



Sermon, Sunday April 21, 2024 “I Am the Good Shepherd”

SCRIPTURE: John 10:11-18 ¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Introduction: ‘Ego eimi’ (Εγώ εἰμι)

Today is the fourth Sunday of Easter. Today’s text is the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John contains a special type of sentence that is difficult to find in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). One of them is the sentence ‘Ego eimi’ (Εγώ εἰμι). It means, “**I am X.**” The expression “**I am the bread of life**” in John 6:35 is an example of this form. Also, the expression “**I am the gate for the sheep.**” in John 10:7 and “**I am the way and the truth and the life.**” John 14:6 also has this form. In today’s text, the expression “**I am the good shepherd**” (Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός) appears repeatedly in verses 11 and 14.

Through today’s text, we will learn about the faith of the writer of the Gospel of John by understanding the meaning of the word “Good Shepherd.” We will also learn what the essence of the Christian faith is.

The author of the Gospel of John, Jesus' disciples, and most of the early Christians lived within the religious traditions of ancient Israel. This tradition included a view of God as a shepherd. Because the ancient Jews lived as nomads, the relationship between ‘**God and the people of Israel**’ was explained through the relationship between ‘shepherd and sheep.’ Our beloved Psalm 23, which begins with the sentence, “**The Lord is my shepherd, I will not want,**” is one of these materials. Even during difficulties, the Israelites lived by holding on to the goodness and kindness of God, their shepherd. In this tradition, the writer of the Gospel of John said that Jesus is the good shepherd that the Old Testament speaks of.

However, many modern people have difficulty accepting that Jesus is the good shepherd. This is because modern people ignore the fact that our existence is like that of sheep. In other words, they criticize the Christian faith for making human life passive. However, the ‘**good shepherd and sheep**’ mentioned in the Bible is a concept that emphasizes the sheep’s complete trust in the good shepherd and does not mean a dependent relationship like slave. So what is the basis for Jesus being a good shepherd whom we can completely trust?

Body: Jesus, the good shepherd



According to the text, there are two reasons why Jesus is a good shepherd whom we can completely trust. Verse 11 of today's text says: **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."**

A good shepherd fights for his life when his sheep are attacked by wolves or other wild animals. However, among the shepherds who took care of their sheep, there were also those who worked to make money. These shepherds' main concern is not sheep, but money. Therefore, when a sheep was in danger, they did not risk their own lives to save it.

In today's text, the good shepherd giving up his life for the sheep refers to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. However, many people living today think that Jesus' death has nothing to do with their lives. Many people think that they have worked hard to get a good job, buy a house, and have a great life. Among these attitudes of life, there is no place for Jesus' death on the cross.

In contrast, Christian tradition holds that Jesus was the only Son of God from birth. So, Apostle Paul confessed in 2 Corinthians 4:6 that he came to know **"made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Have you ever truly loved someone? If we had such an experience, we would have experienced the power of love through that experience. In this way, the disciples and early Christians experienced the divine love and power of life available only from God through Jesus.

We believe that those who led Jesus to death on the cross were the members of the Sanhedrin, the residents of Jerusalem, the Roman governor Pilate, and the Roman soldiers who carried out his orders. However, the actual people who drove Jesus to death are all the people who did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God.

Today, we live in a similar way to the many people of Jesus' time who did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God. We do not recognize the Son of God. Also, we cannot discern the truth. Instead, we find a scapegoat for ourselves. Furthermore, we plot and frame evil and ignore the suffering and death of innocent people. In this way, we are all directly or indirectly involved in the death of Jesus. When we recognize and accept this fact, we can acknowledge that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

So what is the second basis for Jesus being the good shepherd? Verses 14-15 of today's text say, **"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."**

The Greek word translated 'know' in this verse is **'ginōskō (γινώσκω).'** The word **'ginōskō (γινώσκω)'** means to know the other person very deeply. This means that just as a shepherd who cares for his sheep deeply knows the condition of each sheep, Jesus knows the hearts of his disciples. Also, only through Jesus can we truly know who we are. In other words, we can acknowledge that we are like sheep only in a relationship of trust with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Additionally, for us, as sheep-like beings, to maintain a complete trusting relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd, it is essential to know clearly about Jesus. Doctrinal study is important for us to know who Jesus is, but what is more important is to try to focus more on our relationship with Jesus.

So what does it look like to focus on our relationship with Jesus in our daily lives? Instead of being distracted by the things that happen in our daily lives, we deeply experience God's reign in the process. Of course, this does not happen automatically. However, the deeper we know Jesus, the more we will experience the reign of God, the power of life, and the mystery of the life that God creates in the world. This is the life of experiencing Jesus as the good shepherd. Do you want this experience?

Conclusion: A life that focuses on the Good Shepherd. VS A life lived with a desire for achievement.



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Now let's summarize today's message. Please think about it. When most people say something is good, the criterion is mainly whether it is beneficial to them or not. The problem with this way of life is that we fundamentally don't know what is good for us. In other words, it is difficult for us to judge what is beneficial to our lives and what is not. Because the world God created is beyond our perception.

Therefore, even if everything happens as we planned, it does not mean that everything is beneficial. On the other hand, just because everything doesn't work out as we planned doesn't mean that everything has failed.

Chapter 10, verse 10 of today's text says, **"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."** It is not easy to live **"a life of abundant life"** like this verse in our daily lives. Because we are all imperfect beings. Therefore, please do not be disappointed if we are not able to live a life of abundant life right away.

In fact, the fundamental reason why we do not enjoy the life of Jesus Christ abundantly is because we live with a desire for accomplishment that exalts us. If we pursue this kind of life, we are bound to encounter all kinds of problems because we are not the master of our lives, God is. All kinds of problems arise when we try to pretend to be the owner even though we are not the owner.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Even if you go through trial and error in life, please do not forget one fact. Jesus Christ is the only good shepherd who gives us life in abundance. If we do not forget this, the Lord, the Good Shepherd, will take care of and guide our lives. Amen!

