



Worship@Home 11th May 2025
Fourth Sunday in Eastertide
with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Loving Shepherd, you know our names;
 you care for us. When we face darkness and
 death, walk beside us. When we hunger for
 your love, fill us with your presence. When we
 are fearful, feed us at your table. May we
 dwell in the house of goodness and mercy
 all the days of our lives. Amen.

Written by Mary Petrina Boyd, and posted on Ministry
 Matters. <http://www.ministrymatters.com/> and RE:Worship:
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2015/04/opening-prayer-psalm-23.html>

StF 481 – The Lord's my shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upRoR7ej9Ns>

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
 he makes me lie in pastures green,
 he leads me by the still, still waters,
 his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone,
 and I will trust in you alone,
 for your endless mercy follows me,
 your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
 and he anoints my head with oil;
 and my cup — it overflows with joy,
 I feast on his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path —
 I will not fear the evil one,
 for you are with me, and your rod and staff
 are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)
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Please read:

John 10:22-30

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=510990754>

Time to Reflect

This Sunday our lectionary passage is taken
 from John's 10:22-30, a passage that is rich
 with comfort and depth.

The scene is set during the Festival of
 Dedication in Jerusalem, which is more
 commonly known to us as 'Hannukah'. It was
 a time when the people would remember
 God's faithfulness in rededicating the holy
 temple, which served as a religious focal point
 for the ancient Jewish people.

In Jesus time the festival was a relatively
 recent innovation that marked a period when
 in the 2nd Century BCE when the Greek ruler,
 Antiochus IV Epiphanes, had desecrated the
 temple, banned the traditional practices of the
 Jewish faith, and persecuted anyone who
 disagreed with or opposed him. However,
 after a period of conflict, led by the
 Maccabees, Antiochus was defeated and the
 temple was re-dedicated in 164 BCE.

Amid the crowds and conversations occurring
 at the festival, Jesus is confronted by the
 religious leaders who ask a pointed question
 on the subject of his identity and mission:
 "How long will you keep us in suspense? If
 you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

On the surface, it seems like a reasonable
 request for the religious leaders to make.
 However, Jesus answers them not with a new
 declaration, but with a reminder: "I did tell you,
 but you do not believe. The works I do in my
 Father's name testify about me." (John 10:25)
 Jesus has already shown who he is through
 his ministry of healing, feeding, teaching, and
 reaching out to those on the margins of
 society. The problem is that those who hold
 power in Jerusalem have hardened their
 hearts and are not able to accept the work of
 God that is occurring in and through him.

Jesus then shifts the focus in this conversation
 to those around him who do believe in him.
 Jesus calls them "my sheep": "My sheep listen
 to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."
 (John 10:27) In this image, which draws upon
 the familiar pastoral image of God in Psalm
 23, Jesus reminds us of what it means to
 belong to him. It's not about status, ritual, or
 the sophistication of our theological
 understanding. It's about relationship. The
 sheep know the shepherd's voice because
 they have spent time with Him. They follow
 because they trust in a shepherd who leads
 the flock.

This passage invites us to consider our own walk with Jesus. Are we listening for His voice? Are we following even when the path ahead of us is unclear? Listening for God's quiet voice is not always easy in a world filled with competing voices; voices that would lead us into fear, doubt and distraction. Yet Jesus assures us that his voice, the voice of the Good Shepherd, can still be heard, and that those who follow Jesus are known and cared for by him deeply, personally, and eternally.

Jesus then offers his followers words of comfort: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:28). In saying this Jesus reminds his followers that they are not only known by him, but they are also held by him eternally. This gentle yet firm holding is one that no force in creation, no suffering, no failure, no fear, can ever loosen. And those who are held by Christ are also held by the Father for Jesus adds: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30).

In his assurances Jesus offers not just words of comfort but a foundation for our lives to be built upon. The newness of life that is offered to us, through the Holy Spirit, is given to us in the present as we respond to the Shepherd's voice. It is life rooted in his constant presence, in his constant love, in his constant promises, that are fulfilled in the cross and the resurrection and are available to us in the here and now.

As we reflect on this passage in the quiet of our home worship, perhaps we are reminded of times we have felt lost. Jesus reminds us that we are seen, known, and that we belong to him. Jesus does not promise a life free of hardship, pain, or difficulty. Instead, Jesus promises that we will never walk alone as he serves as our guide and constant companion.

So let us take a moment today to truly listen to God with our hearts and our minds. What is the Shepherd saying to you/us today? Where is he leading you/us? What reassurance does he want to give you/us?

In the stillness, may we remember that the one who calls us by name is faithful. Jesus Christ is our Shepherd and we are His sheep,

who find our safety, security, and our liberating freedom within his hands.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 548 – Blessed Assurance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WQdWkCdXpU>

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine:
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love:

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest —
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love:

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby) (1820–1915).

Final Prayer

Good shepherd of the sheep,
by whom the lost are sought
and guided into the fold:
Feed us and we will be satisfied
heal us and we shall be made whole;
and lead us, that we may be with you;
for you are alive and reign,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter. *The Methodist Worship Book*
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