

**MESSAGE OUTLINE**  
**THIS IS THE LIFE: THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

**John 10:11-18 (NIV)**

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup>The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—  
<sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

**1. Jesus is steadfast.**

The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.

**2. Jesus knows the Church and is knowable by the Church.**

I know my sheep and my sheep know me

**3. Jesus unifies the Church.**

...there shall be one flock and one shepherd

**4. Jesus gives his life for the Church.**

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WEEK OF APRIL 25, 2021 THIS IS THE LIFE: THE GOOD SHEPHERD

### CONNECT

- What is an image for God that you find comforting? Where does your spirit need comfort these days?

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Prayer of Examine (16th century practice of Ignatius of Loyola)

This practice helps us become aware of how God has been present in the past day. Then by looking forward to the day ahead, we are prepared to notice the places God where God is present. This ancient practice offers a series of questions to guide you. It is short enough to do in the morning, mid-day, or in the evening before falling asleep. Journal your responses.

- **Pray:** Lord God, open our eyes to see you and help us see where you were present in our day.
- **Listen:** Read Psalm 23 aloud. The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
- **Praise:** Where did you sense God's presence in the past 24 hours? Where did you experience the comfort, guidance, or protection of the Lord today? Where did you live out your dependence on Jesus today?
- **Consider:** When did you miss an opportunity to follow Jesus as your good shepherd today? When did you fail to offer Jesus' inclusive love, grace, and generosity to others today with your thoughts, actions, or words? In humility, confess whatever you wish you had handled differently.
- **Guidance:** As you look toward tomorrow, what are you looking forward to and what concerns you? What is one specific way you desire God to lead you in the midst of your activities tomorrow?
- **Affirmation:** Reread Psalm 23 aloud. What word or phrase expresses what you need to believe or receive from God today? Express your gratitude for Jesus' presence in your life with a short prayer.
- **Group Sharing:** What comfort do you receive from Psalm 23? What insight does the Prayer of Examine give you?

### SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

- Read John 10:11-18 aloud. What speaks to you from this week's Scripture or message?
- What does this passage say about Jesus' relationship with God the Father? What does this passage say about Jesus' relationship with his followers?
- What are the "wolves" that prey on the church? How does your faith help you face the risk and dangers of living in this world?
- What is the responsibility of the shepherd? What's the responsibility of the sheep?
- What do you learn from this passage about good shepherds and hired hands? How have you experienced Jesus as your Good Shepherd, protecting you physically, emotionally, or relationally?
- What are the signs/evidences in your life that: a) you know Christ and b) Christ knows you? How would you describe your current relationship with Jesus?
- Who are the "other sheep" in our world today, those whom we are commissioned by Jesus to welcome into the fold? What makes this hard for us?
- How do Jesus' sacrifice, authority, and obedience all work together, rather than in conflict, to align his mission with God's? How do these work together in our lives, as we align our mission with God's?
- How does listening to the Shepherd's voice bring us together? Why is it important that there be but one Shepherd?
- How does this passage deepen or enlarge your understanding or interest in who Jesus is? How can you be attentive to the voice of the Shepherd this week?

### PRAYER and BENECTION

**Share your requests:** Are there personal challenges the group can pray for this week?

**Pray for one another:** Thank God for what you have learned. Ask God for wisdom to apply it this week.

### Benediction (I John 3:18-20)

Dear ones, let us love not just in words but with action and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence, whenever our hearts condemn us, for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything! Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!