

APRIL 25, 2021; ST. TIMOTHY THE PASTOR; SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON

(COVID 50% seating capacity)

Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson (Other Singers)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 23

HYMN #450 AH “Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us” 9 am: #254 OVH “Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us”

PRAYER

HYMN ON SCREEN: “Faith is the Victory”; 9 am: #142 OVH “Faith is the Victory”

CHILDREN’S SERMON:

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Acts 4:1-12 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4 But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. 5 The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

EPISTLE LESSON: *1 John 3:16-24 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 19 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence 20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

READER: Here ends the reading of God’s Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He

shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

PRAISE AND WORSHIP SONGS: Hannah Carrizales

SERMON TITLE: “HIRELING OR SHEPHERD” JOHN 10:11-18; Pastor Tom Olson, April 25, 2021

Dear Friends, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

As we look back in our lives as believers in Christ, think for a moment about the people who have had the strongest positive influence in your spiritual conversion and growth. What is it about them that we remember positively? Was it their education? Was it their knowledge of Scripture? Was it their popularity? No, I would say that the most influential element was two-fold: it was their deep relationship with Christ and the sincere concern they had for us spiritually. Most of us would rather sit in a class of a teacher that we sensed walked with God and loved the students than we would in one with a person who has a lot of knowledge but little concern for the students. Today we look at the teaching of the Good Shepherd. Jesus is THE Good Shepherd and his life stands as a model for us to follow. He was perfect. We all have a bit of the Hireling and Good Shepherd in us all I am sure, if we are honest. That is why we need Him.

I. CONTEMPT: THE HIRELING FLEECES THE SHEEP

John 10:11-13 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns 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. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

The word that comes to mind is CONTEMPT. The phrase that comes to mind is FLEECING THE SHEEP. Here we have Jesus in the midst of chapters 9 and 11 where the religious leaders are attacking him from every angle. They are in it for the money and position and their concern for the spiritual condition of the people is totally lacking. All they care about is the power and the wealth that comes from being a religious professional. It is like the time Pastor Elden Nelson asked a certain pastor why he went into the ministry. And the pastor answered that he searched for a career where he could get paid to do as little as possible and that is what he did and his church was floundering. He didn't even bother to greet the people after church. He just showed up at the last minute, did the service as quickly as possible and then went out the back door and back to whatever he wanted to do...probably golfing. That is the attitude of a hireling. The people in the congregation were somewhat confused by it all and hardly knew their pastor. Another woman once told me her dad was dying and he didn't belong to their church. She asked her pastor to please go see him and he said that wasn't his job. I can't imagine such an answer. We don't want to be hirelings.

A. THE HIRELING IS A HIRELING! 12a *“The hired hand is not the shepherd...”* Hired Hand...emphasis on hired. All he wants is a job and money. No sense of career or calling. Just work for money, does bare minimum and has no real concern about the business of his employer.

B. THE HIRELING HAS NO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SHEEP. 12 b *not the shepherd who owns the sheep.* He doesn't own the sheep so he doesn't care for them. We need to "own" our church. We don't belong to a church to merely "be fed" but to give to others as well. A beautiful old prayer puts it this way "it is in giving that we receive." A man in a previous parish stood around with a sour look on his face and no one greeted him. He was a minority and said to the head usher "people here are prejudiced against me." The head usher said, "No they aren't, just put a smile on your face and reach out your hand and say good morning and see what happens." Sure enough, when he started to "give" to others, he was also greeted with warm smiles, greetings and handshakes. The hireling only cares about himself.

C. THE HIRELING ABANDONS THE SHEEP WHEN TROUBLE COMES. 12 c *"So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away."* When trouble comes, he has no commitment...he abandons the sheep and their owner. This person has no ability to endure hard times. Believe me, there were a number of times I was tempted to flee the city and masks and arguments about the virus and just hide out on our hobby farm until it was over...but I knew I was needed here. To the hireling personal safety and comfort are more important than commitment to fellow believers. That is truly the secret of marriage isn't it, commitment to work through tough issues for the sake of everyone involved. It is not always possible but it is more possible than people realize. So often the dark night of hardship ends and there is a new morning of joy again.

D. THE HIRELING DOESN'T CARE. V. 13 *The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.* He doesn't care for the sheep or the owner. His goal in life is to get by as easily as possible. He has little concern for the future. All he wants is his paycheck...no more. When I got out of college, I got a job teaching school at one of the highest paying districts in the United States in central Alaska. The weather was cold, the children were both white and native and both sides came from troubled homes. Some teachers would grab their significant paycheck and say, "This is why I teach here." I could never understand that because those children needed us to care for them so much...it was not easy...they tested you...but they could sense if you really cared. A percentage of students didn't have a dad who cared for them and they were searching for a father. One student even lived with me a number of months. I still think of him.

BIG QUESTION: What is going wrong in Minneapolis? Right here is the answer. The children have been raised without the guidance of a loving and dedicated father...a good shepherd. Their fathers have been hirelings...when trouble comes like the first diaper...they are gone. They were raised the same way. It all fell apart when the government started paying girls to have babies without fathers in the house. The inner-city family was very stable before President Lyndon Johnson and his massive welfare programs. Before that time, the poorest people were helped by the churches. Many fatherless children were raised with their cousins in stable homes. A well-meaning social worker cannot take the place of a mother or father. We have created a disaster and no one has the courage to deal with it.

II. LOVE: THE SHEPHERD FEEDS THE SHEEP

John 10:14-17 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 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. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-only to take it up again. 18 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."

A. THE GOOD SHEPHERD HAS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS SHEEP. 14 *"I know my sheep and my sheep know me-* He likes to be with them. He names them. He treats them for illness. He leads

them to “green pastures and quiet waters.” He makes sure they get rest for their souls. “He restores my soul.” He honors them, “Prepares a table in the presence of their enemies.” The welfare of the sheep is His passion.

B. THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS FATHER. 15a *just as the Father knows me and I know the Father...* We learn from our father, how to be a good father. There is nothing better for our children than to see us taking time alone to be with God. My Norwegian pastor friend said he grew up in Norway in a family with ten children in a one room house. He would never forget how his father would go to the corner of the room by himself and take time in the Word of God to be alone with God.

C. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. 15b *...and I lay down my life for the sheep...* He goes above and beyond. He doesn't let the wild animals attack his sheep. (Teaching truth and skills comes in here.) King David was a good shepherd before he became king. At one point he killed a lion and a bear with his bare hands to protect the sheep. He put his life on the line for Israel when he faced Goliath with only a sling and stones. But Jesus literally died for all who would desire forgiveness and eternal life. 1 ***John 4:10 “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”***

D. THE GOOD SHEPHERD CARES FOR LOST SHEEP. 16a *“...I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also.”* He goes to great effort to search for that one lost sheep, even if he still has 99. We need to ask ourselves...where are our former members? How can we get them back?

E. THE SHEEP KNOW HIS VOICE AND IT UNITES THEM. v. 16b *“...They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”* The WORD OF GOD (His voice is the Word of God.) Good Bible teaching unites us. People who know Christ love His Word and love to be with people who love His Word.

F. THE GOOD SHEPHERD TAKES HIS COMMANDS FROM GOD THE FATHER 18 *“...This command I received from my Father.”* He doesn't do what He wants but what the Father prompts Him to do. The Father wanted Jesus to lay down His life for the sins of the world. The will of the Father and the will of the Son and the will of the Holy Spirit are always one. Jesus willingly died on the cross for you and me. Think about that for a moment. The song puts it this way... *“He left the splendor of heaven, knowing His destiny, Twas the lonely hill of Golgatha, where he laid down His life for you and me. If that isn't love...If that isn't love.”*

THESE ARE GOALS THAT COME TO ME FROM THIS PASSAGE:

1. Draw near to God in the Word and Prayer.
2. Take time to get to know each other more personally.
3. Get people together around the Word of God.
4. Listen to God's leading for our fellowship. Join God in what He is doing, rather than asking Him to bless what we want to do.
6. Be faithful with few people and expect God to increase the flock. Healthy sheep reproduce.
7. Give thanks to the Lord. Jesus faithfully fulfills every aspect of the Good Shepherd right down to dying on the cross to save us.

Some of the best leaders I know are not great speakers or highly gifted. But they love the Lord and they truly love the people they are called to serve and they bear good fruit. This passage reminds me of something I once was told, “How does a child spell LOVE? T-I-M-E. Amen.

Now may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #563 “Hiding in Thee” (ALL VERSES!) 9 AM: No song here.

PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER: *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 that 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*

BENEDICTION: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY 10:30 & 9 am “Doxology” OVH #32

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Acts 4:1-12 *The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4 But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. 5 The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

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