

**Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish**  
**Order of Sunday Worship- Fourth Sunday of Easter – April 21st, 2024**  
**At Sauk Valley Lutheran Church**

**Prelude**

Emily Larson, Musician

**Welcome/Announcements**

**Invocation:**

P: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

**Opening Prayer:**

P: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your holy Word. We pray that You would open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ's sake. **C: Amen.**

**Hymn:**

*"Crown Him with Many Crowns"*

Praise #243

**Confession of Sin:**

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

**C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Kyrie:**

*C: O God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us!*

*O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us!*

*O God the Holy Spirit, true Comforter, have mercy upon us!*

**Absolution:**

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake God forgives all our sins. To those who believe in his name he gives power to become the children of God, and has promised them his Holy Spirit. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this Lord unto us all.

**C: Amen.**

**Gloria:**

P: Glory be to God in the highest.

*C: And on earth peace, good will toward men.*

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And also with you.*

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: Let us pray together.

**C: O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**Psalm 23**

**First Reading- Acts 4:5-12**

**Second Reading- 1 John 3:16-24**

**Gospel Reading- John 10:11-18**

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: God be praised for his glad tidings!**

**Apostles Creed**

**C: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

**Children's Message – "Jesus Loves Me"**

**Offering and Offertory: *We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift might be. All that we have is Thine alone, a trust O Lord from Thee.***

**Hymn:**

*"Jesus Paid it All"*

Praise #219

**Sermon**

**Pastor Lexy Carson**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Some of you may have saw the image I shared on our churches Facebook page of my home congregation's main stained glass window. It's a huge window with the imagery of Christ standing there, rod in hand gathered around his flock of sheep. Every Sunday of my childhood I walked by that window. I've even got a picture of me as a baby on my baptismal sunday held up by that window.

Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd is a beloved image in the church, one known and clung to very closely. There's a reason one of the most common funeral passages is Psalm 23, because the imagery of Christ as a Shepherd gives a lot of comfort and assurance and rightfully so it is a beautiful passage filled with a lot of peace.

When something becomes a beloved image, we might not think that hard about what the image is saying about Christ and about us because it has become a habit, a custom, it's an image just always there so today we are going to really dive into what Christ is saying about himself and about you, specifically who you are in relation to him.

Christ says "I am the Good Shepherd" and this opening statement is a huge. Jesus is making an exclusive statement: I alone am the Good Shepherd, not you, not your spouse, not your children, not your favorite celebrity, athlete, politician, radio voice. Christ says I am the Good Shepherd, he doesn't I am a good shepherd, he is THE one and only good shepherd.

So what does this one and only Good Shepherd do? What makes him good? Well Christ doesn't keep us in too much suspense, he answers right away in his second sentence. "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Now as I said earlier, we know this image so well of

Christ taking care of his sheep, being their shepherd that at first glance we don't grasp the radicalness of this.

By our worldly standards, "a good shepherd" certainly tries to take care of their flock the best they can but to lay their life down for the herd? That's a bit excessive. I think any "good shepherd" in our world would be doing exactly what the hired hand is up to - in the face of threats and dangers, thieves and wolves - we're hightailing it out of there as fast we can. No sheep is worth the threat of losing our own lives.

Is a sheep worth laying your life down for? Our society would say no. To lose one or two or three sheep, not a big deal, we can get more. The life of the shepherd is worth far more than the sheep.

But that's the radicalness of Christ, the Good Shepherd, he sees worth, value in every single one of his sheep. And he's not going to let anything or anyone get in between him and his flock.

This includes the threat of thieves and wolves who are snatching and scattering the flock. So what are the troubles, the threats, the "wolves" that you are facing? Well I bet you have all kinds of ideas of things whirling around in your head of what's wrong in our world today, issues, conflicts, troubles, there's no shortage of "wolves" that each of you could name. The real threat and danger surrounding us, the most terrifying wolves around us though are sin, death and the devil. And the devil is the sneakiest of all the wolves, he's so good and raising fear and turning us to look at something else as the real problem and not him at all.

Most imagery of the Good Shepherd, leave out this section of the story. You don't see many Good Shepherd paintings that have a wolf lingering in the background or even a good fight scene between Jesus and the wolves. But the wolves are exactly what Christ is defending the flock of sheep from, it is Christ's laying down of his life, being devoured by the wolves that makes him the Good Shepherd.

And he lays his life down, for you, for the sheep, for the flock. You are his sheep. Again, because this image is so well known we usually miss sight of the radicalness of ourselves being called sheep too. To be called a sheep is pretty offensive. It means you're passive, you go with the majority, you're meek and to our world that's not always the most favored attribute. Sheep are not regarded as the brightest livestock by any means, they don't learn quickly and often end up in unfortunate situations. Well that's who Christ is saying you are, a weak, defenseless, timid, sheep who needs saving.

In this passage Christ is saying there are dangers all around, things seeking to destroy you and me that we aren't capable of defending ourselves against. And this is truth about us. And this was incredibly offensive to the people Jesus was talking to, in fact if our Gospel would have included one more verse, you would have heard "The Jews who heard these words were divided, many of them said Jesus is demon possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?" This was the reaction to Jesus's great proclamation of claiming his chosen sheep, that he would be the Good Shepherd of. Not quite the reaction we would imagine.

And yet, Christ laid down his life over and he keeps laying down his life and picking it back up again for you.

And I think sometimes we take it for granted or lose sight of the work that Jesus is doing as our Good Shepherd. We don't realize how tiring Christ's job is tracking us down all the time, fighting off the devil, sin and death. I think we don't even realize what the Good Shepherd is doing for us half the time. As I was mulling over this section of my sermon, I kept thinking about a few weeks ago when Jesse went to go make sure the cats were in the garage for the night, our two cats which he is not a fan of, he thinks they are dumb and worthless. So he went out and started yelling for them and he turned around and looked in the garage and he saw our two cats were hunting something, probably thinking could this human please stop shouting as well and he watched for a couple minutes and they caught this huge mouse. He came in raving about what he just witnessed and how proud he was of our cats.

And I think Jesus is a lot like this story. I'm sure our cats have dozens of mice in their lives but Jesse had never witnessed it, he didn't see the radicalness and significance in what they were up to. And with Jesus, we have these amazing accounts, his words and his proclamations and he's doing so much work behind the scenes in your own life that you have no idea he's even doing, you cannot even fathom the wolves, the work of the devil, the sins that he is battling against for you. For you his chosen sheep.

He laid his life down for you, and he keeps laying life down for you. So whatever wolves are threatening you right now, they are no match for the Good Shepherd than you have. Jesus Christ has laid his life down for you, in his name all of your sins are forgiven, all wolves conquered and defeated.

The peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn:**

*"Nothing But the Blood"*

Praise #269

**Blessing for the Quilt Distribution**

-Gracious God, we give thanks for the variety of gifts that compose these quilts: donations of fabric, thread and sewing machines, the faithful people who cut the squares, design the patterns, sew the tops, make backs and fillers, tie and stitch the bindings.

-We give thanks for the fellowship of all who work together to make the Quilts, the laughter, the shared stories, the joy of crafting something with one's hands and heart for another and the time to reflect and wonder about the recipient.

-We send these Quilts as a sign of God's love and blessing for each person who receives one, trusting that their Quilt will be a source of comfort and hope in the midst of disaster and fear, a symbol of Christ's love to those who suffer, a reminder that each recipient is a beloved child of God.

-We pray that these Quilts will serve a useful purpose in the life of the recipient; that they will bring warmth in the cold, shelter from the sun and heat, a wall for a home, or a carrier for a few precious belongings.

-Bless all who give and all who receive, as we are sewn together in the unity of your Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Prayer of the Church:** Each prayer will end: Lord, in your mercy. *C: Hear our prayer.*

**Holy Communion**

P: The Lord be with you.

***C: And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts to the Lord.

***C: We lift up our hearts unto the Lord.***

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***C: It is meet and right so to do.*** P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and all places give thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. For he is the very Paschal lamb, who was offered for us, and has taken away the sin of the world, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again, has restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company in heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:

***C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Invitation/Distribution

Thanksgiving-

P: The Lord be with you. ***C: And also with you.***

P: Let us give thanks and pray: We thank you Lord God almighty that you have refreshed us with these gifts; and we ask you, in your mercy, to strengthen us through these same gifts in faith toward you and in fervent love for one another; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

***C: Amen.***

### **Benediction**

P: Now may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us his peace.

***C: Amen, Amen, Amen.***

### **Doxology**

***C: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

### **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**Dismissal:** P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God! Postlude**