**John 10:22-30 May 8, 2022**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for this morning comes from our Gospel lesson, John chapter 10 here re-reading these words. “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Jesus the Lamb of sacrifice and Jesus the Good Shepherd. Two very different illustrations of all that he does for us the sheep, but both involve his death. The Lamb that was brought into the temple was perfect, blameless, spotless, and killed for the sins of the people. The Good Shepherd is good on account of his love for the sheep, love that would push him to protect them so much that he would lay down his life for them. Jesus is the Lamb, He is the Shepherd, He is the Door for the Sheep. Here in our Gospel lesson from John chapter 10 on this particular Good Shepherd Sunday they come to question if He is the Christ, and his answer is a very straightforward one. “The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.” There is no shepherd without a flock, and a shepherd wasn’t like a rancher that we would see today, someone who kept sheep in one place. A shepherd had to bring the flock from place to place, getting them food and protecting them. A shepherd’s job while the sheep were out was a constant one because sheep are quick to stray and get into trouble. There is a video online where a young boy in a foreign country is pulling a sheep out from a long and narrow ditch that the sheep had fallen in. The sheep is yelling and kicking and the boy pulls it out and sets it free. The sheep excitedly jumps and runs enjoying his freedom, until about 3 seconds later when he jumps right back into the same ditch. Sheep are constantly getting into trouble and the Good Shepherd knows this. He knows the sheep and the sheep know his voice.

The same can be said for Mother’s as we remember them on this Mother’s Day. If you have the opportunity today, call your Mother. Talk to her. And if you are able and given the opportunity you can take her out to dinner, invite her over and cook her a meal, or give her something nice like flowers or some other gift, but one of the greatest gifts you could possibly give your mother, is right here in this Gospel lesson. It’s seen in two different ways. First, share the Good News of Jesus Christ with your mother. Bring her the bulletin, go trinityonekama.org and click on “online services” or go to our facebook page and show her how to watch the service online, bring her to church next Sunday, connect her to The Good Shepherd Jesus Christ who is her Savior just as He is yours. Secondly, if you want to thank your mother for all that she’s done for you, take a moment and tell her what she’s done for you. Hear again Jesus’s words. “The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me.” How do you know that your mother loves you? Or that she is truly the one who brought you into this world? Take a moment and thank her for all of the things that she did in your life as you grew up and all of the things that she still does to show you her love. A love that goes beyond just saying the words, but a mother’s love also is rooted in protection, motherly instincts can tell when a child is in a dangerous situation where they will need help, motherly instincts kick in to help and do and provide. So recognize that, say it, let them know that you know they did those things, or are doing those things. And the biggest part of Mother’s Day, is that what we are talking about, recognizing and appreciating mother’s, doesn’t have to be one day of the year, it can be something that is done regularly for the wonderful woman that God has put in your life.

The child’s vocation is to Honor their Mother and their Father. It’s right there in the 10 Commandments. The sheep’s vocation is to follow the Good Shepherd. To let him lead, provide, and guide. The sheep know the voice of the Shepherd because they go where the shepherd says to go. The sheep don’t make assumptions, the sheep are obedient to the word of the Shepherd. The sheep know that the Shepherd loves them and wishes what’s best for them in what the Shepherd says and what the Shepherd does. The Shepherd’s actions are all the evidence that the sheep need of the Shepherd’s intentions, and also the shepherd’s existence. A sheep can’t deny a shepherd exists when the shepherd is the one who is leading them, bringing them to streams of water, bringing them to grazing lands, protecting them from predators, and even carrying them home when they have gone astray. There is no denying the work of the Good Shepherd in the sheep’s life. This is the life of a sheep who is safely in the flock of the Good Shepherd, who knows his voice, who can see his work in their life. “The Lord is my shepherd…I shall not want…..Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

How can we deny the work of the Good Shepherd? What can bring out such doubt that we echo the words of the Jews gathered around Jesus asking, “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Isn’t that the demand of so many in our world today? Show us yourself God! Reveal yourself to us! And this isn’t a request. It’s an ultimatum. A sheep who has stubbornly sat down on the way to the pasture, who won’t believe unless the Shepherd does some trick, some miracle, something to prove that He is The Good Shepherd. But the question reveals the intentions of their hearts. Sometimes you can learn a lot just how someone asks a question, the way the question is phrased can be all you need to know about why they are asking it. The more you know about the person, the more you can understand why they are asking the question. This is something that mother’s learn very quickly. They know their children, and they know in how they ask questions how they feel about the answer. A question about what is for dinner, or what they are doing that night can be very telling. “Are we eating chicken tonight?” Is a lot different from, “We aren’t really going to eat that tonight are we?” And we see it here, that these particular individuals didn’t believe Jesus was the Christ. “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” They wanted more words, even after He had told them. They wanted more signs, even after He had performed so many. We fall into the trap of playing by the rules of the world around us when it comes to the existence of our Good Shepherd. He has to do more. He has to show us in some other way. When in reality, there is evidence of His existence, and His love right before our very eyes. Creation itself speaks of the work of God, the delicate balance of so many things from our planet to our entire galaxy. Our bodies speak of the design of our God and how we were created and formed from the dust of the earth with His hands and how the breath of life was put into our bodies. There is evidence all around us of where we live, what we have, what we are blessed to wear, and eat, and drive, and use, and the things we get to do to serve God, and the family we have, and the blessings we’ve received, and the list goes on and on. All the good in our life is evidence of the love of God because outside of God there is no good, there is no life, there is no lasting peace and joy. If you want evidence of God in your life think of all the times you’ve been stuck in the ditch on account of your own failing, your own mistakes, your own screw ups, and you’ve been rescued, redeemed and set free, only to fall right back into the same temptations and the same traps and the same pitfalls. And rather than ignore you in your struggles, or give you 3 strikes and you’re out, again Jesus pulls you out, restores you, forgives you, and protects and provides for you again. That’s what the Good Shepherd does for you. That’s all the evidence you need.

It’s not a question of if Jesus is the Christ, it’s a question of what that means in our lives, and for this particular Sunday it means that He is our Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd who gave us the greatest gift. A gift even greater than the gift your mother gave you, when she bore you into this world. Your mom gave you life, but the Good Shepherd gives you eternal life. The life your mother gave you will end, you will perish, you will die, it’s the result of sin in our world and in our lives, but the life that we receive through the Good Shepherd never ends, we will never perish, and we will be with Him forever. No one can snatch us out of the hand of the Lord, our Savior. We may mistakenly walk out of his protection, we may be tempted and coerced to leave the protecting hand of Jesus and go after whatever Satan, the world, and our sinful nature is desiring in our sinful sheepish hearts, but no one can take us away from Jesus but us. Which makes hearing his voice so important. Which makes receiving the food that He has provided us here in His house, the place He has led us to so important to receive a greater feast than water and grass, instead receiving the body and blood of the lamb of sacrifice for our sins. The final sacrifice. The greatest food for our forgiveness. The Good Shepherd gives and provides, His work is endless and it still continues today, in what he provides in our lives. How can we not see or believe that He is the Christ?

May God bless you, on this special day, in this joyous season, to appreciate the work of those in your life, from your mother to The Good Shepherd.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.