

SERMON FOR MAY 8, 2022

TEXT: JOHN 10: 27-28

THEME: SECURITY FOR THE SHEEP

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

In the name of Jesus:

I was shopping in the local Walmart this past week, Luann drove me there and was waiting in the parking lot to pick me up. I told her that I would only be a minute but a minute turned into a little bit longer than I had anticipated. As I was in the line getting ready to check out, my phone rang. It was Luann, checking on me to see if I was okay. I was, it was just taking a little longer than what I had anticipated. Luann only needed to hear my voice to be assured that I was alright.

A voice, the right voice, can be so reassuring. When I was in college, I would meet up with my sister on a Sunday night and we would call home to talk to mom and dad. They needed to hear our voices to be assured that all was okay, in spite of the distance between us.

The right voice can calm and steady the nerves. But we live in a time where there are a lot of voices that demand our attention. Sometimes they come to us one at a time, other times the voices come to us all at once. People

who demand our attention, our parents, spouse, children. Voices that share with us the news of the day, on radio, social media, even friends that meet with us to catch up and catch us up with what is going on with friends. And there is that voice of the wily one, Satan, who whispers doubts and lies into our hearts and ears and minds. So who do you listen to? And most importantly, how can you recognize the One voice you need to listen to, the Voice that will give peace and security?

This Sunday after Easter is called Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He is your Good Shepherd and He is my Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd, and we are His own, the sheep of His pasture.

I will readily admit, I don't know a thing about sheep. I was raised in the suburbs of Cleveland, nowhere near a pasture, or sheep. But I did take a crash course in shepherding from a local shepherd, the sainted Len Pohlod.

Some of you will remember Len. He was a long time faithful member here at Redeemer, a godly man who served as Sunday School Superintendent, elder, and many other roles in our congregation. His daily vocation was a hearing officer for the Department of Corrections of the state of Ohio. Len lived by the Fairgrounds, but when he retired he bought a farm outside of Amanda. Len Pohlod became a farmer, and in his retirement Len took care of

sheep. And Len invited me, his pastor, out to the farm to take a look around, and it was there I learned what little I know about sheep.

Len took care of the sheep. There are a lot of memories I have about my visit, most specifically the stench of the sheep, the smell of wet wool, sheep are dirty animals that need to be cared for. And Len took great care of his sheep. It was time to feed the sheep so Len asked me to call the sheep over to the place where they would be fed. Not knowing what to say, I did my best, "Here sheep sheep sheep, time for dinner." No luck. Not a chance these sheep would listen to my voice. Len smiled and recalled our Bible passage for today, that the sheep knew the shepherd's voice. Len called, and the sheep responded. The sheep knew Len's voice, they knew the voice of their shepherd.

That is the challenge we face as Christians today. Many Christians like to follow Jesus, full speed ahead! No holds barred, Katie bar the door! But we don't pause to stop to listen to Jesus' voice, to recognize His voice, and then to follow Him.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. And we are His sheep, dirty, smelly, sinful sheep. We are all like sheep who have gone astray, hearing voices that lead us away from the Lord, voices that are self centered and self serving, voices that cause anxiety, doubt and despair. We at times leave God's paths to follow our

own. But God does not abandon you when you follow your own paths and listen to other voices. Remember, Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He is the One who lays down His life for you, He is the One who loves you with such an amazing love that He is willing to die for you, so that you might live and live life abundantly.

He calls you by and through His Word. By His Word God created the heavens and the earth. His Word, Jesus, became flesh and dwelt here on earth for a time. By His Word Jesus calmed the storms on the sea. By His Word Jesus fed 4000 and 5000 at one sitting. By His Word Jesus gave sight to the blind. By His Word Jesus made the lame walk and gave the dumb the ability to speak. By His Word Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave. By His Word Jesus proclaimed on Calvary's cross that His life and death is the payment for your sins. By His Word on Easter He tells you not to be afraid for He has risen from the grave, just as He promised.

Today, by His Word Jesus forgives you all of your sins in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Today, by His Word, Jesus reminds you that He has called you by name in the waters of your Baptism, and He says to you that you are Mine. By His Word Jesus offers to you His very Body and Blood, given in, with, and under the bread and wine, in this Holy Communion to forgive you all of your sins and to give you the assurance of eternal life.

Jesus says to you today: “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” Jesus is your Good Shepherd. You are His little lamb. He loves you so very very much. He loves you so much that David reminds you in Psalm 23 that He is your Shepherd and you shall not want. He leads and guides you all throughout your life, making certain that you have everything you need. When you are exhausted and feel spiritually depleted, He renews your soul, leading and guiding you in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

In this life, each of us face uncertain times, troubling situations, things that cause us fear and uneasiness. God may not make all these things go away, but His promise is certain and sure. These things will not separate you from Jesus and His love. In all of this, Jesus, your Good Shepherd, is by your side, never leaving you nor forsaking you. Even in times when we walk through the valleys of life, even the valley of the shadow of death, He is with you to lead you, to guide you, to strengthen you.

In all of the uncertainties of life, there is one thing that is certain and that you can rely on. Jesus. Jesus speaks to you today His Word of love and peace. No matter who you are, no matter the situation that you are in, Jesus speaks to you and says that you are loved. He forgives you all of your sins. He

is by your side. He is there to give you strength. You can rest secure in knowing that Jesus has provided for you in the past and He will continue to provide for you in the future.

You are secure in Jesus. Nothing will separate you from His love for you. No matter how crazy life gets, no matter how difficult life gets, no matter how scary things are for you in your life, this much is certain. Jesus holds you in His hands. No one will be able to snatch us out of His hands! And so we can say and live with confidence and secure in His love, knowing that surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Amen