

Bible reading John 10:1-10

Hymn 481- Singing-The Faith-*The Lord is my shepherd I will not want*

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

10 “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.^[a] They will come in and go out, and find

pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

New International Version (NIV)

Reflection

The gospel text from John reminds me of the video of sheep and shepherd that I saw. I was amazed by the way the sheep responded to the voice of the shepherd and ignored the voices of the strangers. Hence, we hear Jesus giving an illustration of sheep and shepherd. I wonder why Jesus chose sheep not goat, leopard, lion or cattle. I suppose sheep because of its characteristics. I read an article which viewed sheep as sociable animal which does not deal well with isolation. When one sheep moves the rest will follow and that their instinct is so strong that it caused death of 400 sheep in Turkey as the leader sheep tried to cross a deep ravine the whole flock plunged to their death. There is a high level of vulnerability in their oneness but have an amazing memory and recognition skills. Jesus knows our weaknesses and strengths but most of all our vulnerability. We are not like lion or leopard who fight their own corners. Jesus said the sheep recognise their shepherd and would follow him as he leads them. Sheep would not follow a stranger. All this can only happen

when there is a good relationship, which we need to have with our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is giving us an assurance by saying “I assure you, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate is a thief and a robber. For a Shepherd enters through the gate.” Why did Jesus compare us to sheep? That’s quite a strong metaphor that explains the love of Christ who laid his life for us on the cross. As we are still thinking about the events of Easter and the times we are living in are we not comforted to know that Christ is our Shepherd who guides us to green pastures. Is the oneness of Sheep not visible at a time as this as we check on each other? Are we not scared of being lonely in isolation? What a befitting metaphor for Jesus to call us sheep and him our shepherd. Let us be of good cheer and know that we have a friend in Jesus. Hallelujah! 🙏🙏

Prayer

To you heavenly father we put our trust. You have identified our weaknesses and strengths and compared us to sheep. We acknowledge God that we are weak, scared and vulnerable. As a gatekeeper continue to watch over us so that we may not be victims to situations around us. For you have told us that the devil has come to steal, ill and destroy. May our joy and peace be complete in you as we

entrust our lives in your hands. Help us to continue to be one and to continue to hear your voice and recognise your presence in Jesus’ name. AMEN 🙏🙏

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Marriott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!***