

Daily Reading & Meditation

My Sheep Hear My Voice

SUNDAY 8 MAY 2022 GOSPEL READING: 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? Shepherds were very common in the land of Jesus' time. A shepherd could have hundreds or thousands of sheep under his care. Sheep without a shepherd were vulnerable prey for predators, such as wolves and thieves. If a sheep strayed from the fold, it could easily get lost, fall into a ravine, or become injured. 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 so they could lead them out to good pasture** for grazing during the day and bring them to a safe place at night for rest and shelter. Shepherds got to know their sheep well and kept a careful count each evening. 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?

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?

Psalm 87:1-7

- 1 On the holy mount stands the city he founded;
- 2 the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. [Selah]
- 4 Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia -- "This one was born there," they say.
- 5 And of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; for the Most High himself will establish her.
- 6 The LORD records as he registers the peoples, "This one was born there." [Selah]
- 7 Singers and dancers alike say, "All my springs are in you."

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:- "World Peace"

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness making them bring suffering to others. **Amen.**