

5/15/2011

THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP **Psalm 23**

Lay Minister: 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

People: 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul.

Lay Minister: He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

People: 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.

Lay Minister 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

People: You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Lay Minister: 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

People: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship called to mercy, protection, and love, by the Good Shepherd.

People: We begin in the name of God the Father, and in the name of God the Son, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lay Minister: He is Risen!

People: He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd. Keep us from straying after other things that would harm our souls. Help us by Your Holy Spirit to hear and follow Your leading always, until that day when we are gathered with all Your sheep around Your throne in heaven. We ask this in Your name, for You live and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Peter 2:19-25

(God continues to bring us back to our Shepherd and the Overseer of our souls.)

19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 10:1-11

(Jesus shares the truth about Himself, "I am the Good Shepherd.")

1 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate

is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and **his sheep follow him because they know his voice.** 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. 7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. **8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

THE SERMON "Following the One Who Really Cares"

1 VAmh.n avmh.n le,gw u`mi/n(o` mh. eivserco,menoj dia. th/j qu,raj eivj th.n auvlh.n tw/n proba,twn avlla. avnabai,nwn avllaco,qen evkei/noj kle,pthj evsti.n kai. lh|sth,j\

Truly, Truly, I say to you, the one who does not enter through the door / gate into the sheep pen but climbs in by another way that one is a thief and a robber.

2 o` de. eivserco,menoj dia. th/j qu,raj poimh,n evstin tw/n proba,twnÅ

The one entering through the door / gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 tou,tw| o` qurwro.j avnoi,gei kai. ta. pro,bata th/j fwnh/j auvtou/ avkou,ei kai. ta. i;dia pro,bata fwnei/ katV o;noma kai. evxa,gei auvta,Å

qurwro.j **the door keeper**

This one the door keepers knows the sheep and the sheep listen to his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and they are led out / follow him.

4 o[tan ta. i;dia pa,nta evkba,lh|(e;mprosqen auvtw/n poreu,etai kai. ta. pro,bata auvtw/| avkolouqe/(o[ti oi;dasin th.n fwnh.n auvtou^

Whenever he bring / casts out his own he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

5 avllotri,w| de. ouv mh. avkolouqh,sousin(avlla. feu,xontai avpV auvtou/(o[ti ouv oi;dasin tw/n avllotri,wn th.n fwnh,nÅ

avllotri,wn **stranger - belonging to another**

But the stranger / the one to whom the sheep do not belong they do not follow,

but flee from them because they do not know the voice of the stranger.

6 Tau,thn th.n paroimi,an ei=pen auvtou/j o` Vlh sou/j(evkei/nou de. ouv k e;gnwsan ti,na h=n a] evla,lei auvtou/j

This proverb Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand anything which he was telling them.

7 Ei=pen ou=n pa,lin o` Vlh sou/j\ avmh.n avmh.n le,gw u`mi/n o[ti evgw, eivmi h` qu,ra tw/n proba,twn

Therefore, Jesus spoke to them again, Truly, Truly, I say to you that I am the gate of the sheep.

8 pa,ntej o[soi h=lqon Ipro. evmou/Ð kle,ptai eivsi.n kai. lh|stai,(avlIV ouv k h;kousan auvtw/n ta. pro,bata

All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep do not listen to them.

9 evgw, eivmi h` qu,ra\ diV evmou/ eva,n tij eivse,lqh| swqh,setai kai. eivseleu,setai kai. evxeleu,setai kai. nomh.n eu`rh,sei

I say to you, I am the gate/door. If anyone enters through me he shall be saved and shall enter in and go out and shall find pasture (?)

10 o` kle,pthj ouv k e;rcetai eiv mh. i[na kle,yh| kai. qu,sh| kai. avpole,sh|\ evgw. h=lqon i[na zwh.n e;cwsin kai. perisso.n e;cwsin

The thief does not come except to steal and slaughter (in sacrifice) and destroy. I have come in order that they might have life and have it abundantly.

11 VEgw, eivmi o` poimh.n o` kalo,j o` poimh.n o` kalo.j th.n yuch.n auvtou/ ti,qhsin u`pe.r tw/n proba,twn\

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life / soul on behalf of the sheep.

INTRO - This week I read a story about an athlete who was being more than an athlete. Maybe you've heard of Troy Polamalu. He is a football player, a very good one. He was the defensive player of the year in the NFL last year. He's also famous for his long hair. But yesterday he made news for another reason. Eight years after leaving school he finished his degree in history and graduated from the University of Southern California. You might say that he is a man who is making the most of the talents and gifts God has given him. By the way, he also is a committed Christian.

I. Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, and also graduation recognition Sunday at St. John.

A. Graduation is a time when those who have graduated and look to the future have all sorts of dreams and hopes. It is a time for dreaming of making the most possible of the talents and gifts we possess.

1. But, in all honesty, this is not just the dream of graduates. We all want to make the most of our lives. It is what everyone desires.

2. I also want you to know, this is God's desire for us.

3. In John 10:10 Jesus told his disciples about His purpose for the sheep, **I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** It is God's desire that we live our life to the fullest, that we become all that He has made each of us to be as His special children.

B. Becoming all that God made us is more than we sometimes think. But, there is someone else today who faces those dreams. Aidan, begins his life as a child of God through baptism, the same Sunday his sister is recognized as a coming graduate.

1. Living life to the fullest is not just what others see outwardly, it is spiritual.

2. It is not just in this world, it is eternal.

3. Living life to the fullest is ultimately found in our relationship with the Shepherd, with Jesus.

II. So, how many people who had big dreams, lots of potential, settle for less, settle for less than what God has in store for them, settle for less than they dream, settle for less than is possible?

Yesterday at the Trustees work day we stopped for a break and were talking. The conversation went to folks who were struggling with drugs. One person brought up the problem, but everyone knew someone struggling. The folks we know who are facing this struggle also had big dreams when they graduated. This is an extreme example, but you don't fulfill dreams, yours or God's, when you are fighting addiction, or in jail.

A. Jesus warns about this. He calls his people to follow his voice as the voice of the Good Shepherd.

1. But, in verses 8 he speaks about others who seek to gain the attention of his sheep, **8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers.**

2. In verse 10 he says a false shepherd **comes only to steal and kill and**

destroy;

3. When people follow a desire, a leader other than the Good Shepherd it keeps them from fulfilling their dreams, from fulfilling their potential.

B. There are other voices Christ's sheep can listen to instead of Jesus.

1. Sometimes instead of following the voice of the Shepherd, people listen to their own wisdom.

2. But, even when people trust themselves, and work hard, often their best efforts end up in only in failed dreams and frustrations.

C. But, the thing that can get in the way of our dreams and God's dreams for our life has nothing to do with our choices. Tragedy or illness can and does get in the way of our dreams.

On July 30, 1967 a young girl was with friends and dove into Chesapeake Bay. She broke her neck, and became a paraplegic for life. Her life would never be what she dreamed. What happens to dreams, and living life fully when an accident happens?

III. What I want you to know, is that when God's people face life with the Shepherd, there is never a time that we don't live life to the full. Life may not end up the way we expected, but with God's help we can face anything. This girl who broke her neck was named Joni Eareckson. For years after her accident she was angry and depressed that she had been smart and athletic, and her life had seemingly been stolen from her. But, through the struggles this young lady listened to God tell of his love for her. She trusted him, accepted her tragedy, and sought with God's help to make the most of what her life was. Now she is Joni Eareckson Tada, a married woman and an award winning author, artist, singer, and radio host.

A. Jesus says in verse 4 **his sheep follow him because they know his voice.**

1. Following Jesus means listening to His word in Scripture, trusting His promise of love, and living in obedience to Him.

2. Following Jesus, believing in Him, listening to him, obeying Him means following not the desires of the world, not our own wisdom,

3. But following Jesus means following the Lord of the Universe, following the one who created the world around us in power and wisdom, following the one who knows what is best for us and tells us in His Word and in His law.

3. It makes sense to follow Jesus, to trust and obey the one who is all powerful and all wise.

B. But, there is another reason to listen to the voice of Jesus and follow Him toward the fulness of life.

1. Jesus says, **11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

2. In listening to Jesus for the direction of life, in following Jesus in faith and obedience, we are following someone who loves us, and loves us enough to lay down his life for us and save us from those dangerous voices. No one else loves us like that.

C.. You see, life never goes exactly the way we think. When we have made bad choices, when our sin has caused trouble in our lives, or when trouble or tragedy strikes, we have the Good Shepherd by our side.

1. He laid down his life so we can be forgiven. Even when we sinned, we can turn from our sin and turn to Him, and with God's love we can make the most of life.

2. He laid down His life so we can have eternal life. Even when life here brings disappointment, God has eternal life in heaven waiting where there is no disappointment.

3. When life causes tragedy, God's love is stronger than life's disappointments.

4. When we follow Jesus we receive life, and have it to the fullest.

CONCLUSION - Let me tell you of another person who in my experience is living life to the full. In 1991 I met a man named Jarvis Odom. Jarvis was in jail on an 8 year sentence, but was became active in jail worship at the Palmer Correctional Center. He took time, listened to Jesus' voice, admitted his wrongs, and sought to grow in his relationship in the Lord. Many people who are in jail, unfortunatly when the leave, later reoffend and end up back in jail. But Jarvis became a pastor, of a church that still meets in the building of a Lutheran Congregation. I have seen him from time to time. He continues to do well.

Jesus came that we might have life and have it to the full. When we follow Him in faith and obedience there is nothing we can't face as a child of God.

THANKS

Graduates

GRIEF

- Sharon Kern

ILL

- Joseph Maddry
- **LeRoy Jenson**
- Anna Mae Shackelford
- Others . . . on our hearts and minds

TRAGEDY

Flooding

FAMILIES

College kids traveling

COUNTRY

Serving in Harm's Way

Garon Bishop

Tyler Svedin

Cole Jacobson

Andrea Falkenburg

CHURCH

Faith