

Misericordias Domini
St. John 10:11-16
May 5th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I AM the Good Shepherd

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd. He lays down His life for us, His sheep. His sheep are the ones who hear His voice; who hear His Word. Anyone who does not hear His Word—His voice—is not a sheep. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and the one who has faith clings to the Word Who is the Good Shepherd. We cling to our Lord + Jesus Christ and His promises because He lays down His life for us. He offers Himself as a ransom for our sins to God the heavenly Father. He laid His life down for us on the holy cross. And He took up His life again at His resurrection as a testament that the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice of His Only-Begotten Son on our behalf.

Therefore, we who hear the voice of the Good Shepherd rejoice through faith over the sacrifice of our Good Shepherd for us. We hear His voice, and we listen to His voice, because His voice speaks of the tender mercies that He accomplishes for us. We have life, because of His death. We have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation—the rewards of the cross—because our Good Shepherd lays down His life of His own will for us His sheep. And, our Lord + Jesus gives us these gifts—these rewards—through the means of grace; through His Word and His sacraments.

These gifts are given to us through His called and ordained ministers. The good minister seeks to protect the sheep from the wolves of this world. Therefore, he exhorts the sheep to listen to the voice of the One, True Good Shepherd, and to stop listening to the voice of the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh. In other words, the good ministers of the Lord preach the Law and remind us that we are full of sin, both original sin which we inherited from Adam, and that we commit sinful acts daily against the Ten Commandments, and that we daily omit to do the good that is required of us by the Ten Commandments.

We are lead into repentance, that is, contrition and sorrow for our sinfulness, and faith in our Lord's merits and works on our behalf that win forgiveness for us, through the voice of the Good Shepherd; through the preached Word and the administered sacraments which the ministers of the Good Shepherd distribute to us at the command of the Lord + Jesus for our benefit. We who repent of our sins, and cling in faith to the Good Shepherd are united in faith as one flock, one sheepfold. We have one Good Shepherd Who leads us out of death into life. He leads us out of this valley of sorrow to Himself in Heaven. We as the one flock of the Christ have forgiveness, life and salvation through His death on the cross. We are freed from sin, death and the power of the devil because our Good Shepherd

lays down His life for us sheep. We therefore, know His voice, and listen to His Word, for in His Words are the words of eternal life; the words that proclaim to us that we have an eternal life awaiting us in Heaven with all of the saints who have gone before us.

Our Good Shepherd proclaims these promises to us through His good shepherds that He has sent to us to preach His Word in its truth and purity, and who administer the Sacraments according to the Good Shepherd's institution. These good shepherds sent by the Lord + Jesus lead us into the way of peace, and share with us the tender mercies of the Lord. They willingly make sacrifices for the sheep entrusted to their care, because they care for the souls of the sheep. They sacrifice a good life. They sacrifice popularity and good pay. They sacrifice all good things in this life for the sake of the sheep entrusted to their care, so that their sheep may be found in Heaven on the Last Day, even if it means sacrificing their very own life.

There are, however, those hirelings who care not about the sheep, but rather care about their own bellies, their reputation, their popularity, their bank account who by their willingness to withhold the Word of God in all its truth and purity—even the preaching of the Law and the pointing out of sins which the world does not view as sinful—shows they care not for souls of the sheep. Faithfulness to the Word of God is not about getting butts in the pews at the expense of the truth. It is not about increasing the church's finances and budget through gimmicks and tricks. Faithfulness to the Word of God is about preaching the realities that come to the sheep of the Lord on account of their faithfulness to the Word.

The wolf—the devil—is out to devour you and your life. He seeks to catch you and scatter you from the salvation found within the Church. When the hireling allows the wolf to scatter the sheep from the Word of God because he has sacrificed the truth of the Word of God instead of his own life, the sheep are driven away from faith in Christ. They are driven into the false notion that they are good Christians because of what they have done and are doing and not because of the tender mercies of the Lord, Who lays down His life for the sheep. The hireling leads the sheep of the Lord into the wolf's claws by teaching them to look at their own acts of service instead of the works and merits of the Christ.

The Lord + Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd because He takes all things necessary for our salvation upon Himself. Our salvation required a perfect fulfillment of the Law of God. We were and are unable to fulfill the Law of God, for us poor, miserable sheep daily and often break the Word of God. Our Good Shepherd fulfills the Law perfectly for us. Our salvation also required a payment for our transgressions. The penalty for transgressing the Word of God is death. The penalty for our sins is the sufferings and death that our Good Shepherd endured for us on the tree of the holy cross. If you want to see if the penalty of your sins was paid for, just look at the crucifix on the altar and in your homes. There is the image of your sins being paid for with suffering and death. And if you want to see if this payment was received and accepted by the heavenly Father, then you only need to look at the empty tomb of our Lord on day of His resurrection.

Your sins have been paid for, the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice of His Only-Begotten and Beloved Son on your behalf and He was raised again for our justification. In other words, our faith clings to this promise and we are justified, that is, made right with the Lord God. The rewards that He won for us on the cross are distributed to us through the means of grace given to us by the good called and ordained shepherds of the One, True Good Shepherd, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

When we hear His voice, we are made His sheep through the faith created in us by the Holy Ghost. We are His sheep because we hear His voice, and we know Who He is. We know Him to be our Savior and Redeemer. We know Him to be our Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for us and protects us from the wolf—the devil—by first rendering him powerless, along with sin and death, and then sends to us good shepherds to convict us of our sins through the preaching of the Law and also proclaims into our ears that our Good Shepherd has defeated sin, death and the devil—the wolf—once

and for all on the tree of the holy cross.

In the cross of our Good Shepherd we see His tender mercies for us, we see the *Misericordias Domini*—the merciful heart of the Lord. He is the Good Shepherd—our Good Shepherd—because He lays down His life for us His sheep. Hear His voice. Listen to His Word. He has redeemed you from sin and death and the power of the devil, and He has given you forgiveness, life and salvation. He has called all of us into the sheepfold of the Church through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, and through the work of the Holy Ghost through these means He has created faith in us that clings to Him as our Lord and Savior.

We are now one flock under one Shepherd, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Who leads us into the sheepfold of the Church, and leads us into our heavenly home in Heaven by His voice preached through proclamation of His Word. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!