
The sermon text for today is based on the text from
John Chapter 10, verses 1 to 10

Who is alive today? I've mentioned that a few times over the past month or so. We are alive of course. If you find yourself awake today or in the middle of the night and you are breathing you are alive. Do you know why you are alive and how you are called to live?

This Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday. What does it mean to live following our Good Shepherd Jesus wherever He leads us?

Sheep are vulnerable. If they are alone they are anxious needing the support of the other sheep but especially they need the voice of the shepherd. They need the shepherd to guide them to the best pasture, to protect them against lions and bears and to find the lost ones, the ones who have gone astray and to carry them back to the sheep pen.

Even in Australia our farmers provide food for the sheep and secure fencing too. But the imagine Jesus uses fits best with the way shepherds cared for the sheep in those days, which continues in some countries to this day. Yet without the shepherd the sheep remain vulnerable.

Do you ever feel that way in life? Vulnerable? Do you feel that when you have to stand up for yourself or say no to someone who is pushing you into something? Yet is it good to be vulnerable? Why do we see vulnerability as a bad thing when it comes to Jesus knowing

us? Why do we fear when we are alone? For as we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd are we not comforted? Do we fear that things won't be ok rather than hearing the comforting voice of our Good Shepherd Jesus and knowing all things are possible for Him for our good?

Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Notice in Jesus we have it all. All that we need for this life and the next. All we need now and forever. And notice why Jesus says He came? That you, one of the sheep may have life. We all, the sheep of the Good Shepherd Jesus who hear His voice and follow Him, not following the imposter shepherds are given life in His name. We have life Jesus says for He is the life. Eternal life He gives us in His name. Forgiveness of sin, life and salvation He offers simply received by believing.

King David writes beautifully what we have in our Lord the Shepherd, the good shepherd.

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.

How much comfort again to vulnerable sheep. When we are lost in sin, Jesus rescues us, when we hunger for truth and righteousness we are fed and filled, when we feel we are empty and have nothing we are reminded that in our Lord our cup overflows.

This is not about money and possessions but about our life that is filled to overflowing with God's love and presence. If we have possessions a plenty it is from our hearts that overflow with God's love that we give freely and generously. If we have limited possessions we can give freely of our time or our prayers from the overflowing of God's love in our hearts. Whether we have much or little by faith our cup overflows so we can never say we have nothing to give someone, we always have more than enough. We no longer have to fear evil, for our Lord lives in us. We are provided for, you know those times when you pray and you seem to get exactly what you needed without realising you needed it? In the presence of those who mock and laugh at you, there is a feast prepared and you are the

honoured guest, you are anointed, chosen to do God's work no matter how grand or how humble it is and in His name you will dwell in His house forever.

Jesus came so that you might have life. Hear the word life, the life that Jesus gives with meaning and purpose. You are made to be a blessing to each other sharing all God has given you in word and action. Jesus says to you now and always, I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

You have eternal life now so live as one who will live forever in the name of Jesus. Share His love with each other. Pray for each other, love each and serve each other and give of yourself generously. How do you live your life? Follow the Good Shepherd Jesus follow Him as you spend time with Him in His word of eternal life. Hear His voice and go where He leads you. Trust in Him and see the full life He gives you, freeing you from sin, guilt and shame and giving you hope and a future that you live out each and every day. Be in the full life you have been given, won on the cross at Calvary, be in the way, the truth and the life, Jesus now and forever.

Amen.