

Fourth Sunday of Easter May 3, 2020

Good Shepherd Sunday Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.

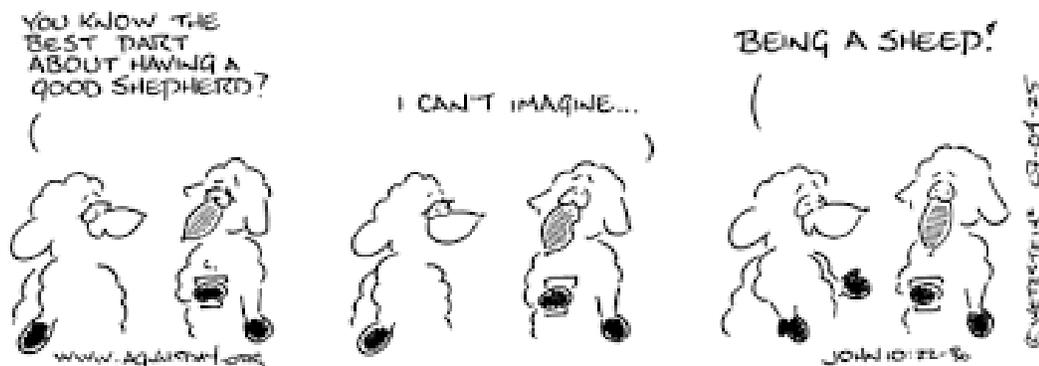
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

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- ✦ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM(5pm Kenya/Uganda):** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



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Hymn of the Day

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

“The King of love my shepherd is”

“Henry W. Baker (1821–77) was an Anglican priest of the high church tradition who served a parish in Herefordshire, England. Even today this county is a popular tourist destination for sightseers in search of the “real” England of unspoiled, green and rolling countryside. This scenic domain was coupled with Baker’s own rich vision of the Christian life, a life thoroughly shaped by the Gospel and Sacraments within the living traditions of the ancient Church. Baker was a strong advocate of the views expressed within the Oxford Movement. This rich resource of images and allusions drawn from the Church and from the land found deep expression in Baker’s hymn paraphrase of Psalm 23.

Although Baker asked John Dykes to compose a tune, different from the Irish melody in LSB, the wedding of text and tune (whether Dykes’ tune or “St. Columba”) wraps the singer in the atmosphere of the psalm, a decidedly idyllic atmosphere that breathes the air of the English shire and the Irish glen...” (study by Marion Lars Hendrickson)

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is” is a metrical paraphrase of Psalm 23, written by the Anglican cleric and hymn-writer Sir Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877) for the second edition of Hymns Ancient & Modern (1868), of which he was editor as well as contributor. Baker's hymn has been described as perhaps the most beautiful of the many versions of the beloved psalm, and it has been said that the author's own last words before dying were the third stanza: Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me, And on His shoulder gently laid, And home, rejoicing, brought me. Originally, the hymn was paired with the tune DOMINUS REGIT ME, written by Baker's friend John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876) specifically for Baker's text. Later, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) sought to republish the hymn in The English Hymnal (1906), of which he was editor, and was denied the right to use Dykes's tune. He then paired Baker’s text with his own arrangement of an Irish traditional air, ST. COLUMBA...”

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5tXAJigW-M>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVyl> Arrangement by Gonzalo L. Gonzalez Melody - St. Columba (ancient Irish melody)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DyS46N1KXo> BYU Singers, (Brigham Young University Singers) “Songs of Praise & Remembrance “ “tile tiles ... Sadly a few important verses have been left out of this arrangement. This isn't the full hymn if you're hearing this for the first time”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5tXAJigW-M> Con Spirito Music, “this arrangement for brass quintet is based. Following a short introduction, the tune is presented three times: first, by trumpets in a modal melodic/harmonic fashion; next, by low brass trio evoking Vaughan Williams' familiar harmonization; and finally, in a broad, full presentation by the entire ensemble, followed by a quiet, peaceful ending.”

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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During the season of Easter the Old Testament reading is replaced with a reading from The Book of Acts. The Old Testament/Epistle titles are changed to 1st and 2nd reading.

1st Reading– “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship...”

Psalm – “The LORD is my shepherd”

2nd Reading – “For to this you have been called...”

Gospel – “¹¹ *I am the good shepherd.*”

Acts 2:42-47; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next week: Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60; RCL, Acts 7:55-60)

“The last couple of weeks, the readings have focused on “Witness,” the church boldly proclaiming the word of God in the world. Last week, for example, we heard Peter proclaim both Law and Gospel in his sermon on Pentecost Day, calling sinners to repentance and to faith and forgiveness in Christ. Today, then, we see the results of that witness. The proclamation of the gospel, which brought many people to believe and be baptized—the gospel witness leads to a church being formed. The church: a community of faith with Christ at the center. The believers live their lives in community, formed and held together by the gospel and the sacraments. This common life, this fellowship—the Greek word for it is “koinonia.”...”

➤ <https://stmatthewbt.org/2011/05/14/koinonia-the-churchs-life-together-acts-242-47/> Pastor Charles Henrickson, St Matthew Lutheran Church, Bonne Terre, Missouri

The Coming of the Holy Spirit Verses 1-13

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost Verses 14-41

The Fellowship of the Believers Verses 42-47

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe^[a] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together

and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

a. [Acts 2:43](#) *Or fear*

“As Will Willimon notes, modern Christianity is sometimes plagued by temporary enthusiasm that quickly burns out. Like eager dieters who sometimes abandon their plans after a few months, some people have short-term religious highs that don’t flower into long-term commitment.

So even when Luke tells us that God converted more than 3,000 people on the first Pentecost, we may be a little skeptical. After all, some outbursts of religious enthusiasm are the beginning of little more than burnout and disillusionment.

However, the story of the early church is remarkably different. God converts about 3,000 people ... and it turns out to be only the beginning. Among other things, Pentecost’s Holy Spirit equips Jesus’ followers to boldly tell the truth about humanity’s rebellion against God and God’s longing for us to be reconciled to God.

Yet even that proves to be only just the beginning. The truth God reveals to Jesus’ first followers triggers not just mass repentance, but also a remarkable chain reaction of love...

It’s always been tempting for God’s people to receive God’s grace with our faith and then be, in a sense, done with it. After all, we’re at peace with God and will go to heaven when we die. However, becoming a Christian is always only just the beginning. The question is what the rest of the story will be.

Those who preach and teach Acts 2 might invite people to imagine the rest of that story as being part of a group of people who care so much about them that they’d sell everything they had to take care of their needs. Not because they had to, but because they wanted to. Because God’s Spirit had given them what Luke calls “glad and sincere hearts.”...

As one prominent preacher notes, we spend our week dominated by questions about ourselves as well as those we love and like. Perhaps as a result, when we come to church, at least some of us are ready to think about someone else for a change. And if even we aren’t ready to do so, the Scriptures have a way of diverting our attention away from ourselves and onto both the Lord and other people.

We believe that God is graciously in worship spaces, because they’re where God’s children meet for worship. Yet as always, God’s presence is only just the beginning. You and I encounter the Spirit of the risen Christ whenever and wherever Christians gather. But that’s only just the beginning of the story that God equips you and me to write as we leave our churches. The only question is what that story will be about...”

- https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-4a/?type=old_testament_lectionary
Doug Bratt, pastor of Silver Spring (Md.) Christian Reformed Church.

Psalm 23; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 146; RCL, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16)

*“The 23rd Psalm is one of the best-known and best-loved parts of the entire Bible. Bible scholars tell us that this famous Psalm is a “Psalm of Trust.” And they also tell us that there are only two Psalms of trust in the Bible, Psalm 16 and Psalm 23. This morning, on this Sunday of the church year called “Good Shepherd Sunday,” we consider the second of those two Psalms of Trust – the 23rd Psalm. I pray that God would bless our consideration of His Holy Word this day. I pray that His Holy Spirit would enable us, first of all, to **hear** His Word – secondly, to **understand** it – and, thirdly, to **put it into practice** in our lives today...” (continued after the reading)*

The LORD Is My Shepherd A Psalm of David.

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

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.^[a]

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness^[b]

for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^[c]

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely^[d] goodness and mercy^[e] shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell^[f] in the house of the LORD

forever.^[g]

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*

Psalm 23 is, as I say, a Psalm of Trust. It's a beautiful confession of faith. It may be hard to believe, but this Psalm is written by Israel's King David, who just happens to be the same person who wrote Psalm 51. The 23rd Psalm was written during a time in David's life when his faith was vibrant and strong. When it comes right down to it, King David is a very interesting Bible character. He's a man very much like us, an individual who went through some good times and also through some very challenging times over the years...

King David was a real human being, with abundant spiritual warts and wrinkles. During his lifetime, in the school of hard knocks, he learned many important lessons about life and about faith in God. Israel's King David wrote many of the Psalms – including the one we're looking at this morning. David, the great and glorious king of Israel, was also a man with feet of clay. The Scriptures don't pull any punches: David was a great man of God. But he was also a grievous sinner. He knew what it was like to live on the mountain-top of praise. But he also knew what it was like to dwell in the slough of despondency. Psalm 23 takes us to the mountain-top. Psalm 51, on the other hand, takes us into the depths of despair.

Psalm 23 contains timeless words of wisdom. These are the words of someone who knows the Lord very well – someone who has a lifetime of experience with the LORD. These are the words of someone who TRUSTS God. That's why Psalm 23 is a Psalm of comfort and strength. In a very real sense, it's David's personal statement of faith – his testimony you might call it – his personal creed. In Psalm 23, David reviews the events of his life, but he does it in the light of his relationship with God..."

<https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/sermon-april-26-2015-pastor-terry-defoe-psalm-23-the-lord-is-my-shepherd> Pastor Terry Defoe, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Regina, SK

1 Peter 2:19-25; RCL, the same reading (1 Peter 2:2-10; RCL, the same reading)

"The lectionary text for this week provides a compelling commendation to Christians to do what is right even if it brings suffering.

Part of the power of this text is its Christological grounding -- it is Jesus who has gone before and whose footsteps we attempt to follow (1 Peter 2:21).

Before we hear this passage for us today, we need to hear it in its first-century context; when it would have been read aloud to small, house-church communities scattered across Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Particularly, what we need to reckon with is the specific audience of 1 Peter 2:18-25, referenced in verse 18. Peter addresses slaves: "Household slaves, submit by accepting the authority of your masters..." (Common English Bible)..." (continued after the reading)

A Living Stone and a Holy People Verses 1-12

Submission to Authority Verses 13-25

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,^[b] whether it be to the emperor^[a] as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people

who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants^[d] of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

“...A few cultural realities of the author and audience of 1 Peter can help us here. **First**, we should note that Christians were a small struggling messianic sect of Judaism in the first century; they would likely have had no pretensions of ridding their world of slavery, or patriarchy for that matter (3:1-6). Their calling was to live out the gospel as those without much cultural power...

Second, the balance the author calls for -- a balance between Christian distinctiveness and cultural accommodation -- comes through in his adaptation of a household code in this part of the letter (2:13-3:7) which is a commonplace genre in the Greco-Roman world of his time (for example: Aristotle, Politics, 1.2.1). Noteworthy in this adaptation of the genre is the shift of its typical addressee...

Finally, the author of 1 Peter hits some of the same notes for the entire Christian community as he does for the slaves. These themes include suffering for doing good not evil (2:19-20; cf. 2:11-12; 3:13-17; 4:14-16) and Christ as exemplar (2:21-23; see also 4:1) and shepherd (2:25; see also 5:4)..."

➤ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3246

[Jeannine K. Brown](#) Professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN

“We ought to first note that the lectionary this week has skipped over I Peter 2.1-18. The very important passage in I Peter 2.4-10 will be next week's text.

The creators of the lectionary have evidently changed the order of the texts so that "Shepherd Sunday" might be celebrated each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. Psalm 23, for example, is appointed for the Fourth Sunday of Easter in each year of the lectionary cycle.

We should note that the omitted verses 11-18 begin with the introduction which reads, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh...." The first thing to notice about this verse is its clear definition of the status of the Christians Peter is writing to in the Dispersion. They are aliens and exiles. They have no status in their lands. They are the marginalized, the worker slaves, the undocumented workers of their time.

One commentator calls this section "ethics for exiles within the structures of this world." The kind of advice given here comes pretty much from what are called "traditional household duty codes." These were commonly held ethical codes of their time. There is really nothing uniquely Christian about this listing of advice. The Law, after all, is written on the heart of all people! See Romans 2.14-16. It is not the Law that is revealed with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is the Gospel that is revealed! Advice for ethical living in I Peter comes from the common wisdom of the society...

Peter also mentions the wounds of Christ in v.24. This is the only New Testament reference to the wounds of Christ as such. In the Old Testament, however, wounds are spoken of often as a description of the human condition. See Isaiah 1.5ff; Jeremiah 30.12, 17; Micah 1.8 and Nahum 3.19. Isaiah again speaks of wounds in chapter 53, his great poem to the suffering servant. "He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed." Isaiah 53.5."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=59 Richard Jensen
Carlson Professor Emeritus of Homiletics, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Ill.

John 10:1-10; RCL, the same reading (John 14: 1-14; RCL, the same reading)

"In today's reading, Jesus presents himself as the gate of the sheep pen, the place where the sheep are kept safe and secure. It is not actually until verse 11 that he says, "I am the good shepherd." But that's probably close enough, since most of us are going to naturally use the shepherd metaphor for this sermon, anyway!

What we do learn about Jesus — whether gate or keeper or shepherd — is that he has come to do the opposite of the "thief," who wants to steal and kill and destroy. Jesus has come to bring life, and to bring it "abundantly."

What a cool word: perissos in Greek, which in this context means, "superior, extraordinary, surpassing, uncommon." (Thayer/Smith Greek lexicon, online [here](#)) Again, whatever else may be said about the life Jesus came to share with us — and that we share in our Easter faith — it is way, way better than pretty much anything else we can imagine!..."

<https://lectionarylab.com/2014/05/05/year-a-the-fourth-sunday-of-easter-may-11-2014/> Rev. Dr. John Fairless,

"The Holy Gospel according to the 10th Chapter of St. John"

I Am the Good Shepherd Verses 1-21

10 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from

him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

I and the Father Are One Verses 22-42

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“Liturgically sensitive preachers will immediately take note that the 4th Sunday of Easter in the Revised Common Lectionary is always “Good Shepherd Sunday” and perhaps will then let out an audible sigh of despair.

It’s not that we don’t *like* Jesus as the Good Shepherd. After all, probably half of Christian art would disappear were it not for this popular image of Jesus.

The hint of exasperation arises when we find ourselves asking, what more is there to say about Jesus, the Good Shepherd? How many times can I talk about shepherding practices in ancient Palestine? Do my congregants really want to hear again that they are all a bunch of dimwitted sheep? Please, anything but Jesus as the Shepherd.

Good Shepherd Sunday, Year A, the irritated preacher gets the unexpressed wish. Not until 10:11 will Jesus declare, “I AM the good shepherd” because 10:1-10 is all about Jesus as the gate. Twice, 10:7 and 10:9, Jesus reveals himself to be the gate for the sheep before saying he is the shepherd of the sheep. Perhaps for this year, we might find a way to explore the meaning of this image of Jesus in relationship to Good Shepherd Sunday.

A reminder about the lectionary is necessary before we move into commentary on the verses themselves. Each year of the lectionary assigns different portions of chapter 10 of John for the Fourth Sunday of Easter: Year A, 10:1-10, Year B, 10:11-18, and Year C, 10:22-30. For preaching the first part of chapter 10, it is essential to remember, however, that 10:1-18 is not an isolated passage that pictures Jesus as door and shepherd in some sort of generic way.

John 10:1-18, and even the verses before, 9:40-41, are Jesus’ discourse in response to his healing of the man blind from birth (9:1-41), whose story is read on Lent 4, Year A. Jesus does not stop talking at 9:41 even though the lectionary’s textual delineations are in service to the chapter and verse markings of our modern bibles...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1993

[Karoline Lewis](#) Associate Professor of Preaching and the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

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“I don't know any shepherds and no amount of sharing what you found out about first-century shepherds in the Bible Dictionary or stories you tell about the modern Bedouin shepherds you met on your trip to the Holy Land is going to change the fact that I don't know any shepherds. Your best bet, then, may be to continually familiarize me with my scriptures which speak at length about how God is shepherd-like. Read Ps. 23 to me while my eyes are closed and ask me how I do or don't experience God as a shepherd? If Ps. 23 is read along with ch. 10, the listener will immediately hear the connection in v. 9. Inundate me with shepherd language from the Hebrew Bible. Then show me the places in John where this theme recurs. If you do this, I will discover that John wants me to understand that I am known by name and constantly cared for, never "orphaned" (14:18) or forsaken...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=67 Jaime Clark-Soles Professor of New Testament, Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

Luther wrote a commentary on this reading entitled “Of the Office of Preaching” which you can read at https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/luther_martin/misc/010_preaching-office.cfm



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“A reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday

This Sunday’s Gospel gives us an image that summarizes all that we have celebrated in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus’ description of the Good Shepherd in John 10 shows us how He saw His mission in the world, and His mission in each of our lives.

Jesus did not come as a political powerhouse, a domineering leader, or a demanding referee. He came as a Shepherd. He came to care for us and to lead us gently, as a shepherd leads His sheep. He is not just *the* Good Shepherd, He is *our* Good Shepherd. He is the Shepherd for each of us. He came to lead us to life. He came to call us by name. He came to bring us home to eternal pastures...”

- <https://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=75328> Julian Paparella

How are you doing with **The Matthew Challenge?**