

PSALM 23



The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,[a]

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

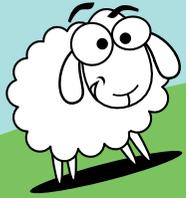
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

LUKE 10:1-10

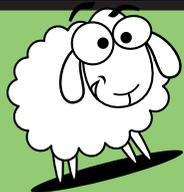
NRSV



"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Sermon from Rev. Adam



The shepherd's voice "and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out" (John 10:3b)

Introduction:

I grew up in the village and I used to take care of my father's livestock. I spent much time in the jungle/ wild in search for good pastures and water for the animals. My father taught me what he called 'secret of the jungle'. Its about small bird called a 'honey bird'. This bird is believed to guide travellers to where they can find honey. It makes a peculiar sound to draw the traveller's attention and they can find honey if they follow. My father also told me that there is a false honey bird which if one follows, it can lead them to a hornets's nest. I never was able to work this out.

By contrast Psalm 23 is the sheep's voice speaking about its owner and in john 10 Jesus speaks as the good shepherd and describes his relationship to his sheep.

The relationship which rapidly develops between a shepherd and the sheep under his care is to a definite degree dependent upon the use of the shepherd's voice. It strikes me how Jesus says he knows me by my name. Perhaps you are unaware of how really God knows you, be rest assured that he knows you.

The shepherd's voice- sheep get accustomed to their owner's particular voice- unique tone
They can distinguish it from that of any other person. If a stranger should come among them, they would not recognise or respond to his voice the same way they would to that of the shepherd.

They would simply stand and stare at the newcomer as if to say, 'who are you?'

Illustration:

Voice recognition- is a computer software program or hardware device with the ability to decode the human voice. This system will only perform commands from the registered person.

Test: on my son's iphone- I asked, "Siri what's the weather today..." and for three times no answer but the owner was replied to just once. This device could not recognise my voice.

Why...does this happen so?

In a similar way, the sheep associate the sound of the shepherd's voice with special benefits. When the shepherd calls to them, his voice is to announce his presence – he is there!

- His presence assures them of protection, hence drives away their fears.
- He takes stock of each; one by one he examines them to see if they are well and fit.
- His voice announces where they can find fresh pastures- food and water.

Jesus is the good shepherd.

Application:

as Christians we need to hear God's voice and to hear Jesus calling.

- He may do this privately in the quiet places of our homes (like now) your quiet time
- One who cares for us
- What is key is to be able to recognise his voice and distinguish it from so many voices in the world
- some have shouted failure and discouragement upon us- do not listen to them.

Our great good shepherd calls us to come out of our limited lives, and to follow as he leads us out into fresh new pastures- perhaps to new places where we have never been before.

Be attentive to the good shepherd's voice and respond to his call for he shall nourish and make you flourish. Amen



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

From Janet Wilson



Today, our Prayers of Intercession are based on The Good Shepherd. The picture that you will see in the backdrop is a tapestry done for me by Jackie many years ago.

During our Prayers of Intercession, when I say,
Lord you are our Good Shepherd,
(Please respond)

Hear our prayers.

So let us bring our prayers before God.

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for our life and all the good things that you have given us over the past week. Your faithful love and all that you have provided, for walking with us even in hard times. All the days may not have been bright, but we know that you have been by our side, guiding, leading and strengthening us, and for that we are eternally grateful. Help us to see you even when the dark times come. And so Lord, we bring before you prayers not only for ourselves but for the whole world. Bless them all Lord, our families, our friends and particularly those who are vulnerable that you may provide for them. Heavenly Father may your goodness and love follow us all the days of our life and may we dwell in your house forever. Amen.

Lord God we pray for our Church our Circuit and for all places of worship throughout this world, for all who serve you in it, for its leaders and those who pastor your people. We thank you for those who have provided worship and worship material during this Coronavirus pandemic. For those keeping in touch with others and sharing your good love, because Lord, it has been a lifeline to many. We pray that we will always seek to follow the example of the Good

Shepherd, being always aware of your guidance and prepared to show the love you have shown to us.

Lord you are our Good Shepherd,
Hear our prayers.

Lord, we pray for our world, bringing before you those who are voiceless, help them Lord, that someone will speak for them. We think of the oppressed, abused and exploited, those who have been imprisoned or tortured for their beliefs that you may rescue them and that they may find comfort and security. We pray for the leaders of all nations that they may realise their responsibilities that is to all the people they govern, being just and fair remembering that their acts of kindness and fairness fulfils your purpose for your people here on earth.

Help us Lord that we will not fear because we know that you are with us.

Lord you are our Good Shepherd,
Hear our prayers.

Lord, we pray for all who work in the caring professions, for doctors, nurses, care home workers, social workers, paramedics and the multitude of others who are concerned with the health and wellbeing of many people. We pray for those volunteering their time to bring help to the elderly, the lonely, disabled and those who can't cope with the stress and hardships of these times during this pandemic. May they always display those qualities found in the Good Shepherd and show his compassion in all they do.

We pray for those worried about losing their jobs, those who have lost their jobs, perhaps even homes.

Heavenly father we particularly remember those in our congregation who are working in these areas, strengthen and protect them we pray.

Lord help us to hold unto the hope that you have promised us that you will make a way. Surely your goodness and love will follow us, all the days of our life.

Lord you are our Good Shepherd,
Hear our prayers.

Lord we pray for those struggling with issues of physical, mental or spiritual health. Those who feel rejected or burdened by guilt. For the lonely and any who may be finding it too difficult during this time. Lord, please bring your healing to our world as we struggle with all the issues of Coronavirus.

We pray Lord, especially for those from our own congregation who are not well, we think of Lydia, Gabriel and others that have not been named and those in our hearts. We think of the bereaved, who mourn the loss of loved ones, we bring before you Anna, Karmen and their families, that they may be comforted by you, and their family and friends.

We thank you Lord, for the life of Anne Hogg, and remember her family, and for those who were able to share in a service of farewell to her as she was laid to rest.

Let us now have a moment of silence, as we bring before you those in our minds and hearts.

For those who feel like sheep without a shepherd, that you refresh their souls.

You are the great healer, and we pray for healing of mind and body and spirit.

Lord you are our Good Shepherd,
Hear our prayers.

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again. Keep us all under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps;

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in whose name we offer these and all our prayers.

AMEN

