

Jesus, My Good Shepherd

Jesus, My Good Shepherd: John 10:11-18

[11] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12] He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. [13] He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. [14] I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. [17] For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may 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 I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

In the Name of Jesus,

AMEN

John in chapters 9 and 10 spends a lengthy discourse on the results of Jesus healing a man born blind from birth. Throughout the previous verses before our Gospel text for today, Jesus has been kicked out of the temple by the Pharisees, who continue to follow and ask Him questions like "Are we blind?", along with His disciples and this man born blind, who now, because of Jesus, can see. In speaking to both His disciples and followers, who now include this blind and forgiven man, Jesus is also addressing the Pharisees, who ironically are given to the office of teaching God's people. Although they are teaching falsely in their office, and are putting the demands of the Law, on the those given to their care, rather than preaching the Promise of the Gospel. These teachers of the law are now listening and asking questions to Jesus, who is the Word become flesh, and it is His Word and His flock ultimately of which they are under-shepherds. With this in mind, the language and discourse of Jesus in these few verses of John 10 we have heard today are addressing this very issue, including both Jesus' condemnation of the sinful Pharisees, who have no idea that they are truly blind like the man born this way who was healed, and His promise and gift of Himself for His sheep. We see here in these verses for today the contrast between the teachers of the law, and the gift of the Gospel. We see the way of death and life, "For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 2 Cor. 3:6 We also see a contrast between what false teaching does, or that of the Pharisees, and the true Word of Christ, death and resurrection.

To begin this section, in verse 11, Jesus again makes the statement to those questioning not only His authority to teach, but where His healing power comes from, by saying "I am". In English, this may actually sound confusing, but this is Jesus declaring Himself to be the God of Israel, the One who spoke from the burning bush to Moses, crushed Pharaoh, gave the 10 Words to Moses, and delivered His people from the bondage of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the land He promised as gift. Jesus is revealing Himself as Yahweh in the flesh, Yahweh Incarnate, the God who spoke the heavens and the earth into existence. The One who walked with Adam and Even in the garden, and was the very One who gave His Word of forgiveness to the priests and prophets, to deliver His forgiveness to His people who had transgressed the Law that He Himself gave them. Healing a blind man for THIS God was not difficult, for in saying this once again, Jesus was letting everyone know that it was He who "formed this

man's inward parts; and "knitted this man together in his mother's womb" as Psalm 139 tells us, and now He came to save this man, not just from biological blindness, but from his own depravity and sin, as well as the Sheep of all of True Israel, Jews and Gentiles, slaves, Greeks and you and me. So Jesus, declaring to be Yahweh, also shows us that Yahweh is the Good Shepherd, the Shepherd of David in Psalm 23, who comforts, heals and delivers.

Yahweh, the Good Shepherd is not an uninvolved or distant God. He is not the God of the Deist who just winds of the clock of His creation and just lets it run. No, rather He is the Good Shepherd who came to be intimately and completely involved in the lives of His sheep. He became flesh to be involved in your own sinfulness, but taking it upon Himself, and as He says twice in our text today, "to lay down His life" FOR YOU. We are tempted here, as in most texts about the Pharisees, to see ourselves much different from the Pharisees, who He speaks of as hirelings, who fail at their vocation, abandoning or even abdicating our responsibilities and going after selfish gain, and the easy path. For we too, may not really believe that this person or that person could be in the church, or even at the altar with you. Jesus says in verse 16 that He has other sheep and He must bring them into His fold. For you, like the blind man, MUST have someone come and give you sight, lead you, feed you and restore you once again to newness of life. You MUST have the Good Shepherd forgive and care for you. And the greatest new is that this is what the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, came to do for you.

BY comparison, Jesus says the hireling, who is not a shepherd, but like the Pharisees looks out for his own pocketbook, ends up, not giving gifts, but because of sin death and the devil, allows the sheep to be destroyed, unprotected from the enemy. Fear not, however, for Jesus IS the Good Shepherd who came to give Himself completely for you today. For today is the day of Salvation says the Lord. Unlike the Pharisees and you in your sinful flesh, your Old Adam, Jesus doesn't take care of His sheep by coercion or selfish gain, the way of the Law, which only brings death, but He gladly, willingly, and as Hebrews says, "for the joy that was set before Him" endured the cross, FOR YOU, so He could lead YOU beside still waters, and feed you in green pastures with Himself and all of His gracious gifts. At the beginning of John's Gospel we are told "*For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*" John 1:16

Not only is Jesus the Good Shepherd, crucified for you, in your place, for your sin, but He is the Victorious and Triumphant Shepherd who is also Risen for you, this 4th Sunday of Easter. John 10:17, "*I lay down my life that I may take it up again*" Jesus declares. He rose to be the One to give you His name in Holy Baptism, and His Word of Absolution this day, for He says "*I know my own and my own know me*", for Jesus Your Shepherd He has named you with His name, and He is Good for ever and ever towards YOU and for YOU, never leaving or forsaking you, even leaving the 99 to run after YOU who are astray. No sin is too great, too much, or too late, for the Good Shepherd did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save it.

YAHWEH in the flesh, the Lord Jesus brings you into His One flock and keeps you there, nourishing you with His very Body and Blood in His gift of Holy Communion, giving you faith, and washing away all your sins as far as the East is from the West. Here, at the font and at His Altar you are washed clean, healed, nourished by the One who "*laid down His life, of His own accord and took it up again*" to cleanse and care for you personally.

Jesus, your Creator and Savior, is YOUR Good Shepherd, just as David prayed in Psalm 23:

[1] *Yahweh is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

[3] He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

[4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

[5] You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

forever.

In the Name of Jesus, **AMEN**

