

Weekly Devotions
South Holburn Church
19th April 2022

READINGS

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

John 10:11-18

REFLECTION

George Adam Smith, the 19th century biblical scholar told of an experience he had while of traveling one day in the Holy Land. In the course of his journey, he came across a shepherd and his sheep. Adam Smith fell into conversation with the man and the man showed him the fold into which the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls, with a way in.

Smith asked him, "This is where they go at night?"

"Yes," said the shepherd, "and when they are in there, they are perfectly safe."

"But there is no door," said Smith.

"I am the door," said the shepherd.

He was not a Christian man and wasn't speaking in the language of the New Testament. He was speaking from an Arab shepherd's viewpoint.

Smith looked at him and asked, "What do you mean you are the door?"

"When the light has gone," said the shepherd, "and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door."

Jesus used the image of the shepherd throughout his ministry - in his parable stories, and as a description of his own purpose. The shepherd's discussion with George Adam Smith would have reflected the practice of the shepherds of Jesus day. And that would be in the mind of Jesus.

We live in the light of the events of Holy Week. The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross for our sins, takes care of all that isolates us from God. And the resurrection of Jesus holds out to us an eternal hope of God's love forever more. We are reminded that we do not follow a dead hero, but a risen saviour who is with us all the time. A saviour who shares all of our lives with us. A saviour who is shepherd to us still. A saviour who watches over us and offers care and protection. A risen saviour present with us in the sad and difficult moments of our life as well as in the joyful and worshipful times.

The Good News of Easter doesn't end on Easter Sunday, we don't pack away the point of easter when we put away the easter decorations. The Good Shepherd, remains with us, and he will comfort and he will pour forth his care, and we can trust in him.

Amen

PRAYER

Jesus
Risen Saviour,
Loving Lord
The cross could not defeat you,
Nor the tomb confine you.

Out of the darkest of times on Calvary's hill
Comes a hope and light that is unquenchable

For you are risen
You are alive
And you are with us.

Thank you for our forgiveness,
Thank for our hope
All found in you.

And when we feel overcome,
When we feel lost
When we feel sad or worried or afraid or angry
Remind us again that such darkness has no power over us,
For you are with us
And we are ever loved,
And never without hope.

Teach us to trust in your way
Even when it feels like the way of the cross
Teach us to trust,
Knowing always that you lead us to resurrection hope –
new life, new beginnings, new hope.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

