

18th September, 2022

The paper-version Service



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out below.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

The Lord's my shepherd; I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

He leadeth me, he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake;
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark
vale, yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me, and thy rod

and staff me comfort still;
for thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be;
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.

Read 1 John 2:3-11 and John 14:15-21 – We live in love

Sermon by Rev. Jonathan Rooke

1. Obey

Obedience to God is less a feeling and more an act of deliberate will. John is quite clear in this letter that knowing God requires obeying his commands. What happens is that when we know God we begin to obey his commands. As we mature in our Christian faith, we try to increasingly form our life in obedience to God.

John says Christians obey Jesus. He says that whoever strives to do this is reaching perfection. Well, there isn't one of us who would remotely claim to be perfect. What he is saying perhaps is we are bringing ourselves towards completion in God – being more the people God made us to be and wants us to be - as we obey.

We need to learn to obey. How do we obey? We pray, we read our Bibles, we sit in silence listening for God, we talk to others, we read books about God, we notice his work in others and nature and around us, and we are inspired and moved and through all these things we come to know who God is. When we know who God is, then we want to obey.

John says that Christians are obedient. Perhaps another way of looking at the idea of obedience coming to know enough about God to accept that God knows best and I freely choose to walk the path that God has set out before me.

Jesus Obeyed God. Jesus sets us the example of giving up his free will in order to be someone and do something that is significant to the work of God. In the Garden of Gethsemane he chooses to obediently take up his cross He says: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39)

Knowing God and obedience seem to be closely linked.

John says that we will know if we are Christians and if we are growing in our Christian life, if we are obedient to a God who we know, in a close way – some of us call this having a personal relationship with Jesus. Because we talk to God, and listen to him, we obey him and because we obey him we come to know him more.

2. Imitate

When we obey God, know God and abide in him we come to imitate him. Obedient Christians walk just as Jesus walked. When we obey we walk just as Jesus walked, says John. Jesus' big commandment was to love one another. "As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (13:34 NIV).

John says this is not a new commandment- it has always been in the Jewish law, Jesus would have taught it himself as a Rabbi, but John says Jesus brings to it a deeper, richer meaning. Disciples are to love in the same measure as Christ has loved- with selfless, self-sacrifice.

We may feel that we are required to love others in our lives. And it may be that loving them feels like a burden that requires our time, energy and resources. Loving others today may require giving things up and laying things down that we hold dear – some hopes for the future, some projects we had held dear. Loving others may require more than we were really want to give. Jesus commands us, to the best of our ability, to imitate him and to love others. He says "Turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23) We can choose to do our best to know and obey Jesus and love others.

3.Love

What is a Christian? John says a Christian is someone who knows God. God is part of their life. A Christian obeys God's commands, walks with Jesus on both the smooth and the rocky roads, on the mountaintops and in the valleys. A Christian loves others when it is a wonderful experience and also when love requires sterner stuff and a Christian is someone who walks in the light – in a loving and right relationship with God.

John challenges us to do our best each day to obey God, Imitate Jesus and love others and to grow in our knowledge of God who loves us.

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 21st Sept., 19th Oct. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28th Sept., 26th Oct. in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise for Harvest, Sunday, 2nd October, 3pm – 4.30pm
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.