

16th Sunday after Pentecost
29th September 2019

Worship after Serving @ Fun Run – 12:30 p.m.

I CAN RELATE TO THAT: A Sheep to the Shepherd

Come to Jesus

Gathering to set the feast tables

Welcome

“Tell me a story” said every child ever born.

Jesus was a master storyteller...but his stories did more than entertain.

His stories opened human eyes to the wonder of God’s great love. Jesus painted verbal panoramas for those with ears to hear.

He talked in images so familiar to his listeners that they felt themselves involved in the telling.

Agriculture. Animals. Families. Relationships. Business. Everyday life...the very place the Father comes to us to rescue and redeem. To recreate and restore.

For instance there’s sheep...Sheep often get a bad rap. Sheep are vulnerable. They’re helpless. They have no depth perception. They’re fearful and panic easily.

They tend to flock together. They are prone to wander and their reactions to situations are unpredictable.

Who would want to be compared to a sheep? Who wants to be seen in that light?

But maybe that’s the point. For inside, we often feel worthless, stupid, and directionless. At times we are full of self-loathing and hate; we go along with the crowd when we know it is not the best way. We cry out (bleat) but no-one seems to hear or care. To anyone who has felt that way, Jesus today wants to tell you that sheep to a shepherd is the most beautiful, comforting, secure, life-affirming relationship that you can receive.

When Jesus speaks you hear your heart saying, “I can relate to that...like a sheep to the shepherd.” We’ll explore and experience that today.....

Song

For the Lord is Good

Table Prayer

“First Course” of the Meal

Grow in His Grace

Scripture: John 10:11-16 & 27-30 & Ezekiel 34:11-16

Brief Sharing on the Scripture

Context:

Israel has been exploited/used by its political leaders
They are now under the rulership of Babylon in Exile.
God has been pronouncing through Ezekiel his prophet
the coming judgement on Israel & the nations.

This chapter chap 34 is the first glimmer of hope:
God begins to make promises

The first promise is to Israel: God will redeem them
The image God uses is that of a Shepherd with his
sheep.

Now just sit in the text to get a feel for the passage.

We want to get the picture clear before we ask:

What can I relate to?

As we read it together be aware of what’s going on:

What strikes you?

What questions does it raise?

Then we’ll break up into small groups to discuss.

For now let’s read:

Ezekiel 34:11-16

11 “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search & find my sheep. 12 I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep & rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark & cloudy day. 13 I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples & nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel & by the rivers & in all the places where people live. 14 Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places & feed in the lush pastures of the hills. 15 I myself will tend my sheep & give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. 16 I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, & I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured & strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat & powerful. I will feed them, yes— feed them justice!”

REFLECT:

What strikes you? What questions does it raise?

Now... imagine being the sheep.

What do we notice about the sheep?

What do we notice about God?

Now I want you to remember 2 events:

#1 a time when you felt like you’d messed up or someone else messed up so that you were inconvenienced or hurt.

What did it feel like – sound like – look like – smell/taste like?

#2 a time recently that you've experienced God treating you like one of His sheep. It could be that the hard situation you just remembered had some restoration. Otherwise just an example of being unexpectedly blessed.

Maybe a personal experience just between you & God OR it could be that you felt God's care from someone looking out for you

Once you have that situation in mind...

What did it feel like – sound like – look like – smell/taste like?

For the Israelites they'd known the torment of being exploited & led into the hands of the enemy. Their leaders were to blame but the Israelites were communally at fault too for not wanting God as their King.

But despite this, God promised that a good shepherd, a King like David would come & protect them...

Now let's see how that takes us to Jesus the Good Shepherd

John 10:11-16 & 27-30

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. 12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him & he isn't their shepherd. So the wolf attacks them & scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money & doesn't really care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, & they know me, 15 just as my Father knows me & I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, & there will be one flock with one shepherd.

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, & they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, & they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, 29 for my Father has given them to me, & he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. 30 The Father & I are one."

Things that stick out?

Do we have any questions?

What do we notice about Jesus?

- Ownership/Commitment (11-13)
- More sheep outside/bringing others who will belong (14-16)
- Security/eternal assurance (27-29)

Of these new observations - choose you relate to:

- Jesus' commitment
- Jesus' heart for others to be added
- Jesus' knowing us & eternal promise.

In what way do we know God's shepherding in a way that the Israelites never could?

From what you've shared with each other...

Share as a group – what is it about being a sheep & having Jesus as shepherd – that you resonate with?

With what aspect of this image do you say:

"I can relate to that"

(supplemental) Kid's Stuff

1. Favourite animal? Why?
2. Could you have one of those as a pet?
3. Whose voice can you hear in a crowd no matter where you are?
4. What do you think it means to "hear" Jesus?
5. Jesus promises no one can "snatch" his "sheep" from his hand. How does that feel to you?

"Second Course" of the Meal

Offering Song: No Other Name

Prayers

The Lord's Supper - around tables

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Go in His Power

Blessing

*t _____, child of God,
You live in the Father's care & love.
Amen.*

Announcements

Song - Blessed be Your Name

Dessert & Clean up!

Show His Love