

SERMON – THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EASTER (MOTHERS DAY) – 8 MAY 2011  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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**John 10:11 ( KJV )** *Jesus said I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

Jesus said I am the good shepherd.

The Lamb of God, the Lamb that was Slain is now the Good Shepherd, our Good Shepherd.

What makes a difference between an ordinary shepherd and a Good Shepherd, or better still the Good Shepherd? Jesus gives us the answer. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

That then brings up the question of how many of us here this morning would really be willing to lay down our lives for a bunch of dumb animals. Not too many, I would imagine.

But Jesus did. But Jesus did.... For us.

Saint Peter wrote, **1 Peter 2:25 ( KJV )** *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

And Jesus commands us in **John 15:12-13 ( KJV )** *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Now let's put this together. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep, then Jesus says, commands us to love each other as He has loved us and that loves requires us to be willing to lay down our lives for each other.

That's a pretty tall order. Jesus the Good Shepherd laid down his life for each one of us and then he has the audacity to command us to be willing to do the same for each other?

Yup. You heard it right the first time. The man is not kidding. God is not kidding. To be truly Christian each one of us here has to be willing to die for each other.

That is called commitment. That is called discipleship. To be truly a Christian calls for more than just showing up on Sunday mornings for an hour or so. To be truly a Christian costs. It costs us the most important thing in our lives, our selves.

Jesus calls us, each one of us to be Good Shepherds, not just hirelings. Jesus calls us to be Good Shepherds in caring for our sheep, which is everyone.

Saint Luke quotes John the Baptist as saying in **Luke 3:9-11 ( KJV )** *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.*

We Christians are called to share, we are not called to accumulate. We Christians are called to give, not to greedily grasp onto our possessions. We Christians are called to live as though there is nothing that is ours. We Christians are called to care.

Jesus said in **Matthew 25:35-40 ( KJV )** *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say*

*unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

We are all called to give, to give until it hurts, to give even if it hurts, to even give our lives if that is necessary.

Again, let me say it costs to be a Christian. It costs to be a disciple, to truly follow Jesus.

We have the choice, each one of us, to be a disciple, to be a Good Shepherd, or to be a casual member of the Church.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned us against casual grace, a grace without commitment, a grace without Jesus Christ.

Think about it. It's your choice. Jesus doesn't hold a gun to your head and make you look after your fellow Christians, your fellow man, those that are less fortunate.

But He does say, **Matthew 25:41-43 (KJV)** *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.*

Amen.