

St. John 10:1-10  
Fourth Sunday of Easter 2017

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.<sup>1</sup>

In the Name of Jesus.

Dearly beloved, this morning I want either to make you a Lutheran, or confirm for you why you already are a Lutheran. ‘The Law came through Moses; Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ.’

What passes for religion in this world is an aping of God’s Holy Law. It’s just one variation after another of ‘God/Heaven/Paradise/Nirvana, etc., is over THERE—and YOU are over HERE—and I, great religious man, will give you the exercises to get from HERE to THERE. Your Good Shepherd calls all such men thieves and liars.

But we cannot even leave off that list those who orbit around the Living God and His True Faith, Jesus Christ, Crucified, Risen, Ascended, among us forgiving our sins. For Moses himself came to kill and steal and destroy—as much as he was the phony-baloney he was. (Read your Bibles; it’s all there!) And so have been all his apes, who pick up Moses and his Law, as a cudgel, to

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Jn 10:7–10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

drive poor bewildered men this way and that, the blind leading the blind.

You are a Lutheran, because the CERTAIN HOPE of the SHEEP of God is the voice of their proper, fitting Shepherd. Jesus does not ‘ape’ Moses, and provide a more-newer, more-better WAY of doing the whole ‘Moses’ thing. Instead, He always and forever stands before and behind His Sheep, lays down His life for them, and picks it up again for them. His sheep are blind and He grants them sight. They are sick and He heals them. They are dead but He calls them alive; calls them to life; calls us to HIM!

‘To this you have been called,’ the apostle Peter declared (1 Peter 2)! Called by our Holy Baptism, to live FROM Christ, to have other life BUT Christ. ‘When reviled, He did not answer in kind!’ Try to do THAT, my dear sheep of Christ! And then you will understand the joy of the unending hope of our Baptism.

OUR Life must be ALL from Christ to us—not at ALL from US to HIM!

Oh, the next man will TAKE IT—if you and I hitch the Law to ourselves and force ourselves to ape the Law out of fear of heavenly punishment, or human penalties. If we DON’T pick up the phone to slander, or DON’T bend the rules of men out of self-concern—and pretending that such necessity is a virtue—men will TAKE THAT, my dear ones! In fact, all organized religion COUNTS on that play-acting!

But that whole schema is nothing but thieving and killing and destroying. In other words, it not only gets us nowhere with

heaven; in our most sober moments, we know we're fooling—and, the Word says, ONLY fooling ourselves!

One commentator after another told me this week who the thieves and killers were NOT—and so, I had the answer! In a panic, one after the next groped around about those who are the NEGATION of our Good Shepherd—and then they each said, panicked, 'It is NOT Moses!'

Of course it is!

John 10, about the Good Shepherd, follows John 9, about granting sight to a man born blind. And what got that man excommunicated from the synagogue—and what got Jesus killed—and what got Martin Luther excommunicated—was when the once-blind man said to the church powers, 'NO ONE has ever heard of a man granting sight to a man born blind!' And who was the greatest wonder-worker in the Bible? Moses! And this man said, 'Something utterly BEYOND Moses is right here!' And so, they threw him out!

All that the Old Sinner is us can do, my dear ones, is abuse God's will—but then try to make amends, as if that could be done. Old Adam will even pretend to make a go of Moses and His Law! Jesus called such men blind and in their sins—for they claimed, fooling only themselves, that when heaven looks at THEIR group and then at groups all around, heaven MUST see the greater value of the group that's US!

Our Shepherd is good, for He protects us not only from Moses and his wannabes—but most of all, from ourselves!

‘Oh, but pastor, we BELIEVE that Jesus gave sight to that blind man!’ Oh, do we, dear sheep?! Well then, let’s do the same! Let US give sight to the blind, health to the diseased and life to the dead. Our Good Shepherd promised that WE would do greater works than He did!

For, in the thoughts of God, massaging blank eyes and making them work is CHUMP CHANGE!---compared to the work of the cross, the happiness to which you and I have been called! In short, it is to forgive as Jesus, in the place of Jesus, and with all the authority of Jesus.

Oh, praise the Lord for our Baptism! For I don’t have that in me; nor do you, be honest! It is ONE thing, we know—and Saint Peter wrote!—ONE PAIN to suffer when we’re caught in the wrong! But to have done NOTHING WRONG, and then to bear lies and insults and rejection and isolation—have you met my relatives?!—who can bear with that?!

Christ bore it—by laying down His Life—and then He picked it up again—so that we may lay down ours!

And since we fail—not just at the Moses aping, but at the mandates of New Life—He gives us His Body and His Blood. For He remains forever the Shepherd of those whom heaven can ONLY pardon, only open their eyes, only heal, only raise; that’s what makes Him GOOD! His reign with the Father, interceding with us without end!

Happy are you—the Good Shepherd’s Voice—happy are you, blessed, wrapped in heaven and already THERE, when you do the same! God be with us in the Name of Jesus! Amen!