

**May 3, 2020**

**“The Good Shepherd”**

**Prayer of Illumination:** Prepare our hearts, O Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own; that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Worship Book, 1970, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

**Scripture Readings:** Psalm 23, John 10:1-18

**Devotion:**

Blessed be the day on which the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm was born! Why? Because the Psalm is the basic image of the Good Shepherd—Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The earliest Christians said, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” and understood the Lord to be the name of Jesus. Jesus says directly in the Gospel of John (10:11), “I am the Good Shepherd.”

Jesus is our Good Shepherd who restores our souls. He leads us on the path of righteousness and accompanies us through danger. Jesus serves the holy meal in the presence of our enemies and seeks us in His gracious love all the days of our lives.

The focus of the Good Shepherd’s care on individual Christians, and the Church as a whole is an intimate force. It is a confession of our trust and commitment to the Lord and an affirmation of faith in God’s grace, love, and mercy towards us. The Psalm entrusts the support, guidance, and protection of life given only and alone to the Good Shepherd.

The Easter message of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is “We, the Church, shall not want.” This is the Good News of Easter, “Death is destroyed.” (I Cor. 15:26). The Book of Revelation promises us: “We will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike us, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be our Shepherd, and He will guide us to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.” (Rev. 7:15-17)

This is our faith and ultimate trust in the Lord our God—in His Only Son—our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayers of Intercessory and Supplication:** (Ask people what they wish to pray for today, briefly inquire about it, and pray for them. Ask them to join in your prayer.)

**The Lord's Prayer:** (Say the prayer in unison.) Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**Blessing:** “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26)