

PREPARING AT HOME

April 16-22, 2018

Focus reading: John 10:11–18 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=385548411>)

Other lectionary readings: Acts 4:5–12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16–24

Theme: Love in Truth and Action

Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd, invoking an image from Psalm 23 and linking his own mission with God's work. Even though shepherds are not commonplace in our culture, the metaphor is still meaningful to us. Shepherds protect, guide, feed, and care for their sheep. Shepherds go after the sheep who has wandered away from the safety of the flock. Shepherds put their lives at risk when caring for their sheep. The sheep are not pets; they are the very livelihood of the shepherd. The shepherd's life is inextricably tied to the lives of his sheep. Thus, to speak of Christ as a shepherd who owns the sheep is to speak of unwavering commitment, identity, and passion. This passage also emphasizes the intimacy of the relationship that exists between the shepherd and his sheep. They know one another, even as God and Jesus know one another. But there are other sheep, outside the pen, who belong to Jesus and will be invited in. The Pharisees and other religious authorities who saw themselves as the gatekeepers no doubt failed to hear the good news of that invitation. The Good Shepherd is always bringing other sheep into the fold.

LIKE A GOOD SHEPHERD OR . . .

Jesus' audience well understood the role of the shepherd. It was a great metaphor for Jesus' time. Is it a good metaphor for your family today? What new comparisons can you come up with? Jesus is like a

WHO WERE THE DISCIPLES

Jesus talks about knowing his sheep. He certainly knew the disciples. Do we? Who were the disciples? Can you name them? How did they act as "shepherds" in the early church? Look for information about the disciples online.

PRAYER

Loving Shepherd,
We give thanks that you choose to love us
with a love that is costly and never-ending.
Like a good mother who cares for her newborn baby,
like a good teacher who shows us how to live,
you lead us every day
and watch over us at night.
We give thanks and pray that
we would follow you faithfully.
Amen.

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org