

The **GOOD** Shepherd

John 10:11-18

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If He is the Shepherd, what does that make us? It makes us sheep! Ps 100:3 *Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.* Further, if He is the Good Shepherd, does that make us baaaaaad sheep? Well, it doesn't make us bad, we were bad from the moment we came into this world at conception. Ps 51:5 *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*

Being baaaaad sheep, we need something to happen to us to make us good, and that something is Jesus, and He happened to us at our baptism. Gal 3:27 *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* And as Ananias told Paul in Ac 22:16 *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Placed in the loving hands of the Good Shepherd in baptism, yes, even as infants, we are safe and secure as long as we remain in our baptismal faith, but then the lure of the world comes courting our flesh, the green grass on the other side of the fence, and we often test the waters and we stray, Prov 6:10-11 *A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep - So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.*

We stray. We leave the open hand of the protection of Jesus our Good Shepherd. We would be safe if we would but stay! As Jesus said in John 10:28 *"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.* The devil will swarm us with temptation and lies. He will buzz us like an angry wasp. But he cannot pluck us from the Shepherd's hand as long as we *remain* there. It's when we choose to wander that the real concern kicks in!

And if you think you are concerned about your loved ones who have strayed, Jesus, the Good Shepherd is even *more* concerned. It is His Father's will that not one of these little lambs should perish! And so off He goes in search of the stray! Mt 18:12-14 *What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

Note "IF he should find it." Sad to say, there are no guarantees, and this is something we need to consider BEFORE we go wandering off. You see, we have this thing called free will, and we have this powerful enemy the devil, who will do everything he can to keep that sheep on the lam. L-A-M. running from the only One who can save his soul ... the L-A-M-B of God who takes away the sin of the world. (aka the Good Shepherd.)

So this straying is a very legitimate concern, poll after poll laments, "where are the millennials" and now they are speaking of the n-o-n-e-s (32% of those under the age of 30 have no religious affiliation!). But take heart, the Good Shepherd is on it! He is at work, while you are at prayer! Keep hoping! Keep praying! You want to pray "the will of the Father?" Then pray that these little prodigals will not perish!

Fact is, we all have a tendency to stray, we all certainly wander off the path of righteousness, and therefore we all have this need for cleansing from our sins. It is only the sinless that are allowed entry into heaven. Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. You don't want to come to Judgment Day with sins clinging to you like the time you left the bathroom with that two-foot section of toilet paper trailing behind you! Something has got to be done with those sins! They have to be paid for because the wages of sin is death! Enter the Good Shepherd!

"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him (The Good Shepherd) the iniquity of us all." And what does the Good Shepherd do with all this iniquity laid on Him? He dies! He pays the price for the wages of all sin. John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."*

God sent His only Son, the Good Shepherd to pay the price of our sins. And that price was death on the cross! He laid the iniquity, (the sin) of the world, all of it, on His Son on the cross at Calvary. This is Good News for those

who by the grace of God place their faith in Jesus, because in placing their faith in Jesus their iniquity, (all of it) is transferred to Jesus, making them fit for heaven.

How many of you remember the D. James Kennedy program Evangelism Explosion? When we were at Calvary Bible Church in Neenah, we would go out in pairs to homes of those who visited our church and present the gospel in a very simple and understandable way. The presentation went something like this: "The Bible says, *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*, and it tells us that *the wages of sin is death*. God is a loving God and it is His desire that none should go to hell, But God is not just all love He is also a just God, that wage of sin must be paid!"

At this point I would take out my wallet and say something like, "This wallet represents my sin, my other hand represents Jesus. The Bible says, *All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*," and then I would place the wallet on my other hand. Sins paid for and as many as receive Him He gives the right to be called children of God! The right to have His sins forgiven. It's an illustration I have never forgotten and it makes a powerful point. Jesus paid the price! He is the Good Shepherd who lays His life down for His sheep.

But what other things can we learn about the Good Shepherd from our texts this morning? Well, how about we turn to the 23rd Psalm for that and let Jesus speak to us as our Good Shepherd! *I am the good shepherd, you shall not want*. You shall not lack what you need. *Seek Me first and the kingdom of God*, and all these things (that you need) *will be added unto you*. *I will make you lie down in green pastures*; I will give you rest, not on bedding made of straw fouled by your own manure of sins, but in the green pastures of new life in Me.

I remember growing up on the farm in days when farming practices were quite different from what they are today. Sorry to say but our cows were typically caked with manure on their thighs and legs because we didn't keep up with proper bedding practices. Cows need to lay down for rest, and they'll lay down on whatever, but the Good Shepherd leads the sheep to green pastures, no mud, no manure, free of sins that cling!

I will lead you beside the still waters. I will refresh you with My living water, Isa 49:10 *They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them*. And on the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." (Jn 7:37)

I will restore your soul; Remember Homer Formby? It was a heavily advertised product, that is still available for restoring old furniture. It is, "specially formulated to gently dissolve old varnish, lacquer, and shellac without chemicals that may harm wood. It renews the wood's natural beauty without the need of scraping or sanding."

And our Good Shepherd is much more than Homer Formby! He takes away all the crud of sin our souls have accumulated through the years and restores it to its natural God-intended beauty. And He does it gently, "a bruised reed He will not break," without harsh chemicals but rather with His own precious blood!

I will lead you in the paths of righteousness For My name's sake. I will show you how to live rightly, not to make you look good, not for your reputation, or your glory and honor, but rather for My glory and honor! Because I want the world to know that The Good Shepherd makes a difference in the lives of His sheep! The world will know you are my sheep by your love for one another.

Yea, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you need not fear evil; For I am with you: Even though you now live with death ever threatening you. You never know when it can strike, because of the presence of sin in this world. Our world is not perfect! Case in point, that SW flight to Dallas that ended in sudden tragedy for Jennifer Riordan this past week. She was just sitting in a plane, like so many of us have done, and suddenly her life on earth was over.

In the midst of this perpetual threat to all of us, the Good Shepherd says, "you need not fear, the suddenness of death. You need not worry even when death approaches at a slower but steady pace, *for I am with you always even to the end of the age!*"

My rod and My staff, will comfort you. As you live out your faith I promise to correct you. There is comfort in being disciplined, knowing that someone wants to keep you from harming yourself and others! I will use the rod if necessary *for whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.*" (Heb 12:6) Or sometimes I will just give you a gentle nudge from my shepherd's crook. Isa 30:21 Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.

I prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies; While you are in this world, you are in the presence of your enemies) but I have prepared a table to give you strength to fight them, and to provide you with forgiveness when you fail. It's called the Lord's Supper. My Body, the same flesh that successfully resisted the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, I freely give to you for that same kind of strength! My blood which I shed for you, will wash away your sins, for the times that you give in to temptation! Please, do this often in remembrance of your Good Shepherd. Why often? Because you need it, and it drives My enemies nuts!

How many of you know that the enemy is present here this morning and observing what's taking place? Even to the point of being active and trying to distract you from the truth that is being proclaimed from this pulpit. Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. They're here!*

How do you think those enemies react when the table is prepared and the sheep partake! I tell you, it's a dagger! On the very night that the enemy was celebrating the betrayal of Jesus, God's plan of salvation for all time was being unfolded! They thought they had won it all, but when Jesus died and was buried, and rose from the dead, they lost it all! And that set table is a forever reminder of their loss and our gain!

I anoint your head with oil; Your cup runs over. This oil is the Holy Spirit whom I have sent to you! John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. He will fill you to the brim, yes even spilling over.

John 7:38-39 *"He who believes in Me, (The Good Shepherd) as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

With the Holy Spirit living in you, surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. But one of the benefits of following the Good Shepherd is our lives leave a trail of goodness and mercy wherever we go.

Have you ever viewed the path of destruction of a tornado? Not a very pretty sight is it? Goodness and mercy are not two words that come to mind except maybe the goodness and mercy extended to the victims. And if you profess to be a follower of Jesus and are leaving a trail of destruction, you are likely a little low on oil in your cup. The path of destruction is evident when our flesh rules rather than the Spirit!

Gal 5:19-25 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Does this describe what is to be found in your wake as you go through life? Or is your life in Christ more reflective of the next verses? *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

The Good Shepherd has anointed us with the Holy Spirit to the point of overflowing for the purpose of leaving a wake of mercy and goodness! This mercy and goodness left in your wake is proof positive of an alive faith! It's proof that the love of God dwells in you!

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Faith without works is dead, but with faith that leaves a trail of mercy and goodness, I the Good Shepherd promise you that you will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Our good Shepherd, not only laying down His life for us, but living in us, dwelling with us that we can handle the travails of this life, and as we live out our faith leaving a trail of goodness and mercy so that other who are not of this fold may see, hear, and believe.

And now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, the Good Shepherd of your soul.