

Divine Worship

Psalm 23

“The Likeness of Christ (4): Shepherds”

Preparation

“I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.”

Silent Meditation

Ezekiel 34.22-24

Call to Worship

Psalm 28.8, 9 (adapted)

Leader:

The LORD is our strength, and He is the saving refuge of His anointed.

People:

Save Your people, LORD! And bless Your inheritance!

Leader:

Shepherd us into Your presence, O LORD, and bear us up forever.

Hymn of Praise

“[Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us](#)” Dorothy A. Thrupp

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

We are Thine, Thou dost befriend us, be the Guardian of our way;
Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear, O hear us when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear, O hear us when we pray.

Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse and pow’r to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! We will early turn to Thee.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! We will early turn to Thee.

Early let us seek Thy favor, early let us do Thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with Thy love our bosoms fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Invocation and Call to Confession

Leader:

Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we hear Your voice calling us to come to You in worship, and we come gladly, eagerly, longing to see Your face, to share in Your Presence, and to shower You with our loyalty and love.

Show us the Father, Jesus, by showing us Yourself, that we may praise and exalt You as we should. Now, Lord, cleanse us of all our sins, as we come to You in silence. **Hear our silent confessions, Lord.**

Silent Confession

All

Word of Assurance

Psalm 28.6, 7

Blessed *be* the LORD,
Because He has heard the voice of my supplications!
The LORD *is* my strength and my shield;
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.

Hymn of Assurance

Psalm 28.6-9

(Angel's Story: [O Jesus, I Have Promised](#))

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.
In You our heart rejoices; You help us by Your Word.
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, Lord.

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure.
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face;
With shepherd's care, Lord, keep us forever in Your grace.

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

All

All may offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. **The Leader shall close by leading into the chorus of thanksgiving:**

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Offerings to the Lord

Leader:

Let us now bring our offerings to honor the Lord and edify one another by His Word: a passage of Scripture which has been particularly helpful; a brief word of praise for some grace of God bestowed; an observation from creation which revealed the glory of the Lord; a word of appreciation for some aspect of the beauty, goodness, or truth of the Lord. When all have shared, the **Leader shall pray:**

We give You thanks and praise, O Lord, and offer our confession of faith together (**all together, saying the Apostles' Creed**);

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Doxology

All

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!
Praise Him, all creatures, here below!
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Amen!

Prayers of the People

All may offer prayers of intercession or supplication, seeking mercy and grace to help in our time of need. **At the end, let the Leader lead the people in praying the Lord's Prayer.**

The Ministry of the Word

Psalm 23

The Leader will read the passage for today, or ask another to read it.

Leader:

One of God's favorite ways of referring to Himself throughout the Old Testament is as the Shepherd of His people, His flock. He even promised, in Ezekiel 34, to come among His people personally, and be their Good Shepherd. Jesus embraced that title, and in John 10 drew out the implications of what it means to shepherd God's people. But already in Psalm 23, we see those qualities of a shepherd being applied to the Lord. Let's have a closer look.

First, let's read John 10.2-5. Jesus said the Shepherd knows where the people should be going, and He leads them to the place of blessing and growth. Now let's look at Psalm 23.

1. Psalm 23.2 says our Good Shepherd leads us to green pastures and beside still waters. What do those images suggest? Where does Jesus want to lead us?
2. Beyond even that, however, look at verse 6. Where is Jesus leading us?

Read John 10.10-13. Jesus implied that the Good Shepherd defends His sheep, even to the point of laying down His life for them.

3. How is this idea of defending the sheep represented in Psalm 23 (v. 4)? How does Jesus defend us? Against what does He defend us?

Jesus our Good Shepherd knows us – each one of us personally and intimately (Jn. 10.14). Knowing us, He loves and cares for us at all times.

4. How is the idea of being known and cared for by our Good Shepherd represented in Psalm 23 (cf. vv. 3, 5)?
5. Jesus said He gives us eternal life (Jn. 10. 27, 28). How does Psalm 23 represent that idea? What does it mean to have your soul restored? When do you need that?

Finally, Jesus as the Good Shepherd seeks other sheep (Jn. 10.16), to bring them into the flock. We've already seen Jesus in the role of Seeker, and we know that we, too, must be seekers of the lost, of disciples, and of the Kingdom, like Jesus.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and we are His devoted sheep. As we follow Him, He enables us to flourish as the Lord intends, and He also enlists us in the work of shepherding one another, following His example. The idea of being shepherds as followers of Christ is suggested in the many "one another" passages of the New Testament.

6. The Scriptures tell us to love one another, bear one another's burdens, teach and admonish one another, encourage one another to love and good works, and more. What do such passages suggest about our calling to be shepherds of one another?

What's the most important lesson you've learned today about being a shepherd like Jesus?

Hymn of Commitment

Psalm 23

(The Gift of Love: *Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire*)

Because the Lord my Shepherd is, I shall not want, for I am His!
He makes me lie in pastures full; I rest in Him by waters still.

My soul He quickens and will bless; He leads in paths of righteousness.
Though I may walk through death's dark vale, I shall not fear – He will not fail!

The Lord is ever by my side; His rod and staff with me abide.
A table rich for me He spreads; with oil my Lord anoints my head.

Goodness and mercy, full and free, shall ever after follow me,
And in the house of God, my Lord, shall I abide forevermore!

Benediction

Hebrews 13.20, 21

Leader:

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

All

Amen.

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