who may not be a believer. As you share about the crucifixion, an important aspect that this passage highlights is that Jesus voluntarily laid down his life for us. He was not forced by the Father, but out of love for us and honor to God, he chose to die so that we may live with him. What greater love is this: John 15:12-13.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US?

**4.) What does Jesus' claims mean for us today?** Three points that Kevin and Andrew serve as great starting points: We can trust the one who died for us, we can know his voice and follow his lead, and we can know we have worth and purpose.

## PERSONAL RESPONSE

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Jesus' statement, "I am the Good Shepherd," shows that he is the leader we need. He provides for us, protects us, and loves us. It's his voice that both comforts us and leads us in the direction towards eternal and abundant life. As we trust him as the guide for every area of our life, we begin to experience the blessings he has for us.

- **Where is one place in your life where you are listening to a "wrong voice?"**
- **How would your life be better if you allowed the Good Shepherd's voice to guide you in that area of your life?**
- **What do you need to do to stop listening to the "wrong voice" and begin listening to the Good Shepherd?**

