

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church
“Staying Connected” 8 – Sunday 10th May 2020

Psalm 23

“The Lord is my Shepherd.....”

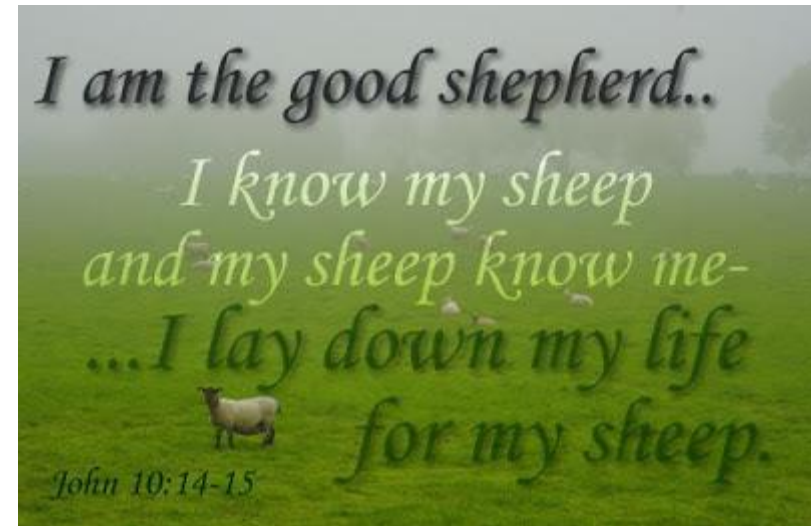
Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way

I hope, you have been able, if you wished, to share in the VE Day 75th anniversary celebrations in some way, despite the limitations.

We are now already at the fourth of our series on the “I am” sayings of Jesus. This week it is, “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11) [see John 10:11-18 for the wider passage]



In the bible, ‘shepherd’ is a metaphor for leadership. Unlike the rogue ‘shepherds’ of the day referred to by the OT prophets, Jesus fulfilled the idea of a good shepherd. A good shepherd who cared about his sheep: every single one.



He cared to the extent of laying down His life for us

1 Peter 2:24 explains:

“‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’”

As the Psalmist affirms “The Lord is my shepherd” we can have confidence (and comfort) in His leading and guiding: even through the dark valleys we need fear no evil... “for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)

We thank You, Lord, for all Your good gifts to us. Help us to appreciate the love, the grace, the beauty; and all the kindnesses we experience day by day. And this weekend especially we remember the peace we have had for many years, and the absence of war. Forgive us for when we take these things for granted. And where things are difficult, give us the patience, the strength and the help we need.

You are the Good Shepherd, lead and guide us we pray

We pray especially for those in poor health, with this virus or other conditions. We pray for good care and treatment, and for those charged with their care. Be close to them, pour out Your compassion, Your love and Your healing, we pray; and we pray for protection for those who serve.

You are the Good Shepherd, lead and guide us we pray

We pray, Lord, for good leadership in our society and in our churches. Show us how we can encourage and play our part. Help us to distinguish what is good and right and true from what is not of You and the Kingdom values You have revealed to us in Your Word, and in Jesus the Living Word.

You are the Good Shepherd, lead and guide us we pray

Thank You for meeting individual needs even in the midst of global concerns. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for keeping us close to You in good times and bad times. We thank You, once again, for Your everlasting love; and we worship You.

May Your name be glorified, now and always.

Amen

A bit of light relief:

A mother shouted up to her son that it was time to go to church. When he insisted that he was not going, she asked for two good reasons. "I don't like the people and they don't like me," he replied, and asked in return for two good reasons from her. "Well, you're forty-nine years old," she replied, "and you're the vicar."

Cited in David Newman, 'Growing up into the children of God'

The answer to last week's quiz question was Pope Benedict XVI!

Worship services on Radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, as ever, please feel free to get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

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Hebrews 13:20-21

"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."



God of justice and self-sacrifice, healing and reconciliation, Prince of peace and victorious risen Saviour.

Today we remember the events of VE day, and all that that day signified:

- the culmination of enormous sacrifices made by individuals, communities and nations,
- the formal conclusion of unspeakable sufferings inflicted by humanity upon humanity.
- gain and loss; victory and defeat; joy and sorrow.

God of righteous outrage and justice, we thank you for the end to the Third Reich and all the hatred and evil that it unleashed upon the world.

God who gave himself in sacrifice, we thank you for the sacrifice of those who gave their lives, their loved ones, their health or their freedom to strive for the cause of justice and to resist great evil.

God of grace and restoration, we thank you for those who gave their energy to peace and reconciliation after the war: who worked with bricks and mortar, finance and healthcare, hearts and minds to bring aid, restore communities, and to rebuild bridges of trust between nations.

God of healing and new beginnings, we confess that we have not wholly lived in the new possibility that peace and victory opened up. We have continued to wage war, we have turned once again to suspicion and antagonism against other peoples and nations. We have permitted the rise of hate-based ideologies across Europe. And we have allowed the seeds of murder and war to continue to live in our own hearts.

God of victory and peace, we look forward to the end of all evil – including our own; the end of all violence – including our own; and to the coming of your glorious kingdom of love and justice. And we commit ourselves once again to working with you towards that beautiful goal.

Amen.

Written by Helen Paynter, a Baptist Minister and college tutor from Bristol.