

## Of Sheep, Flocks, And the Good Shepherd

*Promise: the Good Shepherd Will Lead Us All the Way Home*

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

**Acts 20:17-35**; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30  
(4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, 5/8/22)

*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood... – v. 28*

**Lead In** – The Fourth Sunday of Easter is the Good Shepherd Sunday. In all three years a portion of John 10 is read. In year A it is John 10:1-10. In Year B it is verses 11-18. And in our current year, Year C, it is John 10:22-30. I intend to end with a verse from the Gospel Lesson. But I mostly want to consider the shepherding imagery in our First Lesson....

### I. Context in Paul's Farewell Address to Elders

- A. Paul's fruitful ministry in Asia (Turkey), and Ephesus...
- B. Paul's many trials and persecutions...
- C. Succinct way of stating his main message...

### II. Elders Carrying on Ministry of the Gospel

- A. Not one and done, like Lena who asks Ole if he...
- B. Paul's focused yes, and also the full counsel of God...
- C. Attention to one's own faith, to be of help to the flock...

### III. The Implications of the Shepherding Image

- A. Been to the Middle East, Shepherds lead flocks...
- B. Individual sheep who wander are brought back...
- C. Each sheep must hear His voice and follow...

**Parting Shot** – Becoming well acquainted with the Bible, the Written Word of God is the most reliable way to become familiar with the Good Shepherd's voice. And then you will want to listen carefully to good preaching faithfully based on the Scriptures. This is how Luther explains the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy: *We are to fear and love God so that we do not neglect His Word and the preaching of it, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it. Otherwise, you become susceptible to the wolves...*

**v 18b-20** "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house.

**v 21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2Ti 2:2** and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

**v 26-27** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

**v 28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock

**1Ti 4:16** Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

## Acts 20:17-35 esv

*Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders*

<sup>17</sup> Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. <sup>18</sup> And when they came to him, he said to them:

"You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, <sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; <sup>20</sup> how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, <sup>21</sup> testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. <sup>24</sup> But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. <sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, <sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. <sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. <sup>32</sup> And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup> I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

**Lk 15:3-5** So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

**Ps 95:7** For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

**Ps 100:3** Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**Jn 10:27-28** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

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