

## Message for Easter 4A - 03 May 2020

### Sheep and Stones - John 10.1-10.

*"The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing."*

As far as intelligence is concerned, sheep do not have a good reputation. Flighty, unpredictable and unteachable are characteristics usually applied to them but a recent scientific study shows that they are not quite as stupid as has been assumed. This study found that they have extraordinary memories, especially for those who look after them. Even after two years absence, they remembered the farmer who had fed and cared for them.

If you have ever seen a lamb hand reared on a bottle, you find no fear in them, no malice, they come to be fed and cared for when they see the one who is concerned about their welfare because they trust them. Maybe this is the characteristic Jesus was drawing on when he used the imagery of the shepherd. In the previous chapters of John, we see the religious authorities acting in a way that was solely concerned with their own good. In contrast, we see Jesus acting for the good of the poor, disadvantaged, ill and disabled. We live in a society where plenty of people tell us what to do. For example, we are being told what we should or shouldn't do to avoid contracting Corona virus. One of the challenges of life is to learn to discern what is good for us and to embrace it.

Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd as 'Goodness' itself. His goodness and righteousness is the one true cornerstone by which we judge all matters in life aright.

So when we follow the paths of life, built on our own various experiences both good and bad, we become attuned to the voice of our God who calls us to fullness of life.

As we taste that the Lord is good, we come to him, the precious living Cornerstone chosen by God, and like living stones ourselves, we are built up into a spiritual house of praise and worship with him.

This Cornerstone **is** precious to us who align our lives to him.

To sheep who are lost or in danger and who know their master's voice, we can follow him without fear through the dark valleys and in spite of wolves and wildness all around, because we know that this call is safe.

He is our guide, our rock, our precious cornerstone, and the 'one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'

As sheep trusting a Good Shepherd, we hear His voice over the crowd, calling our name, the voice of our Master and our friend.

The take home thought this week is that you, my brothers and sisters, are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, so that we may declare to everyone around us, the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The God of the universe pays attention to us.

He knows each and every one of us better than we know ourselves. Christ calls us by our true name to be authentically who we are in him. Let us not ignore His voice or resist it but allow it to resound within us. Sometimes the phrase, "people are sheep," is deemed an insult. This Sunday it is the greatest compliment we could ever get.

Rev'd. Mandy Wheatley

0401 670 132

[mmjcwheatley@bigpond.com](mailto:mmjcwheatley@bigpond.com)