

## 4th Sunday of Easter May 12, 2019

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

# Lutheran Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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### Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
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- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1:00pm (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
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<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2013/04/a-stewards-psalm-for-all-seasons-and-reasons/>

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 709 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 431

“The King of Love my Shepherd is”

“**Sir Henry Williams Baker**... born in London, May 27, 1821...Henry's name is intimately associated with hymnody...Of his hymns four only are in the highest strains of jubilation, another four are bright and cheerful, and the remainder are very tender, but exceedingly plaintive, sometimes even to sadness. Even those which at first seem bright and cheerful have an undertone of plaintiveness, and leave a dreamy sadness upon the spirit of the singer. Poetical figures, far-fetched illustrations, and difficult compound words, he entirely eschewed. In his simplicity of language, smoothness of rhythm, and earnestness of utterance, he reminds one forcibly of the saintly Lyte. In common with Lyte also, if a subject presented itself to his mind with striking contrasts of lights and shadows, he almost invariably sought shelter in the shadows. The last audible words which lingered on his dying lips were the third stanza of his exquisite rendering of the 23rd Psalm, "The King of Love, my Shepherd is:"—

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,  
But yet in love He sought me,  
And on His Shoulder gently laid,  
And home, rejoicing, brought me."

This tender sadness, brightened by a soft calm peace, was an epitome of his poetical life..."

- [https://hymnary.org/person/Baker\\_HenryW](https://hymnary.org/person/Baker_HenryW)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVvI> Arrangement by Gonzalo L. Gonzalez Melody - St. Columba (ancient Irish melody) Lyrics by Henry Baker written in 1868 (LSB uses this melody)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdzqhKpHZfo> [Andrew Remillard](#) TLH uses this melody, "Ich dank dir schon"
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNYm-UiPVck> Curtis Stephan sits down with Sarah Kroger to talk about "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." A contemporary musician discusses and sings her approach to this hymn. 7 minutes
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu83WQdQ7-Y> From Princess Diana's funeral, The King of Love My Shepherd Is to the tune Dominus Regit Me. Descant on the last verse. (Dominus Regit Me is the most commonly used melody)

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
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**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** – "...Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock"

**Psalm** – "The LORD is my shepherd"

**Epistle** – "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd"

**Gospel** – "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them*"

**Acts 20:17-35; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts 9:36-43 (Next week: Acts 11:1-18; RCL, the same reading)**

*“This morning we will see how the apostle Paul highlights the need for faithfulness in God’s service to the Ephesian elders by his example and his exhortations. (In our study of the Book of Acts we have been following) his three great missionary journeys which took place over a period of 10 years, between the years 47 and 57 AD. During his third missionary journey, Paul spent most of his time in Ephesus, a city on the western coast of present-day Turkey.*

*During his ministry there, a thriving congregation developed and the Gospel was disseminated throughout the western part of Asia Minor. Paul then left Ephesus to visit all the churches he had planted in Macedonia and Achaia during his previous missionary journey. Then he decided to return by a merchant ship to Jerusalem, sailing southwards along the coastline of Asia Minor.*

*During the voyage one of the ports that the ship stopped at was Miletus. While he was there, Paul sent a messenger to Ephesus (which is about 40 km away) to call the elders of the church to come for a conference with him, as he believed that he would never see them again …”*

- <https://www.lifebpc.com/resources/treasury-of-sermons/46-acts/794-acts-20-17-35-the-challenge-to-serve-faithfully> Rev Charles Seet, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore [An interesting congregational website.](#)

### **Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders**

<sup>17</sup> Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. <sup>18</sup> And when they came to him, he said to them:

“You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, <sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, <sup>21</sup> testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>22</sup> And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by <sup>[b]</sup> the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. <sup>24</sup> But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. <sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, <sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. <sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, <sup>[c]</sup> which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>[d]</sup> <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. <sup>32</sup> And now I commend you to God and to the word of his

grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup>I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup>You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. <sup>35</sup>In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, '*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*'"\*

- a. [Acts 20:21](#) Some manuscripts omit *Christ*
- b. [Acts 20:22](#) Or *bound in*
- c. [Acts 20:28](#) Some manuscripts of the Lord
- d. [Acts 20:28](#) Or *with the blood of his Own*

\* Acts 20:35 "although the exact wording of the quotation of Jesus in Acts 20:35 is found nowhere in the Gospels, the theme is expressed in many places: Matthew 10:8; Luke 6:38; 11:9-13; John 13:34." - Schneider

A "congregation doesn't often get to hear what the responsibilities of the pastor are toward the congregation—usually just performed and assumed. Occasions when it's made explicit, like an ordination or installation of a pastor, are rare, and not always attended by the entire congregation. Acts 20, Paul gives a "farewell address" to the elders of the church of Ephesus. Elders ("presbuterous"—the term was not used in the NT to describe lay people, but the pastors of the church, also called "episcopous"—bishops or overseers, and given the task of "shepherding"—no rankings in these terms). As a congregation of God, what have you the right to expect of us as pastors?..."

**"First and foremost:** to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, not adding or subtracting. The temptation of every preacher is to add their own ideas to the Bible, or to subtract those things (typically) that are hardest to teach or unpopular. The pastor is responsible to see that he does not do this, but teaches the whole counsel of God. But the congregation, the hearers, also share in that responsibility as well, to know God's Word to make sure the pastor is accountable to the Bible...

And after his repeated command to be watchful and remember what he taught, **he gives a second promise for the church.** That we are commended "to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (*verse 32*) We are reminded that the church prevails through time and history, not because of its own merits, or the merits of its pastors, or members, but rather the church prevails because of Christ's own Word and promise. The church—the people of God gathered around Christ and His Word—is God's own. As Jesus promised, the gates of hell will never prevail over it, because its built on this Rock: that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. God's Son who bled and died to obtain the church as His own. And God's Word is a powerful Word—the Word that builds. The Word that builds up the saints into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood of believers who serve the Lord. And as the church is built and grows as the body of Christ, it is built up in love, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians..."

- <https://thejoshuavictortheory.blogspot.com/2013/04/sermon-on-acts-2017-35-for-4th-sunday.html> Pastor Joshua Victor Schneider, Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School of Maui, HI

**Psalm 23; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 148; RCL, the same reading)**

*"The 23rd Psalm is a perennial favorite.*

*And yet for all its familiarity, there may be some nuances to the Psalm we have missed, some reflections scholars might share to deepen our sense of the most comforting words ever composed.*

*Consider one four letter word in verse four: thou. The second-person pronoun "thou" is old English, a relic from the 1611 King James Version. The vast majority of the time we prefer modern translations of the Bible -- but Christians cling to a 400 year old translation of Psalm 23. Why is this? Could it be that elevated language, words with some lineage and dignity, are appropriate to the grandeur, the majesty, the immeasurable grace of God who is indeed our shepherd?*

*And here is a fascinating item: James Limburg points out that, in the original Hebrew of Psalm 23, there are exactly twenty six words before and after, "Thou art with me."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the poet was boldly declaring that God being with us is at the very center of our lives.*

*God is with us. We are not alone down here. The whole Gospel is that God is with us. Jesus was called "Emmanuel," which means "God with us." John Wesley's dying words were, "The best of all is, God is with us." God doesn't shelter us from trouble. God doesn't magically manipulate everything to suit us. But the glorious with is unassailable, unchangeable, the only fact that matters.*

*This marvelous news draws our attention again to the Thou. For the first three verses of the Psalm, God is spoken of in the third person: "The Lord is my shepherd... he leads me... he restores my soul." But with the Thou, the third person shifts to second person: "for Thou art with me, thy rod... thou preparest a table..." Instead of talking about God, the Psalmist begins to talk to God; instead of God in the head, God is a friend in the heart. A conversation happens, a relationship grows. This is faith, the only true comfort..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=919](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=919) James Howell Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C.



## Psalm 23 King James Version (KJV)

23 The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in  
green pastures: he leadeth me  
beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he  
leadeth me in the paths of  
righteousness for his name's  
sake.

<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of  
death, I will fear no evil: for  
thou art with me; thy rod and  
thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table  
before me in the presence of  
mine enemies: thou anointest  
my head with oil; my cup  
runneth over.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy  
shall follow me all the days of  
my life: and I will dwell in the  
house of the LORD for ever.

**The LORD Is My Shepherd A Psalm of David.**

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not  
want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness<sup>[b]</sup>  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death,<sup>[c]</sup>

I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely<sup>[d]</sup> goodness and mercy<sup>[e]</sup> shall  
follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell<sup>[f]</sup> in the house of the LORD  
forever.<sup>[g]</sup>

- a. [Psalm 23:2](#) Hebrew *beside waters of rest*
- b. [Psalm 23:3](#) Or *in right paths*
- c. [Psalm 23:4](#) Or *the valley of deep darkness*
- d. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *Only*
- e. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *steadfast love*
- f. [Psalm 23:6](#) Or *shall return to dwell*
- g. [Psalm 23:6](#) Hebrew *for length of days*

“On this Fourth Sunday after Easter, all three years of the lectionary cycle have us reading Psalm 23. No wonder some parts of the worldwide church call this Good Shepherd Sunday. It is always good to revisit this beloved piece of pastoral poetry...

What can we say on this Good Shepherd Sunday that hasn't been said a thousand times? Probably nothing, but we can try to find an angle into the Psalm that will help people listen in a new way to these treasured old words. It strikes me that a good way to do that is to focus on the verse that is the deepest darkest part of the Psalm. All scholars point out that verse 4 is the

linguistic and theological heart of the Psalm, because it assures us that the Good Shepherd is with us even in the worst times of our lives.

More recent translations have changed the famous “valley of the shadow of death” to “the darkest valley,” because the latter translation allegedly captures the Hebrew better. I can’t speak to that, but I will say that the darkest valley of life is the valley of the shadow of death. So rather than being technically accurate in my sermon, I’m going to be pastorally sensitive and stick with the old translation.

Here’s how I would preach this Psalm today. The Good Shepherd has just emerged from that valley by rising from the dead. Now that ever-living Shepherd is with us as we walk through our darkest valleys, especially the one darkened by the shadow of death. That is the greatest comfort in a Psalm full of comfort...

When I read this text, I see...a picture from my trip to Israel several years ago. One day as we drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho, our bus turned off the modern expressway onto a dirt road that led into the desert. We drove for a while through desolate country. Suddenly the earth seemed to open before us, as a huge canyon plunged away from us. It was rugged and rocky and deep, so deep, hundreds of feet deep, that the bottom almost always lay in shadow. Running through it was a sliver of a stream and alongside the stream there was what seemed to be a little path. “What is that?” we asked our Palestinian guide. “That’s the Jericho Road, where the Good Samaritan rescued the man beaten by robbers.” It was a narrow, lonely, and dangerous place. According to our guide, that’s why the locals called it “the valley of the shadow of death.”

It is entirely possible that David had been to that deep canyon as he led his flocks in search of green pastures and quiet waters. Perhaps that place became for him the symbol of all those dark and dangerous places of life where we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

It’s important to read this verse carefully. It says “the shadow of death”—not necessarily death itself, but its shadow as it approaches like a thief in the night... David is talking about all those times in life when death’s shadow falls across our path—all those times of trouble and sorrow, of separation and loss, of threat and danger...

David says, “I will fear no evil, for you are with me...” That is the epicenter of the Psalm. Indeed, it is the center of the covenant of grace that Yahweh made with his all children. “I will be your God and you shall be my people.” As you walk through history, through all the places of your life, even through that darkest valley, I will be with you.

As Psalm 62 puts it, “One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving.”

That’s the comfort he gives—not just an arm around the shoulder and a gentle, “there, there, it will be all right;” not a soft pillow or the deadening of our pain; but all the power and love of the Good Shepherd to whom we belong...”

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4a/?type=the\\_lectionary\\_psalms](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4a/?type=the_lectionary_psalms) Stan Mast, Calvin Seminary

**Revelation 7:9-17; RCL, the same reading (Revelation 21:1-7; RCL, Revelation 21:1-6)**

*“When Revelation 7:9-17 is read as an isolated unit, much of its meaning is lost.*

*To grasp the passage's fuller meaning we need to go to chapter 6, where the first six seals on the scroll are opened. After the sixth seal is opened (verse 12), the physical foundations of creation are rattled. Destruction reaches such a pitch that all people hide. Key is their question in 6:17. Now that the day of wrath has come, "Who is able to stand?"*

*When John ... reaches that point in his visions, he stops. The suffering and destruction of the first six seals are overwhelming, and so he introduces a break, a timeout that he uses to lift the vision of God's people from the difficulties of the present to the glories of the future..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=568](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=568)  
*Walter F. Taylor, Jr. Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH*

**A Great Multitude from Every Nation**

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” <sup>14</sup> I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore they are before the throne of God,  
and serve him day and night in his temple;  
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

<sup>16</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;  
the sun shall not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat.

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of living water,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

“...**Chapter 6** shows the Lamb opening the first six of the seven seals. While it would not usually be possible to see any of the contents of a scroll until all the seals were broken, the book of Revelation is closer to poetry than to prose, and the progressive nature of the revelation that follows the breaking of each seal involves poetic license:

- The opening of the first four seals revealed riders on horseback who were sent to introduce progressively severe judgments: They were to conquer (6:2), to eliminate peace on earth (6:4), to introduce famine (6:6), and to kill (6:8).
- The opening of the fifth seal revealed the souls of “the souls of those who had been killed for the Word of God” (6:9), who were crying out for justice (6:10). They were told to rest a bit longer, because more martyrs would be joining them (6:11).
- The opening of the sixth seal revealed a series of cataclysms—earthquakes, the sun growing black, a moon like blood, falling stars, a vanishing sky, and mountains and islands removed (6:12-14). Then all people everywhere, from the greatest kings to the lowliest slaves, cried out to the mountains to fall on them so that they might be protected from the wrath of the Lamb (6:16)—“for the great day of his wrath has come; and who is able to stand?” (6:17).

**Chapter 7** is divided into two parts:

- The first part (7:1-8) takes place on earth, and depicts the sealing of the one hundred forty four thousand who were “sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel” (7:4).
- The second part (7:9-17) constitutes our lectionary reading. It takes place in the heavenly throne room, and depicts a future event that seeks to answer the question, “Who is able to stand?” (6:17)...”

➤ <https://www.sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/revelation-79-17/>  
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“Revelation 7:9-17 is a passage with broad implications. In contrast to the first eight verses in this chapter which depict a specific number of worshipers (144,000), Revelation 7:9 casts a larger and more general vision for those who are able to worship around the throne of the Lamb. Beginning with verse 9, the writer describes a great multitude that is countless, numbering those from every tribe and people, and language. There is no limit to the scope of this multitude, be it geographic, ethnic, numeric, linguistic, economic, and on and on the list goes. This multitude is a blow-your-mind kind of multitude that no one can fully grasp. (verses 9-10).

Moreover, this multitude is seen *and* heard(verse 9). The multitude is clad in white, it is waving palm branches, and it is crying hymns of praise in a loud voice. While much of this imagery parallels the Triumphal Entry scene as depicted in the gospels, it should be noted that this multitude certifiably pledges itself to the Lamb. Unlike the multitude in the Triumphal Entry scene that later turns its back on the Messiah, this multitude will remain faithful to the Lamb “forever and ever.”<sup>1</sup>

Not only is this particular multitude to be known for its loyalty, this multitude is to be known as an active group. This group is comprised of individuals who have washed their robes. They are not passive, but active. They do not wait to be served by God, but they actively seek to serve God regularly. It is John who paints a clear picture of this group living out their vocation of worship and praise.

When asked by one in power, John describes not only their current actions but the results of their actions. They remain loyal to the Lamb, they wash their robes, and they worship in the temple (verses 13-15). As a result, they are sheltered, they are fed, they are quenched, they are protected (verses 15-17). Summed up, it might be said that this multitude has found freedom in the One they worship. Herein, the prophecy of Isaiah 25 is fulfilled...”

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2182](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2182) [Eric Mathis](#) Assistant Professor of Music and Worship, Samford University, Birmingham, AL
- <http://www.gracehudsonlcms.org/Revelation.html> is an excellent resource on the entire book of Revelation written by Armin C. Gottberg of Grace Lutheran Church, Hudson, CO

**John 10:22-30; RCL, the same reading (John 16:12-22 or John 13:31-35; RCL, John 13:31-35)**

*“...We’ve got four weeks in a row of readings selected from various portions of John’s Gospel and, quite frankly, they’re not the easiest passages in the world to preach. They’re challenging in part because they are embedded in the larger narrative of John, of which we get only snippets. And they’re challenging because John is, on the whole, far more philosophical, even metaphysical, than the other gospels. As we talked about last week, whereas the other gospels rely primarily on plot and action to move the story forward, John relies instead on dialogue and, even more, discourse.*

*So one of the keys each week will be to set these discourses in context for our hearers...”*

- <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?m=4377&post=2530> [David Lose](#)  
Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

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*“...The story of Jesus in the Gospel of John unfolds around significant festival events in Jewish life. This is the only gospel in which three separate times of passover are noted (first, 2:13, 23; second, 6:4; third, 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28), and the only gospel that mentions the festivals of booths (7:2) and lights (10:22). This latter festival serves as the context for our text. Note that the identification of the festival of lights follows the chapter in which Jesus heals a man born blind (9:1-41) and is identified as “the light of the world” (9:5; see also 8:12). On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, the three-year lectionary draws from chapter 10 each year (Year A, 10:1-11; Year B, 10:11-18; Year C, 10:22-30). As one quickly notes, 10:19-21 is omitted from the readings...”*

- [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/18-2\\_Ecumenism/18-2\\_Berge.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/18-2_Ecumenism/18-2_Berge.pdf) Paul S. Berge, Luther Seminary, St. Paul Minnesota

## “The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 10th Chapter”

### **I and the Father Are One**

<sup>22</sup> At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,  
<sup>23</sup> and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. <sup>24</sup> So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, **“I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of**

*my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me,<sup>[a]</sup> is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one."*

- a. [John 10:29](#) Some manuscripts *What my Father has given to me*

### **"This is the Gospel of the Lord" "Praise to You, O Christ"**

"Today's reading from the Gospel comes from the Good Shepherd chapter of the Bible, John 10. The three-year lectionary always selects a reading from the Good Shepherd chapter for the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

In the first year, we learn something about who Good Shepherd Jesus is. He is the door to the sheep fold. He is the only way into eternal safety.

In the second year, we learn something about what Good Shepherd Jesus does. As the Good Shepherd, He lays down His life for the sheep.

In today's reading, we learn about the benefits of who the Good Shepherd Jesus is and what Good Shepherd Jesus does. Jesus our Good Shepherd knows His sheep and His sheep hear His voice and follow Him.

Our text tells us that Jesus was in the temple celebrating the Feast of Dedication. Today, we know this festival as the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah.

Jesus had quite a few enemies among the temple authorities by this time in His ministry. Whenever Jesus made His presence known on the temple grounds, these enemies would seek him out. They wanted Him to say or do something that would hurt His credibility with the people.

In the encounter that we heard about in today's Gospel, the authorities asked Jesus to clearly state His claim to be the Christ. Jesus, in turn, made it clear that He regularly did exactly that, but the authorities rejected His message. Jesus diagnosed their problem and He used the metaphor of sheep to explain His diagnosis.

- <http://lcmssermons.com/index.php?sn=4536> [James T. Batchelor](#), Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Manito, IL

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"...The parable of the good shepherd is still the literary context for this section, but the physical context has moved now to the temple.

Jesus is walking in the portico of Solomon, an area in the eastern part of the building protected from the inclement weather of the winter, during the feast of the Dedication. The festival was established in 164 BCE to commemorate the rededication of the Second Temple after Antiochus IV had defiled it by building a statue to his own gods on the altar of burnt offering (1 Maccabees 1:54-61). Details of this rededication are found in 1 Maccabees 4:36-59. Today it is called Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights, because it features the lighting of lamps.

This passage picks up themes from the good shepherd discourse of John 10:1-18, such as the mention of the sheep in verses 26-27 who, like the ones in 10:4,16, hear the shepherd's

voice and follow him, which results in mutual knowledge: “I know my own and my own know me” (10:14), “I know them, and they follow me” (10:27), a knowledge that resembles that of Jesus and God: “The Father knows me and I know the Father” (10:15).

Another thematic pointer is the snatching of the sheep from Jesus and the Father’s hand in verses 28-29 (see 10:12). This makes Jesus one with God, something he will affirm in verse 30, and which will provoke the hostile reaction of verse 31...

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4047](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4047)  
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“...This word, Dear Partner – that God will not abandon us, that Jesus will hold on to us through all things, that God will never, ever let us go – needs to be spoken and heard this Sunday. To the child afraid for her safety at home, to the spouse victimized by domestic violence, to the college student who wonders whether there will be any jobs after graduation, to the person fearful of being stopped by police because of his skin color, to the police officer who never knows what will happen when he arrives on the scene, to the mid career person afraid of losing her career, to the retiree with no idea of what to do absent a career, to the one mired in grief at the lost of a beloved spouse, to the person shattered by the disintegration of a relationship.... There are so many times, Dear Partner, when life conspires to make us feel unsafe and unworthy and it is our job to proclaim in the face of these harsh realities the even greater reality of God’s undying, unconditional, and unyielding love. “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. **No one will snatch them out of my hand.**” ...”

- <http://www.davidlose.net/2016/04/easter-4-c-the-electing-word/> [David Lose](#)  
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