



St Paul's Episcopal Church  
Canton Ohio ♦ USA

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, I Am the Sheepgate  
Engraved by Philips Galle - Flemish, 1565  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art<sup>1</sup>

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (*Good Shepherd Sunday*)

2018 APRIL 22

### The Collect: Year (cycle): B

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

**O** God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**NB.** Our Collect is new to the Prayer Book and is an eponymous creation of Dr. Massey H. *Shepherd*. The image of the shepherd caring for his flock is found throughout the Bible, in religious art, and theological writings. <sup>2 cont'd</sup>

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**The First Lesson:**

**Acts 4:5-12**

Introduction: The Sadducees denied both the resurrection and a future state. "In the Gospels the Pharisees are represented as the great opponents of Christ; in the Acts it is the Sadducees who are the most violent opponents of the apostles. The reason of this seems to be, that in the Gospels Jesus Christ came in direct collision with the Pharisees, by unmasking their hypocrisies and endangering their influence among the people; whereas the apostles, in testifying to the resurrection of Christ, opposed the creed of the Sadducees. Perhaps, also, in attacking the apostles, who taught the resurrection of that Jesus whom the Pharisees had persecuted and crucified, the Sadducees aimed an indirect blow at the favorite dogma of their rival sect" (Gloag, "Commentary on Acts").  
<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/vws/acts/4.htm>

**Acts 4: 1-4** While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, <sup>2</sup>much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup>So they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. <sup>4</sup>But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand.

<http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Acts+4>

**T**he next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup>with Annas<sup>a</sup> the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. <sup>7</sup>When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired,

*'By what power or by what name did you do this?'*

<sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,

*‘Rulers of the people and elders,’<sup>9</sup> if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed,<sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,\* whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.<sup>11</sup> This Jesus is “the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.” [Ps 118:22]*

*<sup>12</sup> There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.’*

<sup>13</sup> Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated<sup>4</sup> and ordinary men, they were amazed and *recognized them as companions of Jesus.* <sup>14</sup>When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. - <http://bible.oremus.org>

## The Word of the Lord *Thanks be to God*

### **The Response:**

### **Psalm 23**

*Dominus regit me* [The Lord rules over me]

Introduction: The Psalm is unrivalled for calm serenity and perfect faith. Under Jehovah’s loving care the Psalmist knows neither want nor fear. His words admit of the most universal application to all needs, temporal and spiritual, in every age. Its tone is strongly personal. It is an individual realization and appropriation of the blessings involved in the covenant-relation of Jehovah to His people. Each sheep can claim the care which is promised to the whole flock.

*The Lord is my shepherd*] How natural a figure in a pastoral country, and for the shepherd-king, if the Psalm is his! Jehovah is often spoken of as the Shepherd of Israel, and Israel as His flock, especially in the Psalms of Asaph. Jacob speaks of “the God who shepherded me” (Genesis 48:15, cp. Genesis 49:24).

The title of shepherd is also applied to rulers; and in particular to David (2 Samuel 5:2; 2 Samuel 7:7); and to the future king of whom David was a type (Micah 5:4; Ezekiel 34:23); and so Christ appropriates it to Himself (John 10:1; cp. Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25). <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/psalms/23.htm>

**T**he LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup>He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup>He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. - *KJV*



## The Epistle:

## 1 John 3:16-24

Introduction: **Love** - This is the key-word of this whole division of the Epistle (1 John 2:19 to 1 John 5:12), in which it occurs 16 times as a substantive (an adjective replacing a noun), 25 as a verb, and 5 times in the verbal adjective 'beloved'. The phrase 'to bestow love' occurs nowhere else in N. T. - [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1\\_john/3.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1_john/3.htm)

**3:1-15** See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup> Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

<sup>5</sup>You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you.

Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

<sup>8</sup>Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup>Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. <sup>10</sup>The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is

right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

<sup>11</sup> For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them.

<http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=1John+3>

3:16 -24

**W**e know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup>How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup>Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup>And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup>whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Commentary on verse 18: To love in word is to have that affection which is genuine as far as it goes, but which is so weak that it never gets further than affectionate words: such love is opposed, not to truth, but to loving **acts**. To love with the tongue is to profess an affection which one does not feel, which is sheer hypocrisy: it is opposed, not to deeds, but to **truth**. It may show itself also in hypocritical acts, done (as Bede points out) not with the wish to do good, but to win praise, or to injure others.

[http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1\\_john/3.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1_john/3.htm)

<sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup>and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>All who obey his commandments abide in him,

and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

The Word of the Lord  
*Thanks be to God*

**The Gospel:**

**John 10:11-18**

Introduction: **Chap. 10. Christ is Love.**

In chapters 5 and 6 two miracles, the healing of the paralytic and the feeding of the five thousand, formed the introduction to two discourses in which Christ is set forth as the *Source and the Support of Life*. In chapters 7 and 8 we have a discourse in which He is set forth as the *Source of Truth and Light*, and this is illustrated (9) by His giving physical and spiritual sight to the man born blind. In chap. 10 we again have a discourse in which Christ is set forth as *Love*, under the figure of the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep, and this is illustrated (11) by the raising of Lazarus, a work of Love which costs Him His life. As already stated, the prevailing idea throughout this section (5–11) is truth and love provoking contradiction and enmity. - <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/john/10.htm>

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

<http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=John+10>

**10:11-18**

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

<sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs

away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

<sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.

I have received this command from my Father.’

The Gospel of the Lord  
*All praise to you, Lord Christ*



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<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary/fourth-sunday-easter>

<sup>1</sup> <http://imagineinmei.blogspot.com/2011/05/good-shepherd-sunday-fourth-sunday-of.html>. See insert.

<sup>2</sup>For this reason the Sunday has become known as “Good Shepherd Sunday,” continuing a practice of adding a more familiar appellation as we have seen recently with St. Thomas, Christ the King, and many others throughout the year.

The vocation of the shepherd was considered during Christ’s time as one of the lowest. Joachim Jeremias<sup>3</sup> writes in his, “Jerusalem in the time of Jesus,” that it was primarily due to the allegations of misappropriation of the owner’s property! Whatever those accusations might have been, we can see again how Christ’s ministry everted the social structure as he welcomed those abhorred constituencies into his fold!

Continuing our readings of the early experiences of the disciples from the Book of Acts, we start with Peter’s declaration to the “rulers, elders, and scribes” that, “...this Jesus is, the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.” Our familiar 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is perfect

for this special day and reminds us that God is always with us and evokes the hope that we, "... shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!" John's words in the Epistle underscore the expression of our faith in a question he proposes; "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses help?" His following exhortation is equally inspiring:

"Little children, let us love, not in word and speech, but in truth and action!"

The words of John's gospel reading are the origins of our "Good Shepherd Sunday" and include Christ's moving declaration that, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep!"

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<http://trinityconcord.org/CollectCommentaries/Easter4B.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> **Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr.** (March 14, 1913 – February 19, 1990) was an American a priest of the Episcopal Church. He was a leading figure in developing the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MasseyH.Shepherd>

**Joachim Jeremias** (20 September 1900 – 6 September 1979) was a German Lutheran theologian, scholar of Near Eastern Studies and university professor for New Testament studies. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim\\_Jeremias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim_Jeremias)

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that Peter and John are described in Acts 4:13 as "uneducated and untrained" (ἀγράμματοί . . . καὶ ἰδιῶται). Darrell Bock claims that this has reference to "religious instruction."<sup>34</sup> Peter and John were laymen whose religious instruction had been outside of official channels, i.e., apart from Pharisaic tradition. Ironically, Peter refers to those who were schooled in these traditions as "ignorant." His words are most telling, as he addresses a crowd in the temple: "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance [κατὰ ἄγνοιαν], just as your rulers did also" (Acts 3:17). Here the very same Peter who later would write 1 Peter 1:14 is addressing, not Diaspora Jews or "lapsed Jews," but Jerusalem Jews who were in the very precincts of the temple, and he says they acted in ignorance, even as the leaders of the nation. This usage is exactly parallel with what he says in 1 Peter 1:14 and should remove any hesitancy about the applicability of this term to the Jewish people in this context.

<sup>34</sup> Darrell L. Bock, Acts, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 195.