

“The Good Shepherd”
Psalm 78:70–72; Jeremiah 23:1–4; John 10
Rev. Phil Reddick
May 28, 2017 • Evening Sermon

In this study I have two purposes. One I want to encourage you and two I want to point you to Jesus. We are here in remembrance of Him and then I'll let the Holy Spirit do the rest of the work. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You that we can gather in Your Name. We acknowledge Your Lordship. We thank You for Your sustaining grace. We are grateful to remember Your sacrifice for us even as we remember others who have given their life and the demonstration of how You lay down Your life for us. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Psalm 23 says [1] *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.* [2] *He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.* [3] *He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

[4] *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.* [5] *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.* [6] *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

These words are very familiar to you. At probably almost every funeral you have been to, you have heard those words or you have seen them printed on the flier you get when you go to that funeral. The author of that Psalm is David. In this study we want to talk about a good shepherd, a bad shepherd and the Good Shepherd, Great Shepherd and Chief Shepherd. We will start by looking at Psalm 78 as we look at a good shepherd first.

Psalm 78:70–72 says [70] *He also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; [71] From tending the ewes with nursing young He brought him to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. [72] So David shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart; And guided them with his skillful hands* (AMP).

What do we see from this passage? First of all we see that God chose David. When Jesse, David's father, brought all of his sons for one to be anointed but he didn't think about David. He was an afterthought yet God chose him. He was ruddy and handsome in appearance. He was a shepherd and God elevated him. God had David to shepherd His people Israel. God elevated him from his humble position to his highest position he could have and that was to be king over Israel. He blessed him. He made his name in the lineage of His Son and David's name would carry on from generation to generation. When they think of Jesus they will think of David, the Son of David. So there is this wonderful promise in this passage about David being chosen, elevated and being brought into the limelight.

How did David shepherd? There is a picture here in Psalm 78:72 which says [72] *So David shepherded them according to the **integrity of his heart**; And guided them with his **skillful hands**.* What does integrity of heart mean? I think it means he truly wanted to please God, serve God, obey God for he truly wanted to do what God wanted him to do. He constantly had this in mind and we see this is some of the verses about his life and his integrity of heart.

I Kings 9:4 says [4] *And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules.* I Kings 15:5 says [5] *because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.* Uriah is a big exception but God called David a man after His own heart before and after that heinous sin and all the sins that went with it.

I Kings 3:6 says [6] *And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.* Then Solomon asks God for wisdom because of what his father, David had done. Remember Solomon was born from Bathsheba. There was complete forgiveness in the lineage of Christ.

Acts 13:22, 36 says [22] *And when He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king: of him He testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART [conforming to My will and purposes], who will do all My will.’ [36] For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was buried among his fathers and experienced decay [in the grave] (AMP).*

Ezekiel 34:12, 23–24 says [12] *As a shepherd cares for his sheep on the day that he is among his scattered flock, so I will care for My sheep; and I will rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. [23] “Then I will appoint over them one shepherd and he will feed them, [a ruler like] My servant David; he will feed them and be their shepherd. [24] And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David will be a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.*

From these verses we get some of what David was like and his integrity of heart. How can we relate to what this means? I’m going to offer a word that may help us understand better this integrity of heart or this uprightness of heart. It is the word vulnerability. Be vulnerable before God and be vulnerable before men.

We see much of David and his dreams in the Psalms. What was one of his dreams? He wanted to build a temple for God and God said ‘no.’ He didn’t fulfill that dream of David’s but He gave him something better than his dream and that was his heritage, his legacy. In the Psalms we see David share his hurts and how grateful he is for what God has done for him. We see David admitting his sins sometimes right after he is confronted. We see all these vulnerable qualities of David that God included in His Word so that we can identify with how David felt. David was constantly in touch with God and entreated God to go to battle and how to go to battle. He entreated God about Saul when he was hunted and David wouldn’t raise his hand against God’s anointed. David constantly sought the Lord.

If you heard Harry’s sermon last week you probably told someone about that sermon. Why was that sermon so amazing? Was it because Harry shared the Word? No, he always shares the Word. I think it was because we saw our pastor vulnerable in his hard times. He mentioned how he was dealing with the hard providence of God. We can identify with that. We have all had hard times understanding God’s will. So all of us were touched at how Harry was vulnerable to us.

I also think of our other head pastor Frank Barker where on more than one occasion Frank shared the story about this 24 hour prayer chain we used to conduct here at the church always before the mission’s conference. Frank and Barbara would always take the worst hours

of 2am, 3am or 4am. Once your time praying is done you are supposed to call the next person on the list to wake them up to tell them it's time to pray. On this occasion Frank went to the directory to get the person he was supposed to call and found them, called and said 'It's 3am in the morning, time to pray.' As soon as he said that he realized he had called the wrong person. Frank immediately hung up but later went to him and said 'that was me who called you and I wasn't supposed to call you, it should have been someone else.' He also thought 'I wonder what that person was thinking – what did God have in store for me to call me at 3am to say I need to get up and pray???' Why do we identify with that? It was because Frank was vulnerable with us. We have all been in those situations where we have made a mistake, been vulnerable and shared that with others.

If you have lived past the age of 5 then you have been wounded or have wounded others. As we think about being vulnerable we have to receive forgiveness and we need to ask forgiveness because we've all been wounded and we've all wounded others. One time I took my oldest daughter to the JH Ranch for a father/daughter retreat that my wife told me I should do. It didn't sound all that great to me but it was one of our most wonderful times together. Some of the men that had been on the father/son retreats had prepped me and said 'they may ask Jenny to share with you how you wounded her so you need to be ready for that.' I'm thinking when we have this alone time what is she going to say to me. There was some time to do that but they turned the tables on us and said 'ask your father to share times that he has been wounded.' I wasn't ready for that.

Some of you know this story but it happened when I left Virginia Tech and later transferred to Georgia and my father thought I had made a big mistake. My father was kind of living his dream through me in terms of football for we both played football but he broke his arm and 13 years of age and never got to play. Then his son came along and I played ok but when I left Virginia Tech he didn't think that was a wise decision. My dad didn't know all that was going on at Virginia Tech and that the coach was breaking NCAA rules, my teammates were not happy etc. but for four months there was a very noticeable distance between my dad and me. We hardly spoke for during that time. Later he came back and said 'I think you made the right decision.' But that is what came to my mind when I was sharing with my daughter Jenny where I had been wounded.

So as we think about shepherding people I think if we want to be a good shepherd with integrity of heart and uprightness of heart we need to be authentic, vulnerable and truthful. How many leaders think they need to be at the top of everything when it's been my experience that the greatest leaders are willing to admit their failures, ask forgiveness and willing to bring people along with them. That is part of what integrity of heart is.

Then there is the idea of having skillful hands. David had many things going for him. He was handsome. He was a writer, a musician, a warrior, a great leader and he was also spontaneous. He was impetuous and certainly had some lustful thoughts. He was very gregarious. He brought people along with him. People adored him. He had a lot of outcasts with him, 300 or so when Saul cast him out. When Absalom went after him David had faithful friends. He had people who would even risk their lives to go get water for him.

David also made some big mistakes. He was king and he said he could do whatever he wanted to do. He said 'I can find out how many people I have' and God disciplined him for that. God sent Nathan to talk to him after his grievous sin with Bathsheba. David at times wasn't a great father in many respects but he used the skills that God had given him to shepherd His people.

All of us have gifts. We shepherd in different ways. Some are very handy with their hands and can help people repair things or make things. That is not me. Some are very good at arriving on a scene very quickly when people are needed. We all have different skills, gifts and abilities but we can all leave a message, make a phone call or text. We can all let people know that we care in some way and God will use that. A friend of mine said once ‘you can fake caring but you can’t fake showing up.’ So just show up. All of us in the ministry get this question at times, ‘what do you say to somebody?’ I would say at times ‘I don’t know.’ Every situation is different and you are praying to God that He would give you the words to say or even not to say but just to be there. We have to have enough sense to know when to just be quiet.

After Elisabeth Elliot’s husband died and Ann’s father was murdered, I was able to meet with her and she talked about her husband Jim. She told me that people gave her all these Bible verses but she wasn’t ready to hear them. She went on to say ‘a little later God used them in my life but what I learned was acceptance brings peace.’ David was a good shepherd for he cared for people and I could go on and on about his relationship with Jonathan. David even brought in the only relative left of Jonathan’s to eat at his table till he died. David was an amazing shepherd.

Then there is a bad shepherd. Jeremiah 23:1–4 says [1] “*Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!*” declares the LORD. [2] *Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. [3] Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. [4] I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.*

So there are these bad shepherds who just didn’t do what they were supposed to do. In fact, they drove people away. They didn’t share the truth. All throughout Jeremiah he is telling them to tell the truth. God is going to discipline Judah for they are going to go into captivity. These priests and prophets kept saying that Jeremiah didn’t know what he was talking about. They would say things like ‘we’re God’s people and we’re going to fine. Don’t listen to Jeremiah.’ Three chapters later they are trying to put Jeremiah to death. A bad shepherd does not tell the truth.

Perhaps you have heard this before that when someone dies a person will tell the family member ‘this person died because God needed them up there.’ Does an all sufficient, almighty God need me up in heaven? No He doesn’t. He just chose for my life to over. What we think are comforting words sometimes are not for we are trying to cover up God being God. Sometimes there is just no explanation.

I remember John McArthur saying from this pulpit as he was talking about the Word of God, ‘Can we try to defend the Word of God? It can defend itself. It is sharper than any two edged sword.’ Yes we want to have tools to let people know but it is the Word of God and it will penetrate, endure and do what it needs to do. So as good shepherds we just need to care for people and show people that we care. People will know if we care.

I recently attended the fellows TED talks and one of the guys was talking about a guy in his 40s who had problems in his life with drugs, been arrested, gone to prison and was working as a waiter. It wasn’t that that wasn’t a good occupation but generally you don’t see someone in their 40s waiting tables. It wasn’t a high established restaurant but he had been there a long time. The man asked him ‘why are you still here?’ He said ‘My boss has taken an interest in me, he

cares for me and I feel secure here.’ So he is making a life here, a living here because this boss showed a little bit of grace in this guy’s life.

If you go a little further into Jeremiah 23 it goes into a little more of what the good shepherd is for it says in Jeremiah 23:5–6, [5] *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. [6] In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’* This brings us to Jesus.

In John 10 Jesus declares ‘I am the Good Shepherd.’ He actually declares it more than once. He declares it early in the chapter but we’re going to look later in the chapter where it is the fourth of the ‘I AM’ statements that Jesus makes about Himself. John 10:11–16 says [11] *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12] He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. [13] He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. [14] I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

What do we say about Jesus as the Good Shepherd? David was a good shepherd. Jesus is The Good Shepherd. Jesus is referred to the Great Shepherd in Hebrews 13:20, 21 which says [20] *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, **the great shepherd** of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* Jesus is referred to as the Chief Shepherd in I Peter 5:4 which says [4] *And when **the chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.* Jesus is the epitome of everything we need and that is what David talked about in Psalm 23.

Three times He says in John 10 ‘I will lay down my life for the sheep.’ This weekend we are celebrating Memorial Day where people have laid down their life for us. Jesus says ‘I lay down My life for the sheep and I do it voluntarily.’ God initiated it, Jesus fulfilled and the Holy Spirit keeps bringing it to fruition in our lives. Think of what we said about David and his integrity of heart. Did Jesus have integrity of heart? Isaiah 53 says there was no guile found in His heart. The Bible says He was the High Priest tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. He told the people ‘he who can find sin point it out.’ He said ‘if you don’t believe the words I say believe the words themselves.’ He was constantly saying ‘who accuses Me of sin’ and the children responded to Jesus. He learned obedience by the things He suffered. He said ‘the lame walk and the blind see and the dead are raised.’ There was no unrighteousness in Him. In Jeremiah it says that He was the Righteous One, the Son of Righteousness.

How about skillful hands? How did Jesus work with different people? He dealt with Martha different than he dealt with Mary. He reached out to a Samaritan woman when that was frowned upon. He elevated women. He loved Nicodemus just as much as He loved Zacchaeus. He ate dinner with tax collectors and sinners. He accepted people that washed His feet with their tears and poured ointment on His head. He dealt with a woman caught in adultery and said ‘he who is without sin let him cast the first stone.’ Jesus was skillful for He taught has One with authority but He had compassion.

Did Jesus care for people? At Lazarus' tomb He wept because of the sadness of Mary and Martha, because of the sadness of death, because sin had entered the world. He reached out His hands to lepers. He dealt kindly and justly with the woman caught in adultery. He prayed for Peter and all the Disciples that denied Him and left Him. He constantly cared for people. He promises that not one of His promises will not be fulfilled and that we are secure. Later on in John 10, John 10:27, 28 Jesus says [27] *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

The bad shepherd scatters. There is dismay, fear and all this uncertainty. With the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, the Great Shepherd there is no uncertainty at all. There is hope. Are we following that Shepherd? I would say because you are reading this that you desire to follow that Shepherd. Are we listening to hear God's will? Are we trying to find out what God wants us to do? If we are listening God will speak and then we'll have to obey. This is the Shepherd that is constantly for our good, constantly making us like Himself.

Isaiah 53:4, 5, 7, 9–11 says [4] *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*

[7] *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. [9] And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

[10] *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. [11] Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*

Jesus was willing to be rejected by the Father on the cross so that we would be accepted by the Father because of His atonement and that's where we come to His Table to remember the Good Shepherd and what He has done for us. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we are humbled and grateful for Your faithfulness and love to us and for us. We are grateful for Your grace and mercy but also for Your righteousness, holiness and justice. Lord, we cry out to You that You would continue to use us to draw people to Yourself and that Your Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven, Amen.

Power Point

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. A Good Shepherd | Psalms 78:70–72 |
| II. A Bad Shepherd | Jeremiah 23:1–4 |
| III. The Good, Great and Chief Shepherd | John 10:11–16; Hebrews 13:20, 21; I Peter 5:4 |