

Sunday 21st April, 2024

"JESUS, the GOOD SHEPHERD."

• In JOHN'S Gospel, chapter 10 & verses 11-18, JESUS describes himself as "The Good Shepherd".

He says that a Good Shepherd, will give up his life for his sheep because he owns them & really cares for them. A hired shepherd doesn't have the same personal investment in his sheep & when danger threatens (like a man-eating wolf), self preservation kicks in & he runs for his life & lets the sheep fend for themselves. pics - Middle Eastern shepherd / Aussie shepherd

We Christians are Jesus's sheep & with JESUS as our shepherd, leader & carer, we are in the very best of hands to live our lives under the Care & Protection of the very best Shepherd. Follow a bad leader / at your peril.

• In verse 16 we are reminded that Jesus wants everyone/everywhere, to hear the voice of the Shepherd, so that they too, can become part of one great human family of sheep & his followers - / with one loving/caring shepherd, leading the way in safety/security

Q - HOW WILL THESE SHEEP BE BROUGHT INTO THE FOLD??

A - 2,224 years of missionary work, with more to do

Q - IF WE CANNOT PHYSICALLY GO, HOW ELSE MAY WE HELP?

A - Support those who do. Funds, prayer.
Neil & Sil in Benim.

• PSALM 23 - ¹⁵ The most beloved and well known, of all David's 150 Psalms. They are POETRY - SONGS - PRAYERS. They contain Praise, Thankfulness, Faith, Hope, Sorrow for Sin Committed, God's everlasting care & help to all creation.

- As the youngest of 8 children, DAVID was chosen - firstly to be the family's Shepherd - caring for the sheep & finally, as King of Israel & the fitting forerunner to Jesus - the great Shepherd of Humans.

JESUS called himself the GOOD SHEPHERD who cares for his sheep & he trusts that we, too, will look after one another's physical, spiritual & emotional needs, just as he did & does, every day.

• ACTS 4:5-12 - Tells us of the most challenging of all JESUS'S expectations of those who choose to follow The Good Shepherd - that of SPEAKING UP in defence of our beliefs. It's all very easy to come along here every Sunday & worship with like minded folk, who believe & live, as we do. BUT

Q - WHAT ABOUT OUT THERE? In the world of hostility & non belief?

A - Sometimes, such proclamations of belief & adherence can lead to horrible consequences & interrogation - like Peter & John being brought before the Sanhedrin - the highest Court in Jerusalem, to answer to Annas,

Caiaphas - chief Priests of Israel, for their preaching on the true meaning of Jesus's life & healing, followed by his Crucifixion & Resurrection.

Q - HOW WOULD WE GO THEN?

A - Ask for the Holy Spirit to give you the words & means.

• ^{In Acts 4:19} Later both Peter & John were heard to say to their accusers: - "Do you think God wants us to obey you or Him? We can't keep quiet about what we've seen & heard!"

Well may we aspire to having such COURAGE! Ask - for God's help & you'll get it! TOUGH LOVE

The true test of Faith, is love for one another.

• JOHN 3:16-26 emphasises that we will only feel comfortable in the presence of God if we have the courage to come closer to him. That closeness is the privilege of all those who truly love God and show love to all fellow human beings. EVEN, THE UNLOVELY! ESPECIALLY ^{the unlovely}

Q - HOW CAN WE SHOW LOVE to the UNLOVELY

A - Ask for the help of God's Holy Spirit, to show us ways.

• One can only feel, after the recent atrocities which were committed at Westfield Bondi Junction, Yesterday week, and again at the Assyrian Christian church in Wakeley ^{Last Monday} attacking the Bishop that so many people feel unloved, uncared for, unimportant & disengaged from mainstream society, that a few of them are driven to such extreme means of expressing their frustration & become criminals, as the result.

④

Q- What part can we Christians play, in addressing this?

A- ^{Making sure} Having somewhere to live!

• - So we can plainly see that it's not enough for us to simply follow Jesus and his teachings ourselves. That's only the start!

- With that privilege comes the extra responsibility of proclaiming the Good News to everyone, AND

- Showing love by our care & consideration for ALL, especially those who won't attract the care/attention of anyone else.

Q- HOW CAN WE DO IT?

A- As the old chorus goes,

"Ask the Saviour to help you

Comfort, strengthen & teach you

He is willing to aid you.

HE WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH"