

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (May 12) "**My sheep hear my voice**" Scripture: *John 10:27-30*

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

Meditation: How **secure** is your **faith** and **trust** in God? Jesus speaks of the tremendous trust he has in God his Father and the tremendous trust we ought to have in him because he is our good shepherd (*John 10:11*). **What is the significance of Jesus calling himself the Good Shepherd?** Sheep without a shepherd are vulnerable prey for predators. Shepherds had to keep a constant watch over their folds by day and by night. That is why shepherds had to literally live with their sheep. Shepherds got to know their sheep well. They also called their sheep by name so the sheep could recognize the shepherd's voice when he called them to follow him.

The Good Shepherd and Guardian of our souls

God used the image of a shepherd to describe his covenant relationship and care for his chosen people who were called by his name (*Psalm 80:1* and *100:3*). God called David, who shepherded his father's flock in his youth, to be the anointed king and shepherd for his people Israel (*Ezekiel 37:24*). Jesus, God's anointed Messiah and King, born from the tribe of David, called himself the Good Shepherd of the people whom his Father had entrusted to his care (*John 10:29*).

Peter the Apostle tells us that the Lord Jesus is the *Good Shepherd and Guardian of our souls* (*1 Peter 2:25*). He keeps a close and personal watch over every one of his sheep - his followers (disciples) who belong to him. He calls each of us personally by name to follow him. And he promises to be our guardian and protector from the snares of our enemy, Satan, the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning (*John 8:44*). The Lord leads us each day to good pastures - places where we can feed on his word and drink from the well-springs of living water which is his Holy Spirit (*John 7:38-39*, *John 4:14*). If we feed on his word and drink from the living water of the Holy Spirit, we will find the nourishment and strength we need to live each day for his glory and honour. Do you recognize the voice of your Shepherd and Guardian who calls to you each day?

"My sheep follow me"

Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 AD), an early church father and theologian, contrasts those who listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd, and those who close their ears to his call.

The mark of Christ's sheep is their willingness to hear and obey, just as disobedience is the mark of those who are not his. We take the word here to imply obedience to what has been said. People who hear God are known by him. No one is entirely unknown by God, but to be known in this way is to become part of his family. Therefore, when Christ says, '**I know mine,**' he means I will receive them and give them a permanent mystical relationship with myself. It might be said that inasmuch as he has become man, he has made all human beings his relatives, since all are members of the same race. We are all united to Christ in a mystical relationship because of his incarnation. Yet those who do not preserve the likeness of his holiness are alienated from him... 'My sheep follow me,' says Christ. By a certain God-given

grace, believers follow in the footsteps of Christ. No longer subject to the shadows of the law, they obey the commands of Christ and guided by his words rise through grace to his own dignity, for they are called 'children of God' (Matthew 5:9). When Christ ascends into heaven, they also follow him." (excerpt from the COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 7.1)

The Lord opens our ears to hear his word

The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, but especially through his word in the Sacred Scriptures. He will open the Scriptures for us if we approach his word with reverence and faith (Luke 24:32). How can we grow in listening to the voice of our Lord and Shepherd? If we ask, he will open our ears to hear him speak to our hearts and minds.

"Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward" (Isaiah 50:4-5).

And if we hunger for his word, he will give us understanding, wisdom, and guidance for our lives.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path... I rejoice at your word like one who finds great treasure" (Psalm 119:105, 162).

The Lord Jesus wants to draw each of us close to himself. He wants us to be united with him and the Father. That is why he teaches us to pray to our Father in heaven and to ask for his kingdom to reign in our lives (Matthew 6:9-10). The Lord Jesus knocks on the door of our hearts and homes (Revelation 2:20) and waits for our response. Will you answer his call and welcome his presence with you?

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *The Great might of Christ's hand*, by Clement of Alexandria, 150-215 A.D. "The faithful also have the help of Christ, and the devil is not able to snatch them. Those who have an endless enjoyment of good things remain in Christ's hand, no one thereafter snatching them away from the bliss that is given to them. [No one can throw them] into punishment or torments. For it is not possible that those who are in Christ's hand should be snatched away to be punished because of the great might Christ has. For 'the hand' in the divine Scripture signifies 'the power'" It cannot be doubted therefore that the hand of Christ is unconquerable and mighty to all things."

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, you have the words of eternal life. Open my ears to hear your voice and to follow your ways. Give me understanding that I may grow in the knowledge of your great love and wisdom for my life." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Pray for Healing and Comfort"

Loving God, I pray that you will comfort those in their suffering, lend skill to the hands of healers, and bless the means used for their cure. Give them such confidence in the power of your grace, that even when they are afraid, they may put their whole trust in you; through our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**