

JUBILATE - GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

Mt. Cal, West View 04/22/18

ACTS 4 1-12, I JOHN 3:16-24, JOHN 10: 11-18

HYMNS #475, #709, #620, #588

Theme: Good Shepherd to Bad Sheep

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. John, the 10th Chapter:

For this reason, the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. 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.

He Is Risen! HIRIH;TIMCT!†

This is Good Shepherd Sunday. As you can see by my staff here, I represent the Good Shepherd as I speak to you the very things that He would be telling you if He were physically here as He did to His disciples 2000 years ago. And what did He tell His disciples so many years ago? Just what He told them the past two Sundays: HE IS RISEN...HIRIH!;TIMCT

We have heard from the Great Shepherd Psalm what it means to be a sheep in Christ's pasture: rest from trouble, Freedom from fear; the joy found in knowing that grace and mercy will rule all our lives. All this is ours simply through what the Good Shepherd has done for us ô namely His dying for the sheep, you and me. Because He has died, He takes away all sins and God's wrath. Because He has risen from the dead, we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. My calling as an under shepherd of the Good Shepherd is to proclaim these truths to you, that you may hear the Words of the Savior, "You Are Forgiven," and know, without a doubt, the authority of that forgiveness comes from the One ó The ONLY One - Who can and does forgive. Because He now sits at the right hand of God, He has entrusted me to

care for you. For this reason, I walk softly and carry a big stick . . . No, that is not what this is for! To be sure, the shepherd defends his flock with a staff, but his staff is not to beat the sheep. The staff is used to direct and lead the sheep. The rod is for beating the enemies of the sheep. To beat them back, so that they cannot harm the sheep.

Now it is true, that this staff is nothing more than a symbol of my relationship with you. I could not possibly defend you with this against the devil and His minions, (we fight not against flesh and blood that you can swing at and hit, but against principalities and powers that are against God's Word,) but with this symbol, I show to you how I do battle the devil and the entire hordes of hell: with the Words of the Good Shepherd, Jesus the Christ. What words do I give you to fight back the devil? God's Words. Words like, "***NOW is the Lord your Shepherd, you shall not be in need for anything.***" He has taken care of all your needs, both physical and especially the spiritual, no longer are you an outcast, but one welcomed into the fold. Words like, "***Your sins are forgiven,***" no longer are you to be burdened by the guilt and trauma of your sins. The devil likes to remind you of the sins of your youth, and the ones from just a few moments ago, but Christ has gotten you the victory that is yours now and has already forgiven your sins and remembers them no more. Words like, "***Now has the Good Shepherd made you to lay down in green pastures,***" and "***your cup runneth over.***" How is this to be true? God has established His house as a pasture, where you can come and receive rest from your labors. Here in His house you can eat from His offering to you of Himself in the forms of bread and wine. Indeed, the declaration of your forgiveness at the beginning of the service is enough to know that you are forgiven, but your cup runneth over in that you have the Sacraments as well to give you forgiveness. Indeed, in the Sacrament of the Altar the body itself would be enough for your forgiveness, but your cup runneth over in that you also get His blood to even further comfort your weary soul. Indeed, God is not a miser when it comes to His forgiveness, which is where I come in.

All these things you can have and know simply from the Word of God, but thanks be to God that He does not just tell you about your standing with Him but shows you as well? He has appointed His under shepherds to care for the flock while they cannot see His physical presence. Is Christ here? Yes, undoubtedly, He is, in all His glory, splendor, and majesty, and in all His human form, but because of His glory, we cannot see Him with our earthly eyes. That is where I come in. As we say in the old Pastoral absolution, "In the Stead and by the command of my dear Lord Jesus Christ," I stand with the staff as the shepherd of this flock, the under shepherd of the Good Shepherd. In other words, since you cannot see Christ, He has seen it fit to bless you even more, making your cup run over, by giving you a minister that acts on His behalf, that when you see Him doing His official work of preaching, teaching, and forgiving, you can say that you have seen Christ at work, forgiving you.

An example. Let us say that the Lord has seen it fit to lead you down a path that goes through the valley of the shadow of death. I am the shepherd that is responsible to help prepare you for your journey; to keep your faith focused on Jesus the Good Shepherd Who will take care of you even more than I am able, for it is He that takes you to life everlasting. I can only lead you there and walk for a time with you, He takes you over the chasm of death and He takes you to your place prepared for you since the beginning of time. What comfort.

But what am I to do when one of the sheep from the flock has gone astray? It is my duty to go and bring them back to the proper path. This is what Christ does. Through His called and ordained ministers, Christ call us to repentance, and to life, through the preached Word of Law and Gospel in His house. The Good Shepherd, as we see from the reading, lays down His life for the sheep. We bad sheep have all gone astray and certainly do not deserve such wonderfulness from the Savior. How bad are we? We deserve nothing but wrath and punishment due to our wantonness. We are selfish sheep and care nothing for others nor our God. This is how bad sin has made us sheep, yet, the Savior has called you

through the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctified and keeps you in this One True Faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the entire Christian Church on earth and keeps it in the one true faith.

And that is not all! There are still other sheep that are not in the fold! We must call them as well. That is another point of my calling, not just for this congregation, but to reach out to others along the way. Just as Christ uses pastors to reach the sheep, so I use you to help me reach out to so many more people. I can only reach out to one person, or a best one place at a time. But if we all were to go and tell everyone the great things that our Good Shepherd does for us, that He meets with us here in Mount Calvary, we can reach so many more. The work was started in your baptism and solidified in your confirmation in the faith. Now it is time to reach out to all and share what Jesus Christ has done for you ó given you life and breath and everything that you are!

Now people are not going to just start coming to church because you went to them. They will start coming because the Holy Spirit has moved them to come to church. Again, comfort is found in this, the Good Shepherd does all the work. In baptism it is not the water that does such great things, but the Word of God in that water. In the Supper of our Lord, it is not the eating and drinking that does the forgiving, but the Word and Trust in that Word. In the work of preaching and teaching, it is not the Pastor that moves hearts, but the Word of God. Comfort is found in this: when you go to tell everyone the wonderful things He has done, you are not doing the work, but Christ in you.

So be not afraid to profess your faith, and to do what is right in the ministry of this congregation. You can tell everyone about the Good Shepherd, how He has taken care of you, comforted you, and keeps you in His arms so that the devil will never be able to snatch you out; how He has laid down His life for you, and taken it up again. It is God that does the work, and you reap the benefits thereof.

All this is a comfort to you in your times of distress. Hearing the Word of God, you hear the voice

of the Good Shepherd. And hearing my voice as I forgive you your sins, you hear the voice of Christ, forgiving you of your sins. I am your shepherd, not a hireling, and I speak on the authority of God Himself when I speak forgiveness in His name. You will not see me run from the foe when he comes to attack you, nor will I leave you desolate when you come to confess your sins, but you will be forgiven as if Christ Himself forgave you because it is Christ forgiving you. I will baptize your children and adults with the waters of Life in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When the newly baptized are ready to be confirmed, they will be examined and confirmed that they may partake of the Food of the soul. And when your time has come, I will not leave you for someone else to officiate over you, but will gladly commend your body to the ground, and proclaim to the world your faith in the Triune God that others may hear and believe all the wonderful things that Christ has done.

All this is a comfort to the believer, and you can believe it for God has spoken to you and given you a place to call your church home. This is the green pasture that David was talking about, as well as the Pasture of Heaven. This is your heaven on earth. So, let us joyfully frolic in the pasture of the Lord. Let us come together, rejoice, and worship. Let us remember our baptism, our confirmation, our reception of the Lord's Body and Blood, all for the forgiveness of our sins and for the comforts of our souls to be able to hear His Words and Follow Him. Let us not be content with only this but continue to graze on Gods Holy Word so that we all will be well fed and satisfied, and not be afraid to tell others who are not in this fold, how to come to God. May we all remember all these good things that come from the Good Shepherd and be comforted as we dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of our lives.

He is Risen! HIRIH;TIMCT...He Truly Is Good, and we are made perfect in weakness for He has risen from the dead. Alleluia! In His Most Holy Name, we Pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

AMEN+
Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment

ⁱ Congregation response: He Is Risen Indeed, Halleluiah!; This Is Most Certainly True!