

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 Sermon: "The Good Shepherd"
 Scripture: John 10:1-21
 Rev. Steve Filyk
 February 15, 2026
 Opener: All creatures of our God and King 433
 Choruses: King of Kings
 After Sermon: The Lord's My Shepherd (Crimmond) #11
 Closer: Jesus paid it all
 AGM Hymn: Now thank we all our God 457

We have all been disappointed
 by those who were meant to help us.
 The pastor who forgot the meeting.
 The counsellor who failed to send the resources.
 The doctor who refused to make the referral.

We have all been disappoint
 But some of us have been deeply hurt.
 Stories abound of church leaders who manipulate and bully,
 And of professionals who cross boundaries,
 Taking advantage of the vulnerable,
 Or engaging in criminal abuse.

It leaves us asking:
 Is there anyone we can truly trust?

Last week we encountered an example
 Of abusive leadership
 In the story of the man born blind.

As you might recall,
 one Sabbath Jesus encounters a man
 Who was blind from birth.
 Jesus packs his eyes with a mixture of dirt and saliva
 And sends him away to wash his face clean.
 The man follows the directions and suddenly he can see.

This is a spectacular healing and miracle.

But when the now-seeing man
 is brought before his religious leaders
 they greet him with skepticism instead of wonder.
 They are more concerned about guarding their laws
 Than celebrating his healing.
 When he refuses to deny what Jesus has done,
 they banish him from the synagogue.
 The shepherds of Israel cast out one of their sheep.

Many years earlier the prophet Ezekiel
 brought a word of the Lord against such shepherds
 Those who tended to themselves while neglecting their flock.

"Woe to you shepherds of Israel
 who only take care of yourselves!...
 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool
 and slaughter the choice animals,
 but you do not take care of the flock.
 You have not strengthened the weak
 or healed the sick or bound up the injured.
 You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost.
 You have ruled them harshly and brutally. [Ezekiel 34:2-4]

In that same accusing passage
 The Lord promises to tend the people himself:
 I myself will search for my sheep and look after them...
 will search for the lost and bring back the strays.
 I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak,
 but the sleek and the strong I will destroy... [Ezekiel 34:11,16]

In today's Bible lesson Jesus
 Jesus illustrates how he is the fulfillment
 Of this judgement and promise.

But to really understand this you need to know
A little about shepherding in the Middle East.

Picture a hillside at dusk.
Several flocks are mixed together.
As night falls, the shepherd calls out —
and somehow, from that mass of wool and dust,
his sheep lift their heads.
They know his voice.
He does not drive them with force.
He leads them with familiarity.[see CBSB 1832]

When Jesus talks about
The sheep listening to the voice of their shepherd
And not listening to strangers,
His listeners know exactly what he is talking about.

But he isn't simply talk about ranching.
He is talking about the man who had been born blind
Who heard his voice and followed his directions.
He is talking about finding the man
Expelled from the synagogue
and leading him into his fold.
Jesus is talking about this man and everyone
Who hears his call.

Jesus is the true shepherd
Whose sheep knows his voice.

Jesus is also the gate,
the one who keeps them safe.
"[D]rawing on some modern Middle Eastern shepherding practises,
[some scholars have suggested that Jesus is alluding to the fact]
that some shepherds sleep across the entrance
to a temporary shelter guarding it themselves." [CBSB 1832]

While the Pharisees saw themselves
as the gatekeepers in their community,
Jesus tells those listening
that "whoever enters through me will be saved"...
That they will "have life, and have it to the full" [John 10:9,10]

Jesus speaks of himself as the true shepherd, and the gate.

He takes this illustration further in declaring himself the 'good' shepherd.
Here he draws a contrast between himself and hired hands.
When danger comes the hirelings will scatter,
But the 'good' shepherd, the 'one who own the sheep' will remain.

Again this is illustrated by what has already happened.
The religious leaders quickly abandoned
the man who had been born blind,
While Jesus sought him and found him.

But more than illustrating this act,
Or describing his own character,
Jesus is also speaking of his destiny.

In talking about laying down his own life for the sheep
Jesus is foreshadowing his own sacrificial death,
Not as a tragic unforeseen event,
but a divinely chosen path.

Jesus says he does this willingly.
Jesus also adds that after he has laid down his life
He will take it up again.

In all of this commentary Jesus is staking a claim
To be that divine shepherd, the Messiah, t
hat Scripture had spoken about.
This is not a new idea Jesus invented.
The prophets had long promised
that God himself would come as Shepherd-King.

David said: "The Lord is my shepherd..."

The prophet Micah spoke of one
 who would come from Bethlehem...
 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
 though you are small among the clans of Judah,
 out of you will come for me
 one who will be ruler over Israel,
 whose origins are from of old,
 from ancient times...
 He will stand and shepherd his flock
 in the strength of the Lord,
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
 And they will live securely, for then his greatness
 will reach to the ends of the earth. [Micah 5:2-4,5]

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the promised Messiah.
 We can see this in his action/character.
 We can see this in the recognition of his followers.
 Jesus will definitively declare this in his death and resurrection.

So what are our takeaways today.

We already know the world is a dark place.
 Some shepherds are incompetent,
 And some are dangerous.
 Scripture wisely warns us
 Not be discerning in our trust.

People sometimes tell me they are reading this or that author
 Or following this or that speaker on YouTube.
 You'd be wise to discern whether these people have something to teach you.
 Do a little digging and examine their character.
 You may discover that they have a propensity to fleece their sheep
 Or serve them up for dinner.

But more than teaching us to be discerning
 About the people we listen to
 Today's Scripture teaches us
 that Jesus is one we can have full confidence in.

Jesus is the Shepherd
 Who stood in our place
 And offered his body to the wolf prowling around the pen.
 He died for our deliverance from sin, death, and the devil.
 He came back to life so that we might
 "have life, and have it to the full."

But to share in that life
 we need to remain close enough to hear him.
 What might happen if you set aside
 just five quiet minutes each day?
 to simply to sit with your Shepherd.

To read a few verses.
 To listen.
 To pray.

The Good Shepherd still calls his sheep by name.
 And he has not stopped looking for those who wander.
 Thanks be to God. Amen.