



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY April 22 & BEYOND”

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)



Sometimes, in some places in the bible, it is difficult to easily grasp the connections, the words, and the illustrations being used. I think most people understand why that's the case: we are hundreds of years, even two thousand years apart in culture and language. I kind'a feel that as God's plan was to have the bible

continue on as the most important collection of writings and books and letters EVER, He knew that a whole bunch of different ways to describe the Savior of the World would be absolutely essential. Just speaking about Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Anointed One, the Bright Morning Star, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Prince of Peace....well, you see, there are lots and lots of names and ways to describe just Jesus alone.

This coming Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter (April 22, 2018) is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. It is known as that because for probably 1600 years the lessons about The Good Shepherd have been read to congregations on that particular Sunday. Even if we have a hard time understanding what it is to be a shepherd these days, or even what it means to be a sheep in these illustrations, the imagery is simple enough because it is described enough, for us to get some of the meaning.

Yes, if today we were to use words and phrases such as Jesus is our Human Resources Director, or something about networks, or software engineer, Community Relations Officer, or even just The Good Case Worker, it might have more IMMEDIATE meaning. Still, we read about Jesus, the Shepherd, and the Sheep, and mercenary flock keepers, and we can after a while begin to hear what is being talked about: someone who protects, solid healthy relationships, and un-healthy

relationships!;, caring, nurturing, trust, someone bigger and more powerful than me; leading, guiding, feeding, teaching, watchful.

You don't have to have grown up on a ranch or farm to see it. On the other hand, you cannot presume that just because Jesus used that imagery with the disciples 2000 years ago meant that THEY understood. Jesus had much to offer in sharing about shepherds and sheep in relation to him, but half-way through his talk, Jesus was finishing up one of his thoughts on this by saying, "*his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*" And then John gives us this insight with which we can be sympathetic with the disciples, "*Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.*"

Well, then, we shouldn't feel so bad if we don't get the teaching of Jesus even in simple illustrations (maybe because most of them were fishermen, not herdsman). But Jesus needs them to understand so he continued on saying it again, and saying it in another way, until they heard what it meant for Jesus to be not A Good Shepherd, but THE Good Shepherd. In the same way, when WE hear Jesus speaking, you gotta know it's important! So, it's good to ask, "Lord Jesus, please keep talking to me. And help me to hear you." And the purpose? So you can put even more trust in who he is, and who he is for you.

To finish this reflection, let's hear more of what Jesus said to them, and what we are supposed to hear, too. He said to them "that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." And Hired Hands run away. What are we supposed to hear about God's relationship and desire to be in relationship with us?

The shepherd would bring the flock home to the fold at night. He would then lay down in the gate physically to protect the sheep from wolves coming into the sheepfold. He literally put his life on the line for the sheep. Jesus is not only talking about real wolves, but also human beings who can also be described as "wolves," then just as now.

The wolves who try to enter the fold make themselves look like sheep. They talk like sheep, they pray like sheep, they make themselves look ultra-holy, they say "Lord, Lord", they claim often to be doing God's work ... but by their fruit you will know them ... the fruit of lying, of false works, false prophecy, false teaching, and trying to be justified by their works. The Shepherd sees through their ruse and calls them what they are ... evildoers (they can be redeemed, too, but they will need to be repent of being wolves!).

Doesn't that protective relationship sound like the kind of relationship you would want to have with God? God who lays down his life in order to protect you from the viciousness of life and those who act, and from those whose purpose it seems is to take advantage of you?

Then come to the Good Shepherd, Jesus, and join his flock. He will lift you up and care for you. ***“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”*** (from Psalm 23)

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Fourth Sunday of Easter

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)

Saturday 7:00pm (Church) Willan West Celebration — Mass in honour of St. Mary sung by the Willan Collective under the direction of Dr. Ruben Valenzuela (free)

Sunday 7:00pm (Church) Willan West Celebration — Solemn Evensong and Benediction sung by the Willan Collective under the direction of Dr. Ruben Valenzuela. (free)