“I am the Good Shepherd”

Jn 10:11-18

# Introduction

After the resurrection, everything changed, because one man died a very public humiliating death on the cross, but rose again. Dead men don’t rise from the dead. No-one rises from the dead (this wasn’t a resuscitation – this was resurrection). It was only normal to ask the question – who is he?

What is he, who can do this? Who is this man?

The disciples after the resurrection started to reflect on everything that Jesus had said of himself during his lifetime. And so we, two weeks after Easter are doing the same in our reading today.

We turn to one of the great “I am” sayings in John’s gospel. “I am the Good Shepherd”. There are seven “I am’s”, what marks the “I am the Good Shepherd” out is that all the others are impersonal - “I am the bread of life”, “I am the light of the world”, “I am the resurrection”

Jesus is not only tells us about who he is, He is also giving us a wonderful insight into how he *feels* about us and why he does it. This is remarkable!

Three things.

**1. He knows you**

V. 14 “I know my sheep and my sheep know me”. Shepherds know every one of their sheep.

A preacher who had been a shepherd tells the story of being on a train with another shepherd. A few weeks before the train journey the friend had been to market and had sold his lambs. As they were pulling out of a station, they passed a field with a flock of sheep and the shepherd friend

commented “Look, there are four of my lambs in there!”

What does he know? Just as shepherds know sheep are vulnerable sheep in need of protection. He knows our knows our humanness – that we are very mixed up. He knows us by name and our individual quirks. He sees past the bits we like people to see. He sees the bits we hide, the shameful bits, our failures, our selfish motives, our insecurities and our fears. He sees beyond the image, into our very being.

He says “I know you….”. And of course, my fear is that when someone really knows me, they won’t like what they see and will reject me.

**2. He will die for you.**

This is all the more remarkable given the fact that he knows us so very well! Our response might well be: “Seriously, you would die for me! Even when you know what I am really like!

Yes!

***11*** *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* ***12*** *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.* ***13*** *The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.* ***14*** *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,* ***15*** *just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.*

In this is, a profound Easter message. That little word ‘for’ – in the Greek means “in the place of”.

 He is saying *“I love my sheep so much that when the wolves come, I become like a lamb for them to kill, in the stead of you - I become the sacrificial lamb”.*

He is effectively saying “*I would lose anything rather than see my sheep die. I would rather lose my life, I would lose even my glory, rather than see my sheep perish.”*

Comparing us with sheep, isn’t very complimentary – they are defenceless, stupid and needy. That is precisely the point – that despite our vulnerability, that despite our selfishness and independence yet, he prizes us so much, that he would give up everything and die in our place.

There is no greater affirmation of your worth than this. Jesus looks at your past & seeing everything, even the hidden stuff. He looks at your future – and the mistakes and wrongs you are yet to make, and he looks into your heart, all the way to the bottom.

Jesus is saying “I see you as so infinitely precious, that I would rather give up my life than see you die”.

When someone really knows you, yet accepts you and wants to stick with you, such that they will sacrifice all sorts of things for you, only then do you know that you are ok, that you are likeable and loveable.

# He calls you by name

It’s very easy to assume that he calls you by the name your parents gave you. But again and again, God gives people a different name to the one their parents gave me. Think of Abram becoming Abraham or Simon becoming Peter and numerous others.

Abraham – because he was going to become the father of multitudes.

To each of you, he has a mission – a calling on your life. He has a purpose for you. To start with, it is a calling to be where you are. You are called to the neighbourhood you live in. You are called to your work place. You are called to your school. You are called to your college. To your family.

Where-ever you are – God has called you – to do the work that he has prepared in advance for you to do.

# Conclusion

This is the question – The Good Shepherd is calling you by name. Will you follow him? He knows you – the real you. He would give up anything for you and has done so. He has a purpose for your life.

If you have said yes, before – good time to confirm the yes. If you have never said yes before – maybe ready to say yes. I am going to say a prayer – you may like to echo it in your heart.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you know me better than I know myself and yet consider I am worth sacrificing your life for me. Thank you that you have a purpose for my life and that you are calling me to follow you as my good shepherd. I

Something very rich to ponder on – it speaks of your uniqueness; it speaks of your significance. There could be something quite fun to guess, think, explore what heavenly name you think he has given you.

But the point of new names in scripture is that they describe something about the person and their purpose. They in some way draw you to think about your mission**.** Simon was named Peter because he was going to become a rock.

choose to follow you – I turn from all other paths and trust you to lead me through life.

In Jesus name.

Amen