

Talking Points: Good Shepherd delivered 04 25 21

1 John 3:16-24; Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; **John 10:11-18 (Sermon)**

John 10:11-18 NIV

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² 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. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ 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."

Amen and good morning again church. Our scriptures this morning especially Psalm 23 which was read both as our scripture reading and our call to worship, are much beloved because they draw a line from our savior to the heart of how much He loves each of us.

The parallel the scriptures draw from God as the Good Shepherd to assuring Christ's followers of His unending and unfailing love and care for us is a unique comfort to our aching hearts as we travel this sometimes journey of life.

The analogy of the Shepherd and the sheep are representative of the relationship between God and His flock.

Indeed, one needs only to spend time on a farm or talking with a farmer to understand that the common traits of sheep are the common traits of human beings.

For instance, sheep are known to be **stubborn animals** who wish to go their own way.

How often have we like Isaiah said “we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” Isaiah 53:6

Sheep would be lost without the shepherd, as sheep are really born **without a sense of direction**. They need a shepherd to keep them together and to get them moving in the right direction together.

Just like sheep we need God to lead and direct us.

When we find ourselves feeling without direction, wandering aimlessly, we can reach out to God and He will reveal His plan and purpose for our lives and for the individual seasons of our lives.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord; plans to prosper you and not to harm you.”

Sheep are **utterly defenseless** and need the shepherd to protect them.

Sometimes sheep will turn over on their back (like a turtle) with their legs in the air flailing. There is an old English shepherd's term for this. It is called "cast down."

A "cast" sheep is really a pitiful sight indeed. If the shepherd does not lift up the sheep and put it back on its feet, it will die. It is completely helpless to the prey around it when in this position. Furthermore, it could get left behind when the flock moves on.

"He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11 ESV).

Sheep have a remarkable instinct for being able to learn, know, retain and recognize the voice of their shepherd.

So much so, that they can detect strangers. Many sheep will hear a stranger's voice and will flee. Likewise, sheep when hearing their shepherd's voice will run toward the shepherd.

Christ tells us in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man."

Sheep were not intended to carry heavy burdens. You will never see sheep carrying a pack on their back. Other animals are good for carrying things, but not sheep.

They were not meant to carry a heavy load. In fact, they would be crushed under such a weighty burden.

We also are not meant to carry heavy load. In this we are given instruction from God to "*Cast your burdens on the Lord, and He will sustain you*" (Psalm 55:22).

It's comforting to know that God will lead us when we are directionless, carry all our burdens, will gently carry us when we can't go on any more.

Yet even with this comforting words from scripture, how often do we try to go it alone, wandering about in need of a leader to take us out from the dark wilderness we find ourselves in?

Even with the teaching lessons of scripture how often do we go against God's direction for us to bring our heavy burdens to the Lord in prayer and leave them there.

How much burden do we unnecessarily carry because we simply won't let go and let God?

Our message from Acts today reminds us that there is a Mighty God who arrived in the person of Jesus Christ, who brings salvation, comfort and rest for our weary souls.

Acts 4:12 "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved".

That's why knowing the voice of Christ, understanding the love of God, and learning the word of God is so important.

In Matthew 24:5 Christ says that in the last days, " ... many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

Christ warned us that we would encounter the false gods of this world.

Many cults and organizations thrive on teaching on what they believe is a new 'revelation' of Jesus Christ, and so many are drawn away from the One True and Living God.

It is extremely important that we know the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost that is in the Bible.

How do we do that? We must understand that we are the sheep, who are prone to go astray, unless we stand firmly in the The Good Shepherd of the Sheep, Jesus Christ.

John 10:11-13 says

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² 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. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

The Good Shepherd Jesus Christ, indeed, lay down His life for us when He went to the cross of Calvary.

All those false gods of this age can never claim that.

The false gods of this age are many... addiction, pornography, wealth and fame, drugs, the list of vices that will tempt you away from the God who loves you is long.

Not to mention all the false cult-like religions that proliferate our public squares offering a lesser god in place of The One True God revealed in scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ.

These false religions offer a portion of the truth of the scripture and then slip in their own revelation.

Like the glitzy gods of temptation they are hollow and will have you proclaiming a name other than the name of Jesus, who Luke tells us Acts "... for there is not other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" Acts 4:12.

Philippians 2:8-11

⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.

⁹Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

We must be smart sheep, able to rightly discern and understand the word of God for ourselves.

We must be smart sheep of His flock and stick closely to the Shepherd, otherwise we are prone to be led away from the God who loves us.

1 John 3:16a " We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us..."

The Shepherd died for us. Shouldn't we be willing to live for Him?

The Shepherd died for us. Shouldn't we be willing to follow only Him?

The Shepherd died for us. Shouldn't we be willing to know Him?

The Shepherd died for us. Shouldn't we be willing to know Him?

Beloved of God, recognizing our Good Shepherd involves studying praying meditating on His Word, so that we can be the smart Sheep of His Flock that He has called us to be.

Like a Good Shepherd, he tells us in 1 John 3:22 that we receive much from God as we follow Him, obey His commandments, and do what pleases Him.

Beware the false shepherds of this age.

They mean you harm.

They mean to take away and to reduce the love that you have for Jesus.

There is one final word to be said about sheep that I want to leave you with.

Sheep are social animals.

According to Sheep101info.com, "Sheep have a strong instinct to follow the sheep in front of them. When one sheep decides to go somewhere, the rest of the flock usually follows, even if it is not a good "decision." For example, sheep will follow each other to slaughter. If one sheep jumps over a cliff, the others are likely to follow. Even from birth, lambs are conditioned to follow the older members of the flock. This instinct is "hard-wired" into sheep. It's not something they "think" about."

In 2005 the BBC reported "Turkish shepherds watched in horror as hundreds of their sheep followed each other over a cliff, say Turkish newspaper reports. First one sheep went over the cliff edge, only to be followed by the whole flock, according to the reports. More than 400 sheep died in the 15-metre fall - their

bodies cushioning the fall of 1,100 others who followed”
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4665511.stm>

Beware anything, person, or organization that says there is any other name other than Jesus Christ by which we might be saved.

Philippians **Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names**

There is no other name by which we are saved. There is no other name that has the place of highest honor. There is in fact, power in the name of Jesus

Promise now to be more dedicated to walking with God tomorrow than you were today.

Surround yourself with good obedient sheep so that you may follow Christ together.

Join one of our dynamic Bible Studies for all ages.

He is not only the Good Shepherd, but He is the only shepherd we should follow.

As we emerge from pandemic restrictions, we should strive to continue to spend time as a body in worship, prayer and study.

We want to be good sheep of the pasture of the Lord.

AMEN.

CHALLENGE:

We must be smart sheep of His flock and stick closely to the Shepherd, otherwise we are prone to be led away from the God who loves us.

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As this service airs on the 25th of April, we are hosting our first of two short term vaccination clinics. If you wish to receive a Moderna vaccination please contact me at

yourmtparan@gmail.com

We are happy to accommodate you.

Our next round of Moderna Vaccination 1 will be May 2nd 8a – 1pm This is an event open to all but you are encouraged to register first.

Announcements:

Our communion Sunday date has been moved for the month of May only to May 9th drive through communion from 12noon to 1pm.

Celebrate Mother's Day by taking a few minutes to drive through and receive communion and we will also have a special gift for the women of our congregation.

See you at drive through communion on mother's day, May 9th from 12noon to 1pm