

A SHORT FORM OF DEVOTION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

He chose David also His servant,

and took him from the sheepfolds:

From following the ewes great with young He brought him

to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart;

and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. [Psalm 78:70-72]

Collect for the Ministers of the Word

O almighty God, who by Thy Son, Jesus Christ, did give to Thy holy Apostles many excellent gifts and commanded them earnestly to feed Thy flock, make, we beseech Thee, all pastors diligently to preach Thy holy Word and the people to obediently to follow the same that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn: "Shepherd of Tender Youth"

by Clement of Alexandria, 200

1. Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ, our triumphant King,
We come Thy name to sing
And here our children bring
To join Thy praise.

2. Thou art our Holy Lord,
O all-subduing Word,
Healer of strife,
Thou didst Thyself abase
That from sin's deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race
And give us life.

3. Thou art the great High Priest;
Thou hast prepared the feast
Of holy love;
And in our mortal pain
None calls on Thee in vain;
Help Thou dost not disdain,
Help from above.

4. Ever be Thou our Guide,
Our Shepherd and our Pride,
Our Staff and Song;
Jesus, Thou Christ of God,
By Thine enduring Word
Lead us where Thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

5. So now, and till we die,
Sound we Thy praises high
And joyful sing;
Infants and the glad throng
Who to Thy Church belong,
Unite to swell the song
To Christ, our King. Amen.

PASTOR AS SHEPHERD



Rev. C. J. Ransdell | Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller

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INTRODUCTION

The Lord loves His people and provides all that we need. He has not even withheld His only Son, but given Him unto death for us, that we might have life and salvation and the forgiveness of our sin and holiness and His name and His kingdom and all that is His. The Lord gives us gift upon gift, promise upon promise, and to see to the distribution of these gifts He sends pastors to His people.

This booklet is a Bible Study for pastors, those given this unique vocation in the Lord's Church and who are called and ordained into the office of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. It is fitting, then, to begin by extolling this preaching office as the gift of God. This is as St Paul does in his epistle to the saints in Ephesus:

⁸Therefore He says:

“*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.*”

⁹(Now this, “*He ascended*”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

[*Ephesians 4:8-12*, NKJV]

It is certainly stunning to find oneself in a list alongside the prophets,

NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Scripture quotations are taken from the *New King James Version*.

Franzmann, Martin, *The Word of the Lord Grows*. (Concordia Publishing House, St Louis, MO. 1961)

Judisch, Douglas, *The Prophetic Books of the Babylonian Exile and the Persian Empire*. (Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Ft. Wayne, IN, 1999)

Smith, William (1813-1893), *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN, 1986)

Young, Edward, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989)

apostles and evangelists, as a gift which the ascended Christ gives to His people. Behind this gift of the pastoral office is the Lord's intention to bring to us salvation; the preaching office that has as its reason the faith that justifies and brings everlasting life (Augsburg Confession V).

The pastoral office, then, is a gift, both to the church and to the men who hold the office. Knowing that one's vocation is a gift of the Lord is itself a gift that gives humility, clarity, freedom and joy. These are the goals of the study in hand. As we search the Scriptures we find that there are many parallels between the vocation of pastor and the vocation of shepherd. For example, they share the same name, ὁ ποιμήν in Greek, and the Lord often speaks in shepherd language when He gives vocational instructions and promises to pastors.

As we take up the topic of 'Pastor as Shepherd' we begin with a short survey of shepherds in the Scripture and the image of the Lord as the Shepherd of the church. These will serve as an introduction to three texts: Ezekiel 34:4; St John 10:11-15 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. A conclusion will offer some suggestions for applying these texts to the topic of Pastor as Shepherd.

This study is offered with the prayer that the Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for ours would continue to grant us comfort and life as we hear His voice in His Word.

SHEPHERDS IN THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible is full of Shepherds. God's command to subdue the earth gave to Adam the vocation of shepherd, a vocation he passed to his son Abel. The patriarchs Abraham, Lot, Isaac and Jacob were shepherds, as was Moses for the middle forty years of His life.

David was called from the sheepfold to shepherd the people Israel. Amos was an “alternate route” prophet, his original profession was shepherding. In the New Testament fishermen are much more frequent than shepherds, but it is to the shepherds watching over their flocks by night that the angelic choirs sing of Jesus' birth.



The *Smith Bible Dictionary* compiles the Scripture witness to outline the shepherd's vocation:

Shepherd. In a nomadic state of society, every man, from the sheikh down to the slave, is more or less a shepherd. The progenitors of the Jews in the patriarchal age were nomads, and their history is rich in scenes of pastoral life. The occupation of tending the flocks was undertaken, not only by the sons of wealthy chiefs, [*Genesis 30:29; 37:12*], but even by their daughters. [*Genesis 29:6,8; Exodus 2:10*]. The Egyptian captivity did much to implant a love of settled abode, and, consequently, we find the tribes which still retained a taste for shepherd life, selecting their own quarters apart from their brethren in the TransJordanic district. [*Numbers 32:1*]. Thenceforward, in Palestine proper, the shepherd held a subordinate position.

The office of the eastern shepherd, as described in the Bible, was attended with much hardship, and even danger. He was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, [*Genesis 31:40*]; his food frequently consisted of the precarious supplies afforded by nature, such as the fruit of the "sycamore" or Egyptian fig, [*Amos 7:14*], the "husks" of the carob tree, [*Luke 15:16*], and perchance, the locusts and wild honey which supported the Baptist, [*Matthew 3:4*]; he had to encounter the attacks of wild beasts, occasionally of the larger species, such as lions, nerves, panthers and bears, [*1 Samuel 17:34; Isaiah 31:4; Jeremiah 5:6; Amos 5:12*]; nor was he free from the risk of robbers or predators hordes. [*Genesis 31:39*].

To meet these various foes, the shepherd's equipment consisted of the following articles: a mantle, made probably of sheep skin with the fleece on, which he turned inside out in cold weather, as implied in the comparison in [*Jeremiah 43:12*]; a scrip or wallet, containing a small amount of food, [*1 Samuel 17:40*]; a sling, which is still the favorite weapon of the Bedouin shepherd, [*1 Samuel 17:40*]; and lastly, a staff which served the double purpose of a weapon against foes, and a crook for the management of the flock. [*1 Samuel 17:40; Psalm 23:4; Zechariah 11:7*].

If the shepherd was at a distance from his home, he was provided with a light tent, [*Song of Solomon 1:8; Jeremiah 35:7*], the removal of which was easily effected. [*Isaiah 38:12*]. In certain localities, moreover, towers were erected for the double purpose of spying an

where he says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Toward those who have been misled we are to show ourselves parentally affectionate, so that they may perceive that we seek not their destruction but their salvation. Over against the devil and his missionaries, the authors of false doctrines and sects, we ought to be like the Apostle, impatient, and rigorously condemnatory, as parents are with the dog that bites their little one, but the weeping child itself they soothe. The right spirit in Paul supplies him with an extraordinary facility in handling the afflicted consciences of the fallen.

The Pope and his bishops, inspired by the desire to lord it over men's souls, crack out thunders and curses upon miserable consciences. They have no care for the saving of men's souls. They are interested only in maintaining their position. [Martin Luther, *Greater Galatians*. 1:6]

There is a tenderness and compassion in the shepherd's care of the sheep, but there is corresponding harshness in the shepherd's "care" for the wolves.

The faithful shepherd does not run when the wolves come around. He stands His ground, knowing that every false teaching that pushes its way into the Lord's flock threatens to turn the Lord's dear lambs from the comfort of the Gospel and the simplicity of Christ.

Seek the Lost. Jesus is the Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to seek and save the one lost and wandering sheep, and then, when the sheep is found, gathers his friends and neighbors together to rejoice [*St Luke 15:1-7*]. Jesus came to seek and save the lost [*St Luke 19:10*]. The Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, continues to cry out in the wilderness and call lost sheep into the Good Shepherd's fold. The pastor is privileged to be a part of this seeking and calling the lost to eternal life.

Conclusion. The Pastor is to shepherd the Lord's flock, but the pastor also and always remains one of the Lord's died-for sheep. Jesus is still our Good Shepherd. We, too, know His voice and hear in it the supreme comfort of the forgiveness of all of our sins. Amen.

PASTOR AS SHEPHERD

There is a prevailing caricature of the pastor in our society: nice but insignificant, (Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*) smiley and accepting, sometimes pandering, perhaps thoughtful, certainly tolerant. These adjectives often describe the expectations placed on us by the world, and perhaps even by the churches we are privileged to serve, but they are not the yoke that we are vested with by Jesus. Jesus sets us to be shepherds to His flock.

Feed My Sheep. The first task of the shepherd is the feeding of the sheep. The food and drink of the Lord's Christians are the Lord's Word. The pastor is to be preaching and teaching the pure Gospel, wholesome food and still waters, speaking the voice of the Good Shepherd. Pastor and teacher, the two are bound together [*Ephesians 4:11*]. The Lord also nourishes His sheep with His own body and blood. These are placed into our hands to be distributed to His flock.

Bind up the Broken. The Lord is, through the preaching of His law and Gospel, mending the broken and falling world, and more, breathing life into death. The preaching office is the means through which the Lord is reconciling the world to Himself [*2 Corinthians 5:17-21*]. By the proper application of law and Gospel the Lord brings health and healing, restoration, reconciliation and true comfort through the forgiveness of all sins.

Beware of Wolves. Jesus has warned His church about false prophets who come in sheep's clothing [*St Matthew 7:15-20*]. Shepherds in particular are to stand on guard and protect the sheep from these wolves. This task calls for courage. (Consider David who lacked the fear of Goliath because of his time fighting lions and bears [*1 Samuel 17:34-37*].) The staff of a shepherd is only pleasant if you are not a wolf's jawbone.

In his commentary on Galatians Luther talks about making the distinction between the false teacher and the one who has been deceived by false teachers.

Paul minds the rule which he himself lays down in a later chapter

enemy at a distance and of protecting the flock; such towers were erected by Uzziah and Jotham, [*2 Chronicles 26:10; 2 Chronicles 27:4*], while their existence, in earlier times, is testified by the name Migdal-edar, [*Genesis 35:21*], Authorized Version, "a tower of Edar", [*Micah 4:8*], Authorized Version, "tower of the flock".

The routine of the shepherd's duties appears to have been as follows: In the morning, he led forth his flock from the fold, [*John 10:4*], which he did by going before them and calling to them, as is still usual in the East; arrived at the pasturage; he watched the flock with the assistance of dogs, [*Job 30:1*]; and should any sheep stray, he had to search for it until he found it, [*Ezekiel 34:12; Luke 15:4*]; he supplied them with water, either at a running stream, or at troughs attached to wells, [*Genesis 29:7; 30:38; Exodus 2:16; Psalm 23:2*]; at evening, he brought them back to the fold, and reckoned them to see that none were missing, by passing them "under the rod," as they entered the door of the enclosure, [*Leviticus 27:32; Ezekiel 20:37*]; checking each sheep, as it passed, by a motion of the hand, [*Jeremiah 33:13*], and, finally, he watched the entrance of the fold throughout the night, acting as porter. [*John 10:3*].

The shepherd's office, thus required, great watchfulness, particularly by night. [*Luke 2:8*], compare [*Nahum 3:18*]. It also required tenderness toward the young and feeble, [*Isaiah 40:11*], particularly in driving them to and from the pasturage. [*Genesis 33:13*]. In large establishments, there are various grades of shepherds, the highest being styled "rulers," [*Genesis 47:6*], or "chief shepherds," [*1 Peter 5:4*], in a royal household, the title of *abbir*, "mighty" was bestowed on the person who held the post. [*1 Samuel 21:7*].

THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD

Of all the shepherds spoken of in the Scriptures the most oft mentioned is the Lord Himself. He is the Shepherd and we are the sheep, as we sing in the *Venite*, "We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." [*Psalm 95:7*, see (and please do see) *Psalm 79:13; 80:1; 100:1-5; Isaiah 40:10-11; Jeremiah 23:3,4; Micah 5:4*].

King David's words are dear to every Christian, "The Lord is My Shepherd." [*Psalm 23:1*] He is ours, and we are His. "My" is the

surprising and gracious pronoun that always proceeds the Lord's speaking of the church.

In times past, even when Saul was king, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of *my* people Israel, and you shall be prince over my people Israel.'" [1 Chronicles 11:2]

My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. *My* sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. *I myself* will be the shepherd of *my* sheep, and *I myself* will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. [Ezekiel 34:6,15]

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [John 10:27]

He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend *my* sheep." [John 21:16]

There is great comfort in this: we are His possession, marked with His name, fed, tended and kept by the Lord Almighty, purchased not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, His innocent suffering and death.

The shepherd is the most important thing for a sheep; there is nothing more tragic than sheep without a shepherd. [Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chronicles 18:16; Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34] "Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; they are in trouble because there is no shepherd." [Zechariah 10:2] Without a shepherd the sheep are scattered [Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 26:31], lost, hungry and thirsty, and in constant danger of ravenous wolves. Such were we: "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." [1 Peter 2:25]

With the Shepherd comes all the things that we, the sheep, need. It is as the Lord's sheep that we receive the Lord's gifts; with Christ our Good Shepherd we have life and salvation and the forgiveness of all our sins.

THE WITNESS OF THE CONFESSIONS

Augsburg Confession V

^{1]} That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, ^{2]} the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear ^{3]} the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. ^{4]} They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration. Summary, 14,15

^{14]} Moreover, since for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reproved, 1 Tim. 3 [2 Tim. 3, 16]; Titus 1, 9,—for faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, namely, feed or nourish the lambs and resist the wolves, so that the sheep may flee from strange voices, John 10, 12, and may separate the precious from the vile, Jer. 15, 19,— ^{15]} Therefore we have thoroughly and clearly declared ourselves to one another, also regarding these matters, as follows: that a distinction should and must by all means be observed between unnecessary and useless wrangling, on the one hand, whereby the Church ought not to be disturbed, since it destroys more than it builds up, and necessary controversy, on the other hand, as, when such a controversy occurs as involves the articles of faith or the chief heads of the Christian doctrine, where for the defense of the truth the false opposite doctrine must be reproved.

Taken from the *Concordia Triglotta*.

1 PETER 5:1-4 | QUESTIONS

- What are St Peter's qualifications to instruct the pastors?
- Whose flock is the church?
- How is a pastor to shepherd the flock?
- What is commanded? What is forbidden?
- What does it mean that the flock is entrusted to us?
- What promise is there for faithful shepherds?

COMMENT

The rite of ordination concludes with this blessing which brings together all three of the texts we have studied: .

BLESSING

The presiding minister dismisses and blesses the newly ordained.

P: Go, therefore, and be a shepherd of the Good Shepherd's flock. Preach the Word of God, administer the holy Sacraments, offer prayer for all the faithful, instruct, watch over, and guide the flock over which the Holy Spirit has placed you. Do it not for earthly gain but with great joy, for you have been called not to lordship but to serve His flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

P: The almighty and most merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you. **AMEN.**

While the office of pastor is girded with commands, it is also gilded with promises. Just as Peter directs the eyes of the troubled sheep to the "glory to be revealed" [see 1:4,5; 4:13], so he directs the eyes of pastors to that glory, "the crown of glory that does not fade away" [5:4].

But these promises are not all hidden in the future, the Lord provides all the authority and sufficiency required for the pastoral office in the witness of Jesus' sufferings [5:1]. In this life of suffering we find in the suffering of Jesus the comfort of the forgiveness of all of our sins.

EZEKIEL 34:4 | INTRODUCTION

Author: Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi [Ezekiel 1:2,3]

Date: Ezekiel's prophecy is full of precise dates. The prophet and his family were taken to Babylon in the second deportation (597 BC). His call into the prophetic office occurred three years later in June of 593 BC [1:1,2]. Jerusalem finally fell in 586 BC. The last date mentioned in the book is 571, so we can assume the book came into its final form *circa* 570 BC.

Purpose: The purpose of Ezekiel's preaching and writing was to summon the people to repentance by teaching the justice of God in the destruction of Jerusalem, and then to faith in the sure promises of a future kingdom of glory. Luther: "These two things Ezekiel teaches us when he encourages the people to expect the return from Babylon, but prophesies more about the new Israel and the kingdom of Christ." [Luther, *New Preface of Ezekiel (1545). Works of Martin Luther IV. (Philadelphia Ed.)* (Muhlenburg Press, Philadelphia, PA. 1932, p. 418)]

Context: Ezekiel hears the news of Jerusalem's destruction in chapter 33. "The city has been captured." [33:22] Ezekiel then answers the question, "Why? Why is Jerusalem fallen?" by condemning the sin (both moral and theological) of the people. [33:23-29] The Lord then tells Ezekiel that the people will come to him and hear his preaching, but that they will not do what he says. [33:30-33]

The word of the Lord then comes to Ezekiel against the false shepherds of the people. The entirety of chapter 34 is taken up with condemnation of the false shepherds and the promise that the Lord Himself will shepherd the people and take care of them, even in the wilderness of Babylon.

אֶת־הַנְּחֹלֹתִי לֹא תִזְקֶתֶם
וְאֶת־הַחֹלִי לֹא־רַפֵּאתֶם
וְלִנְשֻׁבֶרֶת לֹא חֲבַשְׁתֶּם
וְאֶת־הַנִּדְחֹת לֹא הִשְׁבַּתֶּם
וְאֶת־הָאֲבֵדֹת לֹא בִקְשַׁתֶּם
וּבְחִזְקָה רִדִיתֶם אֹתָם וּבְכָרָךְ:

The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed
those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor
brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was
lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.
(NKJV)

Word	Parse	Root	Translation
Πρεσβυτέρους	adj normal acc masc pl	Πρεσβύτερος	Elders
παρακαλῶ	vb ind pres act 1st sing	παρακαλέω	Urge, exhort
συνπρεσβύτερος	noun nom masc sing com	συνπρεσβύτερος ¹	Fellow elder
μάρτυς	noun nom masc sing com	μάρτυς	Witness
παθημάτων	noun gen neut pl com	πάθημα ²	Suffering
μελλούσης	verb part pres act gen fem sing	μέλλω ³	To be about to “going to be”
ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι	verb inf pres pass	ἀποκαλύπτω	To be revealed
κοινωνός	noun nom masc sing com	κοινωνός	Partner, sharer “partaker”
ποιμαίνατε	verb imp aor act 2 nd pl	Ποιμαίνω	Shepherd
ποίμνιον	noun acc neut sing com	ποίμνιον	Flock
ἐπισκοποῦντες	verb part pres act nom masc pl	ἐπισκοπέω ⁴	“exercising oversight”
ἀναγκαστῶς	Adverb	ἀναγκαστῶς	Force “under compulsion”
ἐκουσίως	Adverb	ἐκουσίως	Willingly
αἰσχροκερδῶς	Adverb	αἰσχροκερδῶς	Shameful gain
προθύμως	adverb	προθύμως	Eagerly
κατακυριεύοντες	verb part pres act nom masc pl	κατακυριεύω	Domineering
κλήρων	noun gen masc pl com	κλήρος ⁵	Lot “those in your charge”
τύποι	noun nom masc pl com	τύπος	Examples
γινόμενοι	verb part pr mid nom masc pl	γίνομαι	Being
φανερωθέντος	verb part aor pass gen masc sing	φανερῶ	To make visible “appears”
ἀρχιποίμενος	noun gen masc sing com	ἀρχιποίμην	Chief shepherd
κομίεισθε	verb ind fut mid 2 nd pl	κομίζω	You will receive
ἀμαράντινον	adj norm acc masc sing no degree	ἀμαράντινος	Unfading
στέφανον	noun acc masc sing com	στέφανος	Crown

¹The location of this word in the sentence places emphasis on it. It is the subject, the one doing the exhorting.

²This phrase in English is translated “sufferings of Christ,” but the word “Χριστοῦ” is placed first. Again this is for the purpose of emphasis.

³The participle here is used for a future emphasis.

⁴This is often used in reference to the care of the church that is given by elders.

⁵When used in this context, “κλήρων” is a reference to the people of the church.

¹ Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐ ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ
 συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι
 δόξης κοινωνός· ² ποιῶναι τε τὸ Ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον
 τοῦ Θεοῦ [ἐπισκοποῦντες] μὴ ἀναγκαστοῦς ἀλλὰ
 ἐκουσίως κατὰ Θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ
 προθύμως, ³ μηδ' ὥς κατακυπιδεύοντες τῶν κλήπων
 ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου· ⁴ καὶ
 φνεπωθέτος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομειῖσθε τὸν
 ἀμαράτινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

¹ The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow
 elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a
 partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock
 of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by
 compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³
 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being
 examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears,
 you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Word	Parse	Root	Translation
הַנְּחָלוֹת	verb niphil participle feminine plural absolute	חלה ¹	To be made sick “the weak”
חֲזַקְתֶּם	verb piel perfect 2nd person masculine plural	חזק	To make strong “strengthened”
הַחֹלָה	verb qal participle feminine singular absolute	חלה	To be sick “the sick”
רָפְאוּם	verb piel perfect 2nd person masculine plural	רפו	To heal “healed”
וְלִנְשָׁבֶרֶת	verb niphil participle feminine singular absolute	שבר	To be broken “the injured”
חֲבַשְׁתֶּם	verb qal perfect 2nd person masculine plural	חבש	To bind “bound up”
הַנִּדְחָת	verb niphil participle feminine singular absolute	נרח ²	To be banished “strayed”
הַשְׁבִּינֵם	verb hiphil perfect 2nd person masculine plural	שוב	To bring back “brought back”
הָאֲבֵדָה	verb qal participle feminine singular absolute	אבד ³	To perish “the lost”
בִּקְשֵׁתֶם	verb piel perfect 2nd person masculine plural	בקש	To seek “sought”
וּבְחִזְקָה	noun common feminine singular absolute	חֲזָקָה	Force “force”
רִדִּיתֶם	verb qal perfect 2nd person masculine plural	רדה	To rule “ruled”
אֵתָם	particle direct object marker suffix 3rd person masculine pl	את	Them “them”
וּבְפָרֶךְ	noun common masculine singular absolute	פָּרֶךְ	Harshness, severity “harshness”

¹ This word is often translated as either “weak” or “sick.” So what we see here is parallelism that results in emphasis.

² However, the image most used with נרח is that of a flock of sheep. Sometimes the agent which drives the sheep away is not specified (Deut 22:1); sometimes it is lions (Jer 50:17; men, Isa 13:14; cf. Job 6:13). The agent can also be inept shepherds who are guilty not of negligence (so that the sheep wander away) but of doing the opposite of what they are supposed to do (i.e. they scatter and/or lead the sheep astray, Ezek 34:4; cf. Prov 7:21). So, God warns his people against false prophets who would drive them away from him (Deut 13:5 [H 6]). Such shepherds are to be stoned, indeed, if a whole city goes after such a one that city is to be destroyed (Deut 13:13 [H 14]). If the whole nation is so led astray it will be driven off the land (Deut 30:17) by God. Jeroboam (2Kings 17:21), Ahab (2Chr 21:11), and eventually all of Israel's leaders (Ezek 34:4) are condemned as poor shepherds. Note the irony of Jer 27:10, 15! Israel is warned that they are not simply sheep, but are responsible before God neither to be driven astray by false religion (Deut 4:19) or false religious leaders (TWOT electronic ed. BibleWorks 6 “נרח”).

³ This word carries with it the sense of death. Whether it is death of body or eternal death is up for debate. With this in mind then “lost” (which is the preferred translation) is a good one.

EZEKIEL 34:4 | QUESTIONS

- What does a good shepherd do?
- Who are the shepherds of Israel?
- For what does the Lord fault the bad shepherds?
- Who are the weak sheep? How are they strengthened?
- Who are the sick? How are they healed?
- Who are the broken? How are they bound up?
- Who are those that are driven away? How are they brought back?
- Who are the lost? How are they found?
- What is the opposite of force and cruelty?
- What does this text teach us about being shepherd of the Lord's flock?

COMMENT

The bad shepherds were getting fat off the sheep, tending to themselves and their own needs while the sheep go hungry. Would that the Lord would keep us from being these shepherds; that He would give us His Holy Spirit that we would care for the Lord's sheep.

The *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* ordination rite includes this prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, You gave Your own life to be a holy and perfect sacrifice for us and for our salvation. Grant _____ a heart zealous for Your people and boldness to guide, comfort, admonish, and serve Your congregation with gentleness and wisdom. Fill him, Your undershepherd, with Your love that in Your name he will seek the straying and bear up the weak. Give him the heart never to grow weary in the service of Your flock. Amen.

Above all else, the promise in this text is ours, that the Lord will be our shepherd, that He will seek us out and bind us up and give us all that we need. May these promises be our life and salvation.

1 PETER 5:1-4 | INTRODUCTION

Author: St Peter the Apostle

Date: Peter indicates that he is writing first epistle from Rome [*1 Peter 5:13*] where he arrives (late in his apostolic tour) and is martyred. The persecution of the church seems strong but not organized, suggesting a pre-Nero date of 64 AD.

Purpose: Before His death Jesus warned Peter that the devil had asked for him, but that he would be sustained through Jesus' prayers and, promises Jesus, Peter would return to "strengthen [the] brethren" [*St Luke 22:32*]. Then, after the resurrection, Jesus' absolution of Peter is followed by the commission "Feed My lambs... Tend My sheep... Feed My sheep" [*St John 21:15-18*]. Peter's epistle is that strengthening, feeding and tending.

Peter's catholic epistle is sometimes considered "the epistle of hope." Into the midst of trouble and persecution [*3:16,17;4:4,12,14,16*] Peter does indeed bring the Lord's word of comfort and hope, the promise of the glory to be revealed.

Context: Peter has already marked the church as the Lord's sheep, returned to Him through repentance, that is, contrition and faith. "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" [*1 Peter 2:25*]

The Lord's flock is harassed and troubled, and so the chief Shepherd sends undershepherds to the sheep. Pastors, then, are sent to the troubled sheep, not to add to their affliction but to care for them.

ST JOHN 10:11-15 | QUESTIONS

- What are the marks of the Good Shepherd?
- How does He differ from the hired hand?
- Whose voice are the sheep to hear?
- What is the Good Shepherd's relationship to the Father? To the sheep?
- What does it mean to know and be known?
- What is the connection between being known by the Father and laying down His life?
- How does our being known by the Good Shepherd effect our vocation as pastor?

COMMENT

Jesus is *the* Good Shepherd, the only one, *sola Christus*. It is His death alone that brings life, *sola gratia*. His Word is the only voice that the sheep are to hear, *sola Scriptura*, and them following: *sola fide*. While it is true that the pastoral office, like every vocation, calls forth a daily death ("Take up your cross..."), there is no life for the Lord's people in our death; the undershepherd does not lay down his life *for* the sheep, that privilege belongs to the unique office of Jesus. Nor does the undershepherd speak his own voice to the sheep; the sheep are to hear and recognize in the preachers voice the voice of Jesus, their Shepherd.

"Ministers act in the place of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, according to Luke 10:16: 'He that heareth you heareth Me.' Impious teachers are to be deserted, because they do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists." [*Apology VII & VIII. Triglotta*, p. 243,245]

The image of the dying Shepherd ought to be pushed to the absurdity of the Gospel ("What kind of shepherd would die for the sheep?") so that all of the trite models of the church built on rational, business, psychological or worldly ideas collapse under the colossal weight of Jesus' blood.

ST JOHN 10:11-15 | INTRODUCTION

Author: St John the Beloved, the Apostle and Evangelist

Date: A great variety of dates are proposed for the composition of John's Gospel. Ancient tradition dates the writing between 70-95 AD.

Purpose: Eusebius speaks of John's hesitancy to write a Gospel, but finally conceded to the demands for such a record of Jesus' early ministry. "¹¹ They say, therefore, that the apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Saviour during that period; that is, of those which were done before the imprisonment of the Baptist..."¹² John accordingly, in his Gospel, records the deeds of Christ which were performed before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the events which happened after that time." [Eusebius, *Church History*. III.XXIV.11,12]

John holds the office of apostle, one who has witnessed the events of Jesus' life and death, and then is sent to speak these things [see *John 20:21*]. The things that he sees and hears [1 *John 1:1*] he speaks and writes in order that we might believe and trust in Jesus. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" [*John 20:30,31*].

Context: Jesus is continuing to teach who He is (the seven "I AM" statements of Jesus), and what He has come to do. John 10 is sandwiched between the two great miracles of the Gospel, the healing of the man born blind [*John 9*] and the raising of Lazarus [*John 11*]. All of these events provoke escalating violence from the Jews who could not receive the Son sent from the Father [see *10:31, 39; 11:45ff.*] and who continue to show themselves as hirelings and even wolves.

But Jesus' sheep need not fear the anger of Jesus' enemies, for His death is not the loss of the Shepherd, but the sheep's salvation.

¹¹ Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός. ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν
 ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων. ¹² ὁ
 μισθωτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὢν ποιμὴν, οὗ ἔστιν τὰ πρόβατα
 καὶ φεύγει - καὶ ὁ λύκος ἀρπάζει αὐτὰ καὶ
 σκορπίζει - ¹³ ὅτι μισθωτὸς ἔστιν καὶ οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ
 περὶ τῶν προβάτων. ¹⁴ Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός
 καὶ γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκουσί με τὰ ἐμὰ, ¹⁵
 καθὼς γινώσκει με ὁ πατὴρ ἀγὰρ γινώσκω τὸν
 πατέρα, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μου τίθημι ὑπὲρ τῶν
 προβάτων.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Word	Parse	Root	Translation
ψυχὴν	noun accusative feminine singular common	ψυχή	life
τίθησιν	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	τίθημι	Sets down “lays down”
προβάτων	noun genitive neuter plural common	πρόβατον	Sheep
μισθωτὸς	adjective normal nominative masculine singular no degree	μισθωτός	He who is a hired hand
ἴδια	adjective normal nominative neuter plural no degree	ἴδιος	One’s own “own”
θεωρεῖ	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	θεωρέω	Sees
λύκον	noun accusative masculine singular common	λύκος	Wolf
ἐρχόμενον	verb participle present middle accusative masculine singular	ἔρχομαι	Coming
ἀφίησιν	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	ἀφίημι	Leaves
φεύγει	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	φεύγω	Flees
ἀρπάζει	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	ἀρπάζω	Seizes “snatches”
σκορπίζει	verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	σκορπίζω	Scatters
μέλει	Verb indicative present active 3rd person singular	μέλει	Cares
γινώσκω	verb indicative present active 1st person singular	γινώσκω	Know
ἐμὰ	adjective possessive accusative neuter plural no degree	ἐμός	My own