



Worship at Home – 25th April 2021

The Fourth Sunday of Easter – “Good Shepherd Sunday”

Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate

Prayer to start

Risen Christ,
faithful Shepherd of your Father’s sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
that all your people
may be gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

Bible Reading (John 10:11-18)

[Jesus said,] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to 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 authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

Thought

We thought about laying aside elements of our lives for the sake of others during Passiontide. To do so is to follow Jesus’s example on the way to the cross. As we think about Jesus the “Good Shepherd” this week, this takes on a specifically pastoral meaning. What is it that stands in our way of caring for others? Hopefully not devouring wolves, but perhaps pressures on our time, those things that easily distract like the television, or fear of being rejected? If we hand these things over to Jesus in prayer, we can be freed up to find time for others.

What do we need to let go of in our lives so that we can reach out more pastorally to others?

Jesus compares himself - "Good Shepherd" - to a hired hand. The hired hand has no reason to stay and care for the sheep in the face of danger. He is only there for the money – he doesn't love the sheep. But Jesus does love all of the sheep – and we need to understand that means us. Jesus has a relationship with his flock and calls us to live in relationship with each other too. The love that exists in such relationships is what motivates us to help others, even when there is a cost to ourselves.

Who could we nurture our relationships with?

Who needs to know the love of Jesus through us?

Jesus reminds his audience that there are sheep he cares for not just of the sheep pen. So, not just those we know from church or the social club – our own close groups. It includes the new neighbour across the street who may not have introduced themselves, or the recluse from next door. Anyone we are unconnected with is a potential friend.

How can we show that we care for the stranger as well as those we know?

Prayers to end

Lord, teach us to trust in the good shepherd, and let us love, not just in words, but in truth and action. Strengthen us to believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and to love one another, just as he has commanded us. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.

Remember, Sunday worship is taking place weekly at Hope Church at 11am (Morning Worship on 25th April - book with Liz on 01978 762862).

The next Eucharist in St John's is at 11:00am on Sunday 25th April (book with Ann on 07564 286811) and the next Eucharist in Emmanuel is at 9:30am on Sunday 2nd May (book with Jane on 01978 761458).

God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988).