

The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
April 25, 2021

"The other sheep of the one Shepherd"  
(John 10:16)  
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LSB 710

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's text for this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is from our Gospel reading John 10:16

**"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."**

Here ends our text.

If you've ever asked a pre-k child to raise their right hand, you'll most likely get the left hand going up. And you'll get that unsure look from the child who is wanting some guidance. So, you say with much love, "No, the other hand". "Ohh" comes the response. And this might get repeated 10 or more times. As we all know it's part of the learning process.

Well, part of our learning process this day, this Sunday of the Good Shepherd, is learning who we are as sheep and learning who Jesus is as our Good Shepherd.

Maybe it is a little surprising to us that we are called the "other" sheep. That's how we are described. And at the same time, we don't see the word "other" before the word "shepherd". For there is only one Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. There is no other.

The word "other" really isn't a very flattering word, is it? It's a word that humbles us actually. For the word "other" isn't a "first choice" type of word. The hand that the child raised first was the first choice. When that choice wasn't correct, a disappointed, "ohh" is the usual reaction.

When that child grows up and starts driving, that teen might ask the parents to drive one of the family cars to a friend's house. When a parent is asked by the teen if he or she can drive the "new" car, inevitably the answer will be, "No, take the other." You know, the one that has 300,000 miles on it, with faded paint and tears in the seats. You know, it's the "other" car, the second choice, the lesser choice.

I'm sure all of us can remember times when we've referred someone to the "other" option.

I. Humbled as "other sheep"

But, that's who we are – the "other sheep", the Gentiles. That's who Jesus is talking about when He speaks of the "other sheep". We weren't God's first priority. Jesus came first for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In Matthew 10, Jesus said this to His twelve disciples.

**"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' (Matthew 10:5-7)**

And to the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 who asked Jesus for help for her demon-possessed daughter Jesus said to His disciples.

**"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."**

But you remember the persistence and the faith of the woman. **"Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!'"**

How did Jesus respond?

**26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."**

The "other sheep" don't even get to sit at the table because they're like the pet dogs. But she replied,

**"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."**

Then Jesus said, **"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire."**

Being an "other" humbles us, but that is good. For we are then thankful for even a crumb of the Good Shepherd's mercy. Being an "other" reaffirms to us that we are not deserving of any of the Good Shepherd's attention.

## II. But lifted up by the Good Shepherd to be part of the one flock

We have no pedigree or status is the lowest for we are sinners, and utterly lost if not for the Good Shepherd's declaration to us. It is a declaration that He hasn't forgotten about us. What does Jesus say in our Gospel from John 10?

**And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.**

The Good Shepherd, Jesus, pivots toward us and assures us that He also must bring us in. We are utterly incapable of saving ourselves. We need the Shepherd to bring us out of our darkness of sin into the light of His Gospel.

**“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),” (Ephesians 5:8-9)**

We aren't an afterthought, but a “must” an imperative from the searching, loving, heart of the Savior.

For in order for the “other sheep” to be part of the one flock, the Good Shepherd had to lay down His life for them also. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world.

Of course, the evangelization of the Gentiles was prophesied in the Old Testament like in Isaiah 60 we hear.

**“The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you;”**

When we are humbled as “other sheep”, Jesus reminds us that everything that the Jews have received are equally received by the Gentiles. There is but one flock who have but One Shepherd. Jews and Gentiles alike know the Good Shepherd and hear His voice through His word. Jesus knows the Gentile sheep by name just as He knows the Jewish sheep by name. And all the sheep recognize the voice of their Good Shepherd.

The relationship is so close between sheep and Shepherd that Jesus compares it to the relationship that He has with His Father in today's Gospel from John 10.

**“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.  
15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father;”**

That is breathtaking to think about that.

Jesus laid down His life for all the sheep and has the power to take it up again He said. And He did, three days after His death. This power over death He now gives to His one flock, Jews and Gentiles alike. For we too will be raised from the dead to be like Jesus. So, we read from Psalm 23 today.

**Yea, 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.**

And in the final verse, the Jesus’ flock are told that they will live in Jesus’ house forever.

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
Forever.**

So, though we are humbled to be called the “other sheep”, the one Good Shepherd takes away any distinctions and gives all His gifts to all of His flock, both Jews and Gentiles alike!

III. As humbled and forgiven “other sheep” we also “must bring other sheep” into the one flock

Our world is filled with “other sheep” who don’t look like us, talk like us, live like us or value the same things as us. But, yet we are no different or better than anyone else. As we have been humbled before God, so we must humble ourselves before others. May Jesus’ “must bring” heart for others be our “must bring” heart as we search for other lost sheep with our Good Shepherd. As He has laid down His life for us, He calls us to lay down our life for our brothers.

The “other sheep” of this world must know before it’s too late that there is but one flock and one Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Unless a person is part of the one flock, the

holy communion of believers, the holy communion of saints, then one will perish eternally.

All people need to know that without the Good Shepherd, the wolf, the devil, will destroy the sheep. We are powerless. We are powerless to take our lives back up again from the grave. But there is One who lovingly laid down His life for all people so that all who would trust the voice of the Good Shepherd will not perish but have eternal life.

Who does Jesus prefer? Jews or Gentiles? He didn't raise His left hand or His right hand, but both hands! Jesus raised both hands on the cross for Jews and Gentiles. He died for all sinners and wants all to be saved that there be one flock under one Shepherd, eternally. **Amen.**

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**