

Weekly Word

April 30 -2023

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Our Scripture readings for this week are Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; and John 10:1-10.

There is a lot in these Scriptures which is very familiar to us, especially Psalm 23, which is frequently read at funerals. The imagery that King David uses is something that he is very familiar with, that of being a Shepherd. In his early life he was a shepherd caring for his father's sheep and he knew all the work and dangers that this entailed. He took something that he knew and used it to point people to God, who is the Chief Shepherd. It is good to have this in our mind as we will look at portions of the Gospel of John 10:1-10 next.

23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; 23:3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

John 10:1-10 is: 10:1 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 10:2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 10:3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 10:5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." 10:6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 10:7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 10:8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 10:9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The Gospel for today is also full of imagery in that Jesus tells us (v.7) that He is the gate for the sheep, the sheep being those who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. There is no other way for a person to enter the Kingdom of God, except through Jesus, He IS the Good Shepherd. In spending time in Bible reading and in Prayer we learn to hear God's voice, not necessarily an audible voice, but to know the Will of God, such as to love our neighbours as ourselves. It is in those times of intimacy that God will change our hearts towards the world around us. He will help us see others as He sees them, someone worth loving, because as Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary each one of us were on His mind. That is where the Good Shepherd laid down His life (John 10:11), so that we may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

Therefore, I invite you to ask Jesus into your life so that you may "dwell in the house of the LORD your whole life long" (Psalm 23:6) and forevermore.