

The Good Shepherd

April 22, 2018

Our Savior's Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Justin Kumfer

In this day and age we value good leadership. People will look around and search for someone who can lead well. They want to see vision, and a strong desire to carry out the plans that have been made. Maybe it would be nice for someone who simply has plans that they are working towards. Whatever the situation, leadership is important. And people today look for it everywhere. We search through magazines for help in losing those last few pounds. We watch TED talks to be inspired and motivated to make changes in the world. We look to our leaders to set an example for us to follow, one that holds up the things we believe in and shows us the way to achieve those goals. We value good leadership.

Most of us can think of times when we have experienced poor leadership. Where communication has been lacking. When directions are either unclear or nonexistent. We can work in those environments, sure, but we don't feel like we're thriving when there is no leadership. In those situations we are like sheep without a shepherd.

Sheep without a shepherd can lead to disastrous consequences. They wander around in the fields and eat whatever they can find, if anything. Here's a picture I found online of a sheep that did not have a shepherd. The article mention that the sheep had probably wandered off from its herd long ago. It said that the sheep had

survived 5 years on its own and when they found it it looked like this.

There are two things that we can take from the sad situation of this sheep. First, sheep are somewhat helpless when left on their own. And second a good shepherd is essential in the life of a sheep. As you've probably already guessed we're the sheep in this analogy. I'm not meaning to insult anyone when I say that sheep can be dumb. However, when we are left on our own we do engage in some dumb things.

But let's take a break from the sheep for a minute and talk about the shepherd. A good shepherd does many things for the sheep. He protects them from dangers like falling off a cliff or starving because of the lack of food, or from the wild animals who would happily devour them, given the chance. A shepherd also cares for the sheep's needs. We've already mentioned food but there's also the care of a sheep's body and coat. Sheep need to be sheared otherwise they turn into a walking cloud like this guy. They need to be led to new areas where food is available otherwise they could starve. And one of the most important things that a shepherd needs to be is constant.

The verse from John today says that a sheep know their shepherd's voice. They listen to him and follow where he leads. If there is no shepherd or if the shepherd changes like the wind, the sheep may be in for some serious trouble. Let me remind you that we are the sheep. We have a need to be cared for and led.

Thankfully, we do have a good shepherd who leads and cares for us. John 10 reminds us the Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...." "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 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.” Jesus is our good shepherd. Throughout his life he cared for people. He led them to righteousness and life in him.

When we think about a good shepherd and what that looks like most of us go to Jesus. We think about how he welcomed everyone he met into his flock. We think about his healing works to help those who needed it. We think about all of the times he taught the people so that they would know the truth.

To look at Jesus’ life as the life of a shepherd we can see how he wants to be the voice that his sheep listen to. Often times the sheep were distracted and would follow after other voices. In Biblical times, it could be the voices of the teachers of the law or the Pharisees. In our world today, it could be the voice of the activists or the voice of equality or whichever news outlet you watch. And though those voices aren’t necessarily bad they can be if they lead us away from the voice of our good shepherd.

It’s no wonder that many don’t like or don’t know what Jesus says. They don’t like it because he isn’t their shepherd. I think we can fall into that situation too. We don’t like what Jesus is saying because we aren’t really setting him up as our shepherd. For us to know the voice of the shepherd we need to be listening for his voice. This not only means being in worship every week. This means reading the Bible. This means spending time in prayer.

We can make all sorts of excuses and we do saying that we get those things on Sunday mornings. But if we’re only dedicating one day to our good shepherd’s voice and all of the other days to the other voices who do you think is going to have more influence over our lives and the decisions we make?

Listening to Jesus, our good shepherd is a good thing. Listening to Jesus reveals how much he cares for us. Listening for Jesus’ voice

will help us care for others. One of my favorite lines from the John passage is, "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."

One flock, one shepherd. That's what we're working towards. We want everyone to be in our sheep fold because we have the good shepherd. When that is the true reality things will be different. When we are living and acting as one flock who listens to the good shepherd, people will see the love of Christ in us. The love that led Jesus to lay down his life on the cross. He didn't abandon us or leave us to fend for ourselves. He died to give us a chance. He taught us to lead us down the right path. He is the good shepherd and when we know His voice and listen to it, we will be truly cared for.

And when sheep know the voice of their shepherd, it's him alone that they will follow.