

**Lectionary Bible Study  
Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Fourth Week of Easter**

**Readings and Psalm**

Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23  
1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10



Join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom Study each  
Wednesday, 10am:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86887930554?pwd=M0graUNzNFR5azYwUnNkdFZ5RmQ5UT09>

Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554

Password: 654321

Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

*Sadao Watanabe, a 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese printmaker, is famous for his biblical prints rendered in the mingei (folk art) tradition of Japan. In his work “Good Shepherd,” the focus is meant to be more on the Shepherd’s action, and less on his personality.*

**John 10:1-10**

**[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.**

**<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”**

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is celebrated in many churches as “Good Shepherd Sunday”. The tenth chapter of the Gospel of John elaborates on the image of Jesus as a good shepherd. In John 10:11 (one verse after the appointed verses for this Sunday), Jesus makes the claim, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

1. *What is the difference between a good and bad shepherd?*
2. *What do we know about shepherd’s in Jesus day?*
3. *How is Jesus a good shepherd (hint... think about the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm)?*

John 10 begins with a description of a thief or bandit who might approach the sheep through a back way. These “false shepherds” have their own interests in mind, but a good shepherd would enter the main gate for all to see.

Even more important, the sheep would recognize and trust the voice of shepherd who had provided for their needs. Calling the sheep “by name” shows a bond, a relationship, even intimacy. The shepherd and sheep are not strangers but are connected in a special way.

4. *How does one learn the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd?*
5. *How do we allow ourselves to be fooled but not fooled by others?*
6. *What does it mean to be known by name by Jesus Christ?*

Those listening to Jesus do not understand his words and the metaphor (verse 6). Scholars believe that the Jewish community was the primary audience being addressed by John’s Jesus, a mixture of both disciples who were seeking to follow Jesus and also those who were part of the religious establishment (or those who unquestionably supported them). Jesus using the metaphor of a shepherd had strong ties to the Torah and would have been heard as likening himself to Abraham, Moses, and David. Confusion over how Jesus was like the great shepherds in Torah history could easily have been challenging.

At this point, Jesus seems to be changing the metaphor to explain further when he says “I am the gate for the sheep” (verse 7). When we think of a shepherd and of a gate, we often think of two different things. But in Jesus’ day, the shepherd would literally lie down in the opening of the enclosure to protect the sheep.

7. *What does this metaphor of Jesus as the gate, or as a gatekeeper, mean to you?*

The section ends with the explanation from Jesus as to his purpose, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (verse 10). In this context, “abundant life” does not mean “lots of toys.” Rather it refers to the quality of life that comes through attachment to Jesus, knowing his voice, and trusting enough to follow him.

8. *How did the psalmist David describe “abundant life” in Psalm 23?*
9. *What does it mean for you to have abundant life from Jesus?*