

April 21
3rd Sunday after the Easter

The Good Shepherd

Acts 8.14-25,
Psalm 23,
1 John 1.8 - 2.6,
John 10.11-18

As we gather on this blessed Sunday, the third Sunday after Easter, we are reminded of the tender care and guidance of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. In Psalm 23, we find solace in the imagery of the Lord as our shepherd, guiding us through the valleys and leading us beside still waters. Our passage from John 10:11-18 further illuminates this truth, as Jesus declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. Today, we reflect on the profound significance of Christ as our Good Shepherd and the assurance His loving care brings to our lives.

1. The Shepherd's Provision (Psalm 23)

The opening verses of Psalm 23 paint a vivid picture of the shepherd's provision and care for his sheep. The psalmist declares, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul" (Psalm 23:1-3a,). These words speak to the abundant provision and sustenance that our Good Shepherd offers to His flock. In Christ, we find all that we need for nourishment, rest, and renewal. Imagine a shepherd leading his flock to lush green pastures, providing them with nourishment and rest. In the same way, our Good Shepherd provides us with everything we need for abundant life, sustaining us with His love and grace.

2. The Shepherd's Protection (John 10:11-18)

In John's Gospel, Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. He contrasts Himself with hired hands who flee when danger arises, emphasizing His unwavering commitment to protect and defend His flock. Jesus declares, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). His sacrificial love serves as a powerful reminder of His willingness to lay down His life for our sake, ensuring our safety and security. Consider the image of a shepherd standing guard over his flock, ready to fend off any threat that may arise. In the same way, our Good Shepherd watches over us with unwavering vigilance, shielding us from harm and danger.

3. The Shepherd's Guidance (1 John 1:8 - 2:6)

In his letter, the Apostle John emphasizes the importance of walking in the light of Christ's love and truth. He writes, "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. But whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling" (1 John 2:9-10, ESV). As our Good Shepherd, Jesus not only provides for our needs and protects us from harm but also guides us in the paths of righteousness. He leads us in the way of love, compassion, and forgiveness, empowering us to walk in obedience to His commands. Picture a shepherd gently guiding his sheep along a narrow path, steering them away from danger and leading them toward safety. In the same way, our Good Shepherd leads us on the path of righteousness, guiding us with His Word and Spirit.

4. The Shepherd's Unwavering Love (Acts 8:14-25)

In Acts, we see the early believers receiving the Holy Spirit as a seal of God's love and guidance. Despite facing challenges and opposition, they remain steadfast in their faith, trusting in the Good Shepherd to lead them through every trial. The Shepherd's love knows no bounds, and His presence empowers us to overcome obstacles and persevere in our journey of faith. Consider the image of a shepherd tirelessly searching for a lost sheep, refusing to give up until it is found. In the same way, our Good Shepherd pursues us with His unfailing love, never giving up on us even in our darkest moments.

Beloved brothers and sisters, as we reflect on the profound truth of Christ as our Good Shepherd, may we find comfort and assurance in His provision, protection, guidance, and love. Let us rest securely in the knowledge that we belong to Him, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. And may we, as His beloved sheep, follow Him faithfully all the days of our lives, trusting in His goodness and grace.

Prayer:

Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, who leads us with love and compassion. As we journey through life, may we rest securely in Your provision, find strength in Your protection, and walk in obedience to Your guidance. Fill us afresh with Your Holy Spirit, Lord, that we may reflect the light of Your love to a world in need of hope and healing. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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