

sermon study guide

Pastor: Ashwin Ramani

Date: March 21 / 22, 2020

Sermon Title: The Good Shepherd Series Part 1 - His Promise

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. We have all experienced many 'firsts' or 'incidents' in our life. Tell of one of those firsts that changed your life be it for a long or short time. How did it make you feel?
2. What are some positive things that you are experiencing during this COVID -19 crisis?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read *Isaiah 40:10-11* and *Romans 8:38-39*

3. According to these Scriptures, what does God do for us as our Good Shepherd? What does this look like practically in your life during this time?

Read *Psalms 29:4-11* and *John 10:27-30*

4. What do these Scriptures tell us about the voice of God? How do we listen to the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd? How does His voice differ from all other voices?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. How can we find balance in our lives right now as we take care of ourselves and reach out to others?
6. During the pandemic, we are being asked to give up, or refrain from, many things that form the pattern of daily lives. How is this absence opening up other powerful sources of peace, calm and security? What doors may be opening to share this message of peace?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Ashwin taught that our level of panic and anxiety is in direct proportion to whose voice we are listening to.

Meditate on and memorize John 10:27-30. What is the Good Shepherd speaking to you in this time? Journal this and share it with another.

This week's writers: Edi Dygert, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Deb Matiko, Jemimah Ong and Jared Harrison

THE WORD (NIV)

John 10:27-30

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all[a]; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

Isaiah 40:10-11

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Psalms 29:4-11

⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. ⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. ⁷ The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning. ⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh. ⁹ The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever.

¹¹ The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

sermon study summary

The Good Shepherd Series | His Promise

Pastor Ashwin

John 10:27-30

The coronavirus crisis has rocked our world and it appears as if life has come to a standstill. No matter where you look, it is obvious that people are living in a state of instability and uncertainty. Can we ever have security in the midst of the crisis surrounding us? Can we experience peace and calm when there is chaos abounding? The Bible is not an outdated book but the living word of God. When you open its pages, God speaks to us clearly – words of comfort and reassurance – words that give us the right perspective, words we desperately need to hear in a time such as this.

God as Shepherd

Through times and seasons of distress or difficulty, Christians have turned to a particular image of God in the Bible. This image is of God as our Shepherd. In John 10:27-30, Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd. Jesus reveals a God who is good and trustworthy, a sure and unshakable foundation in the midst of the uncertainties surrounding us. In Israel's agricultural society, the image of sheep and shepherds was often used to describe the relationship of God with his people (Isaiah 40:10-11).

Listen to the Shepherd's Voice

While sheep are not intelligent animals, they are good at recognizing and responding to their shepherd's voice (John 10:27) They are safe as long as they hear it but get into trouble when they wander out of range. The same is true of us. Our challenge is to hear God's voice in the midst of all the noise bombarding us. Breaking news and social media are all available at the touch of button, overwhelming us by torrents of information we don't know how to handle.

Let's not begin the day this way. Instead, enter the presence of Jesus, and let Him speak to your heart. Jesus' voice brings hope and perspective! Hear the Psalmist in Psalms 29:4-11. The world is not spinning out of control: God is enthroned, Jesus is King, Jesus is Lord. Time set apart for God is important. This is how we connect to hear his voice and receive his assurance.

He Knows Us and He Calls Us By Name

In the Gospels, notice the many personal encounters Jesus had with people. Jesus knows us. Each person is precious and valued as an individual. We are not just a bunch of Christians. He knows everything about us individually; still, he loves us fully, unconditionally. Your name is written in the palm of his hands (Isaiah 49:16a).

He Gives Us Eternal Life

The sheep know their Shepherd: Their wellbeing is not their ability to take care of themselves but by being in the hands of the Shepherd. Jesus holds onto us: his hand together with the Father's mighty hand (John 10:28-30). Our Shepherd takes care of us, giving us eternal life. Eternal life is not just life forever, but it speaks of the quality of life experienced, which will reach completion when Jesus returns. Now we live in a world filled with fear, a "virus" even more powerful than COVID-19. The cure is not an ability to secure ourselves from danger, but holding on to God's unchanging promise. We face troubles, even death, but it is impossible to perish under the Shepherd's care.