

“The Beautiful Shepherd” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | April 22, 2018

**JOHN 10: 11-18**

<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

**Intro Question**

Tim began his sermon by referencing a dystopian novel in which the characters were escaping the suffering of their own lives by creating a new world in a video game. We all have seasons of life when we desire a new world. Are you currently living in such a season?

**Background**

Jesus is the good shepherd. He is the good shepherd because he commits to delivering his sheep. He delivers us by laying his life down for us—the ultimate act of sacrificial love.

And while we have technically been delivered, we all go through seasons in which we feel a desire to escape from this world. These times can lead us to put our faith in “bad shepherds”—idols—that can consume us. But a good shepherd would never consume his flock; instead he will give up everything because he cares for them.

Like Jesus, we are called to be shepherds to those around us—good shepherds. We are called to love our flocks by laying down our lives for them—by putting ourselves aside. Teresa of Avila said, “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours.” Jesus willingly laid down his life because he looks at us as though we are worth giving up everything; we are his treasure. And we are also Christ’s shepherds on earth. We will help to protect and enlarge the flock by the way we live because the truth and beauty of Christ sacrificial love won’t leave us unchanged.

Read John 10:11-18 aloud.

**Discuss:**

- 1.) Knowing that “bad shepherds” abound, what are you looking for to deliver you that might actually be eating you alive instead?
- 2.) What does it mean to you that “Christ has no body now but yours”? How does this image change the way you see your role in God’s kingdom?
- 3.) In what groups of people has God called you to be a shepherd? In what areas of your life are you a leader? In those situations, what does it look like to lay down your life for others?

**Conclusion/Application**

We are invited to be a part of the beauty of what the good shepherd is doing. As the body of Christ in the world, as his only body in the world, we are equipped and commissioned to act as shepherds, to lay down our lives for others because love is laying down your life.

Father—Open our eyes to opportunities to serve and to deliver and to protect the sheep you have put in our paths. Prepare our hearts to sacrifice when it is needed. Decrease our selfish desires that we will be able to more clearly see what those around us need and so that we will not fail to lay down our lives as you call us to. Amen.

