

Misericordias Domini  
St. John 10:11-16  
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## I Know Mine Own

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“I AM the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

### **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.

My dear friends, Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Sheep are known for having two traits: they have a propensity to wander and go where it is dangerous for them to go. The other trait, fortunately, is that they also learn to recognize the voice of the shepherd, and trust him to protect them from harm and danger. Our Lord + Jesus in today's Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John tells us that He is the Good Shepherd. He is the One Who guides, protects, and feeds the sheep. He is the One Who brings us to green pastures beside still waters. He is the One Who protects us from the wolf, from the devil, who in his ravening and hatred, seeks to devour and destroy the sheep. The devil looks with hatred upon us to destroy our faith, and lead us into eternal damnation.

He is quite successful at times, because sheep have the tendency to wander, to stray into paths and pasture that is dangerously near where the wolf is present to devour them. Many in this world have strayed so far from the Shepherd that they are completely out of the pasture. They have removed themselves from the care of the Shepherd. They have never been aware that they were under the care of the Shepherd, and so, they willingly place themselves outside of the pasture—outside of the Church. They are in the jaws of the wolf, and do not realize it! They are already destroyed and do not realize their eternal destruction is guaranteed. They have refused the care of the Shepherd, and so, they willingly sacrifice themselves to the devouring of the wolf—to the destruction the devil has in view for them.

They are completely unaware of their eternal destruction. The Shepherd continues to call to them to come into the pasture, but they refuse. Indeed, they do not even hear. They have stopped their ears to the voice of the Shepherd. They desire to satisfy the lusts of their own flesh not knowing that in doing so they have secured for themselves their eternal destruction. They have never heeded the

Shepherd's voice, and are unaware that their destruction is imminent. They have been devoured by the wolf, and do not know it.

There are other sheep who have heard the voice of the Shepherd, but are still prone to wandering. In fact, they love to wander. They want to have the best of both worlds. They want to have one foot in the pasture, and the other foot in the world. They want to live like the sheep who have rejected the voice of the Shepherd, and yet, still pretend that they are a part of the flock in the Lord's pasture. These sheep try to live in the Church and the world at the same time. But one cannot serve two masters. Either he will love the one, and hate the other, or he will serve the one, and despise the other. One cannot love the world, and still be in the Church. For the world is contrary to the Church. The Church is the pasture that feeds the sheep and prepares them for an eternal pasture in Heaven. The world only leads to eternal destruction.

It does not help that oftentimes these sheep are led by the hirelings, those who care not to protect the sheep from the jaws of the devil. The sheep are led by the hireling to disregard the voice of the Shepherd. They do not teach the sheep to flee from the wolf. They do not preach the Law of the Lord God. They do not point out the sins of the sheep. They want to show the sheep only joy and happiness, but none of the struggle and pain that comes from living under the cross of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. To put it in theological terms: the hireling is all too eager to preach a theology of glory, and not a theology of the cross. They love to point out all the good things that come to Christians, but none of the bad things that come because we have been made enemies of the devil.

The devil prowls around like a hungry wolf, seeking whom he may devour. Those who hear the voice of the Shepherd are the devil's main target. That means, my dear friends, that the devil—the wolf—is targeting us first and foremost. He levels his attacks against us first and foremost. The other sheep who love to wander, he has in his jaws already. He is already devouring as food. Because they do not heed, nor hear, the voice of the Good Shepherd, their eternal destruction is secured by the wolf.

But we hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd. Therefore, we are under constant attack by the devil, and his horde. He uses all of the enticements and lies and deceptions to lead us out of the pasture of the Church into the wilderness of the world, so that he may devour and kill us. He is very adept at tempting us away from the Church. He uses our own lusts and desires against us to kill us. And we, like Eve in the Garden of Eden, who saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was good to eat, readily take of that forbidden fruit and eat to our own damnation.

This is why the Good Shepherd, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, continues to call out to us with His holy Word. By the preaching of the Law and the Gospel, we turn away from the wilderness, from the dangers inherent in being outside the pasture of the Church. Through the continual calling out to us by the Good Shepherd through His Word, and through the voice of His faithful shepherds, who call to us by the authority and command of the Lord + Jesus with His Word, we come to know and love the voice of the Good Shepherd. We know our Lord by faith, and we are known by Him. For we have come to know by faith that our Good Shepherd is willing to lay down His life for the sheep—for us.

Indeed, He has laid down His life for us poor, miserable sheep. He has suffered and died upon the tree of the holy cross. He has paid the price of our wandering and rebellion. He has subjected Himself to the jaws of the devil—the wolf—so that He might redeem us back from the power and authority of the devil. By His death, He has defeated the devil once and for all. The wolf cannot harm us any longer. To show us that this is true, He has risen again from the dead. By His rising to life again He shows us that He has thoroughly defeated death and the grave. He shows us that the heavenly Father has accepted His sacrifice on our behalf. We who hear the voice of the Shepherd, who hear that the Good Shepherd has laid down His life for us poor, miserable, wandering sheep, rejoice that we have such a Shepherd.

We as sheep may have the trait of having the tendency to wander from the voice of the Shepherd, to place ourselves into the dangers of the wilderness of this world. But we also have the trait to know the voice of the Good Shepherd. We hear His voice and hearken unto Him. We hear Him call out to us with the Law to avoid the dangers and destruction inherent in the world, and we obey and come back to Him in the green pastures, and still waters.

He continues to call out to us with His voice through the faithful shepherds He has placed over us. Those faithful shepherds which do not flee at the sight of the wolf, but are willing to battle and lay down their own lives for the sheep. They would rather see the sheep saved from eternal destruction, even if it meant giving up their own lives. They would gladly place themselves into the jaws of the wolf, if it meant that the sheep under their care would go free. For the faithful shepherds, they also have the trait of hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd. They know that they will be protected by the Good Shepherd, because He has already done it upon the tree of the holy cross.

Therefore, my dear sheep, hear the voice of the Shepherd, and come again into the green pasture of the Church, and sit beside the still waters of your Holy Baptism. For our Lord + Jesus has prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies. He has given us water, and Word, and His Body and Blood in bread and wine, to feed us in this holy pasture. So that having been fed and given to drink, we may be preserved, and sustained in this holy pasture, until He calls us out of it to live with Him in the eternal pastures of Heaven. Let us therefore give up our wandering in the wilderness of the world, and come and find rest and peace in this safe pasture of the Church, where we can hear the voice of our Shepherd at all times, and be protected from the jaws of the wolf. For our Good Shepherd knows us, His sheep, and through His holy Word, we know Him. He is the One Who has laid down His life for us poor, miserable sinners, so that we may be eternally saved and live with Him forever. Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee 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!*