

The Home Sunday Worship Supplement

Fourth Sunday of Easter, 3rd May 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Well, what interesting times, that we are experiencing! Saturday morning was the second time ever that we weren't able to gather for the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Nevertheless, at 6 am, Ian Flarrety and myself (in uniform) stood on the steps of Holy Trinity and after I had recited the Ode, Ian sounded the Last Post followed by the customary one-minute silence and Reveille.

On Monday, I had the very great pleasure of blessing the new Macksville Hospital and its Reflection Room. God was present; but it was quite odd having only one person with me as I prayed the prayers.

Today, we feature the prayer space that Lesle set up in her home. As well as showcasing the creativity with which God has blessed us, sharing our photos of our home worship spaces helps us to maintain a sense of connection.

I am looking forward to receiving photos from others of your 'at home prayer space' (as created by you, or perhaps it's a special spot in the garden like Linda's and mine).

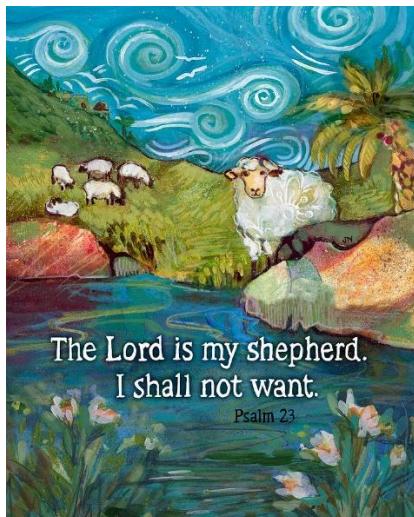
Christ is risen. [Alleluia.]

Rev Clyde



Psalm 23

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd:
 therefore, can I lack nothing.
- ² He will make me lie down in green pastures:
 and lead me beside still waters.
- ³ He will refresh my soul:
 and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.
- ⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil:
 for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.
- ⁵ You spread a table before me
 in the face of those who trouble me:
 you have anointed my head with oil,
 and my cup shall be full.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and loving-kindness
 will follow me all the days of my life:
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.



John 10:1-10

¹ ‘Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger’s voice.’

⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, ‘Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Reflection on John 10:1-10

In response to criticism by some Pharisees for healing a blind man on the Sabbath, Jesus makes two claims about himself: firstly that he is the true shepherd, the Messiah anointed by God to care for God’s people, and secondly, that he is the gate through which salvation is obtained.



The concept of shepherding, or protecting and caring for, God's people was an Old Testament concept that was familiar to the Pharisees. The psalm for today, Psalm 23, refers to God as being a shepherd. As the spiritual leaders of Israel, the

Pharisees were responsible for the flock of God, but in this duty, they were derelict.

Ezekiel 34:2 says, '*Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves!*' They acted out of self-interest. Jesus, on the other hand is interested in the welfare of the sheep, even to the extent of laying his life down for them.

But, sadly not all who hear his voice do make this choice; just as in the parable not all of the sheep in the sheepfold come out of the enclosure to follow the shepherd – only those who belong to him.

And so, Jesus changed the metaphor of himself from being the shepherd to being the gate to the sheepfold in order to make the second claim about himself, i.e. he is the gate to salvation.

Salvation, he says, is obtained not through a religious adherence to ritualistic living, as the Pharisees demanded, but through recognising Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. In other words, salvation is obtained 'through Jesus' and it is in this sense that Jesus claimed to be the gate.

Those who recognise the truth about Jesus and respond to his call receive the blessings indicated in verses 9 & 10 of the passage:

The first blessing is salvation – not only from the threats and dangers which surround the flock, but also from the ‘lostness’ brought about by sin. The second blessing is the security and nurturing that we can have as his sheep – security from knowing Jesus and living in his presence. A third blessing is the new life Jesus brings to us, both joy and fulfilment in this life and the assurance of eternal life with him.

We should ask ourselves, “Have I recognised Jesus as the true shepherd and the way of salvation?” “Have I responded by giving him Lordship over my life and obediently following him wherever he leads?” And as evidence of this, “Am I receiving the blessings of salvation, growth and living life to the full as he would wish?”

Collect

God of all power,
you called from death our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep:
send us as shepherds to rescue the lost,
to heal the injured,
and to feed one another with understanding;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

- John 10:11 -



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Some words of wisdom taken from a little story on Facebook sent to Rev Clyde by his niece, Laura, to encourage those struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions:

“This too will pass!”

“Remember that everything passes. No thing or emotion is permanent. Like day and night, there are moments of joy and moments of sadness. Accept them as part of the duality of nature, because they are the very nature of things.”

“This too will pass!”

Next week's Home Supplement

will be Sunday 10th May 2020 – Fifth Sunday of Easter.
Keep an eye on your email from Thursday.