

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JAN 31 - FEB 4, 2022

EPIPHANY

JESUS REVEALED

SERMON SERIES

Jan 9 - Feb 27

MONDAY

John 10:1-30; John 15:12-14; Luke 10:30-37

Jesus is the Shepherd of all shepherds.

Does Jesus understand us? Perfectly. What better person is there to be our Shepherd—the Shepherd of all shepherds and the Sheep of all sheep! He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8), the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), the Lamb sitting on the throne of God (Revelation 7:17). Jesus knows what it is to be a sheep. He is our Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

If you had a flock of sheep, you wouldn't employ a hireling who was working only for the money ... and who would flee for his life in the face of danger. You would hire a shepherd who is in it for the sheep, who loved and protected the sheep with his very life. That is the job description Jesus gives as He describes how a good shepherd acts as compared with a not-so-good shepherd—a hireling or “fake shepherd.”

The good shepherd cares for the sheep and leads them to fresh water and green pasture. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*” We are Jesus' friends if we do what He tells us to do (John 15:13-14).

My wife and I were married at the outskirts of Berlin, Germany, in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (*Kapelle zum Guten Hirten*). As you faced the front, there was to the right a wood carving of Jesus with a lamb draped around His shoulders.


Have you ever noticed a similarity between the Good Shepherd of John 10 (and Luke 15) and the Good Samaritan of Luke 10? The Samaritan traveler went to the victim in the parable “*and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him*” (Luke 10:34). Because the wounded man was not a sheep, there were no burrs and brambles to remove from his wool. But otherwise, the Good Samaritan acted like a good shepherd.

QUESTIONS

What has Jesus told you to do? We are His people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3). Be ready to respond.

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS IN HAITI

Father, please bring your peace and rest upon Haiti, a country of the most extreme poverty, strife and confusion. Stir the hearts and quicken the spirits of the Haitian people so that they might receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Please call those who don't know You yet, anointing them the Your Holy Spirit.



TUESDAY

John 10:27

Our Good Shepherd leads, giving us Someone to follow.

When I was a new follower of Jesus (58 years ago), I lost my student deferment status because I dropped out of college. I did not know what to do. So I enlisted. Maybe the Air Force could tell me what to do for four years while I was figuring life out. God gave me a verse to hold on to in those days—Joshua 1:9: *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

So when I was tempted to be dismayed, as I was, there was God and that verse. And When I felt abandoned and alone, this verse assured me God was right there beside me.

The idea of Jesus’ leadership and our followership is basic to Christianity. It is in the Old Testament. The Lord, our Shepherd, *“leads us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake”* (Psalm 23:3). It is in the New Testament. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, tells us, *“My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me”* (John 10:27). Some of us struggle to hear our Shepherd’s voice. I do, too. This passage became my “life verse,” not because I’m good at hearing Jesus’ voice, but because I want to be. Immersing oneself in the Scriptures is perhaps the best way to do this.

Looking back on my life, I notice how it has zigged and zagged. And yet I also notice that God has led each step of the way. He has led “through thick and thin,” while living for years at a time overseas, but mostly at home in Southern California as a member of eight different churches. He leads us (Psalm 23:3; Psalm 37:23).

The favorite passage of many, including my wife, is Proverbs 3:5-6 (and boy, has she needed it!). *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and ... He will make your [zig zag] paths straight.”*

As sheep, we follow Jesus. And as part of following Him, He is making our paths straight—paths into the hearts of neighbors and acquaintances by loving and listening to their stories. (Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3).

QUESTIONS

In what ways are you allowing Jesus to lead you into straight paths?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS IN HAITI

Mighty God, please protect, comfort and instruct the beautiful Haitian orphans and students You have been placed in the care of Three Angels. Keep them healthy and strong in the words and admonition of the Lord, growing them into godly men and women for your kingdom and glory. Grow them up to lead this deprived country.

WEDNESDAY

Luke 15:1-32; Luke 19:10; Matthew 7:7

Jesus seeks and finds lost sheep.

Jesus is described as the “The Hound of Heaven” in Francis Thompson’s poem. As fathers (and mothers), we do no better than to emulate Jesus, our Good Shepherd, and the father in His Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). This father loved both of his sons. Pastor Timothy Keller in his book, *The Prodigal God*, gives insight into the heart of God and His gospel message.

In Jesus’ parable, each son had his own version of his own story, which contrasted with their father’s version. Which version of our story do we accept? God’s or our own?

We may think Jesus’ saviorhood stopped at the Cross, or at His resurrection. But His salvation is much bigger and fuller than we dare imagine. As the Good Shepherd, He does not give up on any lost sheep. His gift to us is a life that is eternal (in quality and length). His covenant is forever—in *perpetuity*. He is able to save completely (from the uttermost) those who come to God through Him. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus told three parables in Luke 15 (lost sheep, lost coin, prodigal son) to an audience who had a difficult time understanding that He was referring to them as being lost. First, why would the shepherd leave

the 99 for the one who was lost? Second, why would the older brother not be the hero of the story, never having left home? Instead, is the hero the scoundrel son who dishonored his father by squandering his inheritance? Jesus’ audience of “righteous” religious leaders misunderstood Isaiah 53:6: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray.” We are all lost, needing to be found.

Interestingly, the first parable in Luke 15 mirrors the prodigal son who left home. Both the lost sheep and the younger son were lost outside the home in a “far country.” The second parable mirrors the older son who never left home. Both he and the lost coin were lost inside the home. We are all lost, and there is great rejoicing when we and others are found.

QUESTIONS

Do our hearts beat with the Father’s heart? Let us pray that our hearts are in harmony with His.

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS IN HAITI

Loving Creator, we thank You for Your faithful provision for the needs of Three Angels Haiti and the people it serves. Please prompt generosity among those who have supported Three Angels, and call new people to support this ministry prayerfully and financially. Please bless those who support Three Angels.

THURSDAY

Psalm 23; Luke 2:8-20; Matthew 25:40

God loves shepherds and sheep.

As a general rule, the world does not hold shepherds in high esteem. But God gives priority to shepherds. David went from shepherd to King of Israel. The angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds who went to check it out. They then became the first evangelists of this joyful news of the Baby Shepherd King's birth.

The shepherds being the first to be told by the angelic host of Jesus' birth is another evidence of the God we actually have. God calls the world to an "about face," where the last become first and the first, last.

Jesus started His Sermon on the Mount by saying, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:3). He said, *"For whoever wants to save their life will lose it; but whoever loses their life for Me will find it"* (Matthew 16:25).

Paul says, *"God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise"* (1 Corinthians 1:27). Paul and the early followers of Christ were said to have "turned the world upside-down," but really, they turned the world "right-side up" (Acts 17:6).

God's character has not changed. Gideon was chosen to lead God's army to victory when he was the "least of the least" tribe of Israel. And God chose Israel not because Israel was the greatest (or best)

nation in the world's eyes, but because He loves them and wanted to make good on His promise to them (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

If we are to be partakers and partners in God's character, we will do to the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters as we would do for Jesus Himself—visit them in prison, clothe them, feed them, care for them, comfort them, love them. It's almost as if Jesus is saying, "I want you to recognize Me as I come to you in the guise of other hurting and needy people."

QUESTIONS

How are we doing in this great work to the "least of these," His kin and, therefore, our kin?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Father God, please find loving, godly homes for Three Angels "Angel House" orphans. Stir Christian households to embrace these formerly abandoned children, prompting believing couples to welcome these children into their "forever families." Make the transitions of these children smooth and joyful, and please foster their continuing, growing faith.



FRIDAY

John 21:15-17

We are all sheep, and we are all shepherds.

When I was a boy, my parents added two girls, two sisters to our family. So an addition was built onto the home—a multi-purpose room and another bedroom. At this age, I was afraid of the dark and noises in the night. Mine was the new bedroom—hooray! But it was separated from the rest of the family by the multi-purpose room, kitchen, dining room, living room and hallway.

Mom said that when I was frightened at night, I should come to my parents' bedroom. I could sleep on a corner of Dad's side of the bed. There I felt warm and safe.

That's what sheep feel like in the fold with other sheep and the shepherd nearby. That's why the shepherd leaves the 99 in the fold to search for the one lost sheep. After all, we are God's people and *"the sheep of His pasture"* (Psalm 100:3).

My parents shepherded us three kids through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood with love and creativity. As fellow sheep with one another, we also can shepherd each other in concert with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, whose fruits include love, joy, and creativity.

The "shepherdhood" of the sheep is also known as the "priesthood of all believers." *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light"* (1 Peter 2:9).

After Jesus' resurrection, He met seven of His disciples on the shore of Lake Galilee. He asked Peter three times, *"Do you love Me?"* Peter replied three times that he loved Jesus. After each affirmation, Jesus told Peter to do something. One, *"feed My lambs"*; two, *"take care of My lambs"*; three, *"feed My sheep"* (John 21:15-19). Were these instructions only for Peter, or are they for us also?

At another post-resurrection meeting in Galilee, Jesus gave eleven of His disciples the Great Commission, telling them to *"go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20). Was the Great Commission given to us as well?

QUESTIONS

Whether your answer to the above two questions is "Yes" or "No," what is God telling you and me to do? Are we doing it?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS IN HAITI

Almighty Lord, please comfort, encourage and protect the Haitian staff at Three Angels, including guest-house managers, those caring for and teaching the orphans and students, those providing much needed medical and dental care to these, along with other staff and nearby families. Please keep them safe and fulfilled in Christ amidst formidable challenges.

Sources

- Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven," can be found at <http://www.onthewing.org/user/Hound%20of%20Heaven.pdf>.
- Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2008).

