

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (Proper 19C)

Jesus Christ Is the Great Shepherd of His Sheep



Background: What is the difference between a good shepherd and a bad shepherd? Ezekiel describes a bad shepherd as one who cares more about himself than the flock under his care. A good shepherd makes the flock his priority. He looks after them, rescues them, finds the lost ones and restores them to the flock. So it is with our spiritual lives. Pastors fulfil the role of good shepherds at the peril of being held accountable to God if they do not fulfil the “Good Shepherd role. More importantly, Christ himself is the ultimate Good Shepherd! He knows us, through the Holy Spirit, He looks after us, and lives in us, making it possible to live the sanctified life. Should we stray to far, He will discipline us, which depicted in the picture of the Good Shepherd shows him carrying a lamb, most likely because he broke its leg after he strayed from the fold. But in the end it is not only pastors that are accountable for looking after the sheep. It is a responsibility we all share in supporting the work of the Lord.

Good Shepherd Bernhard Plockhorst (1887)

The Lessons: Ezekiel 34:11–24, 1 Timothy 1:(5–11) 12–17, & Luke 15:1–10

“The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). As He had mercy on Paul, in order to “display his perfect patience” (1 Tim. 1:16), so also does He seek out His sheep “from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Ezek. 34:12). To deliver His flock, He “will seek the lost, ... bring back the strayed, ... bind up the injured, and ... strengthen the weak” (Ezek. 34:16), and “they shall no longer be a prey” (Ezek. 34:22). He sets over them one great Good Shepherd, the Son of David, who “shall feed them and be their shepherd” (Ezek. 34:23). For Christ Jesus is the one man who, “having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them,” would “leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it” (Luke 15:4). When He finds the lost one and brings it home rejoicing, “the angels of God” and all the company of heaven rejoice with Him, with great joy (Luke 15:7, 10).