

Misericordias Domini
St. John 10:11-16
May 1st, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

There Will Be One 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 God, Who didst will Thine Only-Begotten Son to learn obedience by the things which He suffered, that, being thus made perfect, He might become the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him: work in us, we beseech Thee, such inward conformity with His holy patience as may cause us to have part also in His glorious power, that so, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, we may be able to serve Thee all our days in newness of mind and life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

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

During the season of Easter, the Gospel readings all prepare us for the Feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost the Church is gifted with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, throughout the Easter season we will be reminded of the gift of the Holy Ghost to us. This introduction to the Holy Ghost began last Sunday when our Lord + Jesus entered into the Upper Room where the Apostles were hiding behind closed doors. He said to them, "Peace be with you!" then He said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is the One Who gives us faith to believe that when we are told that our sins are forgiven, we believe that we have the remission of all of our sins. The rest of the Gospel readings for the season of Easter are all taken from our Lord's discourse with His Apostles on the night of His arrest and trial. While He instituted the Lord's Supper, He prepared them for the coming of the Holy Ghost after His death, resurrection, and ascension.

Last week's Gospel and today's Gospel reading are the only two that are not from that discourse in the Upper Room. Although last Sunday's Gospel did take place in the Upper Room after our Lord's Resurrection, both in the evening of the same day of His resurrection, and the following Sunday. Today our Lord does not speak from the Upper Room with His Apostles, and unlike all the other Gospel pericopes for Easter, this one does not explicitly mention the Holy Ghost. The work of the Holy Ghost is given to us, though. For, our Lord tells us that all of His sheep, those who believe on Him, will hear His voice. He will be their Shepherd, and they will be His sheep. There will be One Shepherd. Our Lord + Jesus will be our Shepherd.

We hear our Lord's voice, because of the work of the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Ghost who creates faith in us. It is His work to open our hearts to receive the Word of the Lord. It is His work to open our ears to hear the promises that our Lord + Jesus has won for us salvation on the tree of the holy cross. It is the Holy Ghost's work to give to us the gifts that our Lord + Jesus won for us on the tree of the holy cross through the blessed means of grace. We receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation through Holy Baptism, through the Absolution, and through the "breaking of the bread." We receive these gifts whenever we attend upon the preaching of the Gospel, and the preacher of the

pure Word of God preaches into our ears the promise of salvation found in our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ alone. The Holy Ghost strengthens our faith that we receive these gifts when we gather together as a Communion of Saints; whenever two or three of us gather together in Christ's Name, we console one another in our sins with the promise of forgiveness, and we converse with one another about all the good things that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ has done for us. The Holy Ghost is working through all these means to create faith in us, and to continue to strengthen and preserve the faith that He has created in us.

The Holy Ghost teaches us that the Lord + Jesus is our Shepherd. He is the One to Whom we cling to in faith for our salvation. But what does a Shepherd do? When we say that our Lord + Jesus is the One True Shepherd of our souls, what do we mean by that? He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. A Bishop is an overseer. That is what the word "bishop" means; it means overseer. He is someone who watches over us; He sees over us. He makes sure that we do not stray to either the left or the right, but that we stay on the right path to our eternal home in Heaven. A pastor is a bishop, and overseer, of our souls. He acts on behalf of the Lord + Jesus, faithfully preaching into our ears the promises of the Lord, and faithfully administering the Sacraments according to our Lord's institution. He does all this for our souls, to lead and guide us into the way of truth, so that we may enter with our Lord into the eternal heavenly realms.

A shepherd is just another term for bishop. In fact, the word we use for our ministers, pastor, means shepherd. A pastor is a shepherd. Our Lord + Jesus is the One True Shepherd. He is our true pastor. This is how we know how to test whether our pastor is faithful or not, does he speak with the voice of the true Shepherd, or does his voice say things contrary to what our Lord + Jesus preached. A true shepherd will point us away from ourselves, point us away from himself, to the only source of our salvation. A good shepherd—a good pastor—will point us to the Christ alone. A good shepherd will direct us to the One True Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Our Lord + Jesus uses His Holy Ghost to guide, preserve, enlighten, strengthen, and keep us in the one, true faith. Moreover, a shepherd does not just guide the sheep to good pastures and good streams of living water, but he also protects the sheep from the wolves. He stands between the wolves and the sheep, willing to give his life to protect his sheep, so that none are lost. He will fight to the death to preserve and protect his sheep. The hireling, one who does not own the sheep, will flee from the wolves. He protects his own skin, not caring what happens to the sheep. The ministers of the Gospel are imperfect shepherds, for they are full of sin and temptation just like the sheep under their care. They need the overseeing of the One True Shepherd, too.

The Good Shepherd, our Lord + Jesus, already demonstrated His love for the sheep. He has already shown us His love for us. We have just come through Lent and have begun the Easter season. In Lent we compared our lives to the tenets of the Ten Commandments, and saw how little we keep them; how full of sin and shame we are. We then spent several days contemplating our Lord's suffering and death—His Passion—for us. Here our Lord + Jesus laid down His life for us poor, miserable straying sheep. He showed His love for us by battling the wolves of sin, death, and the power of the devil, giving up His own life to rescue us from these evil wolves. He is truly the Good Shepherd. He is truly the Shepherd Who gives His life for us poor sheep.

He was not defeated by death, however. He was not defeated by the wolves. Instead, He rose again from the dead on the third day, and He has revealed that He has thoroughly defeated our enemies—He has completely defeated the wolves who seek to devour us poor, miserable sinful sheep. He has won for us sheep forgiveness of our sins, eternal life with Him, and salvation from our wolfish enemies. He did not run away from the threat of the wolves, but met them on the cross and defeated them once and for all for our sakes.

He now sends to us His Holy Ghost to preserve us in His victory. Every Sunday which we gather together as a Communion of Saints, we relive our Lord's victory. Every Sunday is a victory parade for salvation. We share in our Lord's victory over death together in pure fellowship when we gather at this altar and kneel and receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine. We celebrate our Lord's victory with a victory meal. We share it together. Together we believe that we receive our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood in bread and wine for the remission of all our sins. The Holy Ghost opens our hearts to believe this and rejoice in it.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice this day that the Holy Ghost has opened our ears to hear of our Lord's victory over sin and death. Let us rejoice that we have forgiveness, life and salvation. Let us rejoice that we are a community, a fellowship, which loves our Good Shepherd, our Lord + Jesus, Who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. He leads us to green pastures, and cool waters. He leads us into our eternal heavenly home, preserving us from our enemies—from the wolves of this life—who seek to devour and destroy us. Our Good Shepherd has laid down His life for us sheep, and He has given us all the spoils of His victory. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Thou Good and Faithful Shepherd, Jesus Christ, Who, of Thine infinite love, didst lay down Thy life for the sheep, we give Thee praise and glory for this Thine unspeakable grace and mercy; and we beseech Thee, feed us upon the pleasant pastures of Thy Word, give us to drink of the waters of salvation, and guide us by Thy Holy Spirit, that, as Thou knowest us, and dost continually minister to our need, even so we also may know Thee, gladly hear Thy voice, and follow Thee, and by Thee be delivered from all our foes, until the whole flock shall be gathered in Heaven about Thee, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!