

## Gospel and Sermon Transcript -4th Sunday Easter - April 26, 2026

00:01

50 days of Easter.

00:05

And it seems that each day we find ourselves kind of rehearsing a familiar pattern, perhaps.

00:13

And that is that there are these ways that Jesus self-reveals and that God self-reveals.

00:30

And sometimes we miss it. And sometimes it's not as direct as maybe some of us would like.

00:40

Today, Good Shepherd Sunday. And we will hear some about what it means to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd and to follow,

00:51

which is part of our, I think, our faith experience, especially in Easter and in

00:59

this Easter season. A bit about the hymns today, especially picked in honor of

01:08

someone celebrating a special birthday, so we're happy to sing those hymns not

01:13

only as a way of extending our best wishes, but a way of worshiping together

01:18

as well.

01:22

So we begin our service today with the Thanksgiving, you know, I'm going to stop for a second.

01:27

There was something I meant to say and now I'm going to say it out loud.

01:31

Last week we were not able to be here and it was kind of a sudden shift in circumstance.

01:36

I want to thank Bobbye and all of those who led worship last week, especially having to

01:41

do that with fairly short notice, and thanks to you for your stretchiness in being able

01:47

to adapt to conditions.

01:50

thank you for continued prayers for Sharon. She's home with her hot pink cast

01:57

learning to scoot around with an e-scooter and doing the best she can but

02:04

the days get long. You get tired when you have to schlep around all this extra

02:08

stuff. So continued prayers I'm sure would be appreciated.

02:14

(music)

### **The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 10th Chapter**

Jesus said "Very truly I tell you

"Anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.

02:54

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

02:59

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him and the sheep hear his voice.

03:06

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

03:11

"When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follows, because

03:17

they know his voice.

03:20

They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from the stranger, because they do

03:24

not know the voice of strangers."

03:28

Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying

03:35

to them.

03:36

So Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

03:46

All who come before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them.

03:52

I am the gate.

03:54

Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

04:00

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

04:06

come that they may have life and have it abundantly the gospel of our Lord

04:26

surely goodness and mercy shall adhere to our lives and we will dwell in the

04:34

house of the Lord forever.

### **The Sermon**

04:46

There must have been a number of times in my life where I used my voice to

04:55

deceive and you would think I would have learned after misadventures when I was

05:01

about five. But no. In the days of rotary phones when there was only one in the

05:07

house and I would answer the phone, people would assume that I was my older

05:11

brother because our voices were very much alike. And rather than disabuse

05:18

friends, would-be girlfriends and dates of this, I just played along. I think my

05:30

brother would be a little confused now and again when friends would say, "Well,

05:33

where were you Friday?" Or dates. Wondering why he had ghosted them when he had no

05:41

knowledge of such a date.

05:48

Voice recognition. A tricky thing. And now we live in this world where the phones

05:54

Phones are no longer rotary, and party lines, of course, have long since come defunct.

06:04

And now we speak into our phones and ask them to translate our speech into text.

06:12

Maybe your results are better than mine, but mine are usually either somewhat comedic or

06:18

downright embarrassing. I'm taking away around the barn today, but I'll get there.

06:30

To say that it's not always easy to recognize the voice of the shepherd. I

06:39

would say there's entirely too much racket going on. The stridency of our

06:46

public discourse now. And when you think about a news cycle that is 24/7 and then

06:52

song, I grew up with Walter Cronkite. I could tune in at 5.30 and learn about

07:01

that's the way it is and then kind of deal with that and then I'd wait for my

07:06

weekly copy of Newsweek. That's kind of an American reference, isn't it? I guess

07:11

Walter Cronkite is too now that I think about this. Here we are in this world of 24/7 racket and

07:24

clutter and clamor and where do we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd?

07:34

There are those who claim to be doing God's bidding just now, lobbing bombs

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into all kinds of locations in the world and sinking ships off the coast of South

07:46

American countries and not incidentally making billions of dollars for their

07:53

family fortune in the process. I bring that up because shepherds in Jesus day

08:03

and in David's day sometimes were religious leaders sometimes they were

08:08

political leaders. The world that Jesus lives in is a complex one and when he

08:17

speaks about the imposter going in through ways other than the front gate,

08:23

it's difficult to know exactly to whom he refers. But whenever we read John's

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Gospel, extreme caution is needed because it has been so often misread and assume

08:36

that Jesus has come to do away with an entire religion which is not at all the

08:42

case or to start his own. Again, not the case. It happened, but Jesus' mission was

08:53

really about shepherding, about reclaiming, and about putting love back

09:00

into the ways we express our faith.

09:07

The closest connection we can make between Jesus' words today come in the form of what happened just before.

09:15

If you leaf back a couple of pages in a Bible, you might remember the story of a person who was blind since birth.

09:24

This individual had no idea who this Jesus person was, and when he's interrogated about it, he says,

09:29

All I know is that this person spoke to me, put paste on my eyes, told me to wash, I

did and I see.

09:47

A couple of, or a group of religious leaders, not sure of exactly their provenance, but when they interrogate this person,

09:58

rather than saying good on you that you can see. And if we can help you adjust to

10:04

this world with a new sight, we're... no. The conversation ends with them saying you

10:12

still are born in sin alienated from God. I have a feeling that Jesus heard that.

10:21

In fact, the text strongly suggests he did.

10:26

So, might if he had in mind the times that whatever religion type or stripe or whoever represents it decides to use it as a cudgel instead of as a way back into community.

10:42

As a way of trying to be right instead of waiting on God to set things right.

10:54

How do we recognize and where do we recognize this voice of the shepherd then?

11:02

Well a lot of what Jesus says and does after the resurrection is very similar to some of the things that he did before the resurrection.

11:12

Let me supply three.

11:15

These are important because these are stories we have already rehearsed in this season of Easter.

11:22

And this brings us back to that notion of where does God show up?

11:26

Where does Jesus show up?

11:28

And how often does it happen that it's after the fact we realize, oh, that was a God thing,

11:36

and that was Jesus at work?

11:41

Mary Magdalene.

11:45

She's at the tomb convinced that grave robbers have desecrated Jesus' final resting place.

11:50

And when she asks a person that she thinks is the caretaker, what comes next?

11:59

But he calls her by name.

12:02

And then she hears the voice.

12:06

She recognizes Jesus.

12:12

She hangs on for dear life.

12:14

But Jesus says, "Don't hang on, but follow.

12:18

Go and tell.

12:22

If you want my bias about women's leadership in church, Mary Magdalene is your model.

12:30

She's your first preacher.

12:31

She's your first evangelist.

12:33

She is a powerful witness.

12:36

You might have seen the cartoon.

12:37

In fact, one of my colleagues sent it to me, or actually no, someone from the congregation

12:41

sent it to me.

12:42

Cartoon where Mary goes to the disciples, the guys, and they, "Well, thanks, Mary.

12:47

take it from here. Unfortunate because the witness of Mary being called by name

12:58

leads her to say, "I have seen the Lord." That same night perhaps if we work a bit

13:07

with John's timeline, there are disciples in a locked room convinced the

13:15

authorities are coming from them next. And Jesus walks through a locked door. He

13:23

speaks. Peace. He breathes Spirit. He commissions his followers to remember

13:32

their purpose and their mission and to go about doing it once again.

13:44

Then we have Luke's gospel, which you heard last week.

13:49

A long walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus some seven miles where a stranger

13:56

provides perspective and helps teach

13:59

about the continuity of all of these things that have happened in Jerusalem

14:04

with God's entire plan

14:07

to restore all things.

14:10

And in the breaking of the bread

14:13

when they are at home and

14:16

Jesus becomes the host

14:18

He blesses and breaks the bread as he would have so many times with so many people in so many settings

14:29

The travelers realize who is in their midst a

14:38

Bit like the Good Shepherd

14:42

hearing the voice, seeing the action, and knowing this is the one whom we follow.

14:52

It might have been a bit of serendipity today that in the online

14:57

morning office, the daily prayer that's published by the Episcopal Church in the US,

15:03

included a story from Mark's gospel about shepherds.

15:10

Jesus sees a crowd of people and he has moved with such compassion because they seem like people who don't have a shepherd.

15:21

He goes about teaching and healing and feeding.

15:32

Maybe all of these accounts, if we string them together just a bit,

15:38

Give us purchase into making sense in a world so filled with clamor and with a racket.

15:53

The authenticity of our own faith,

15:56

the gospel that we preach,

15:59

is not about exclusion or scapegoating or othering anybody.

16:07

It's teaching. It's healing. It's feeding. It is just as Jesus said that his whole purpose in life

16:21

was to give a life to us that is abundant.

16:32

One last connection I'd like to make and it is to our experience when we gather for Holy Communion in some of our prayers

16:46

I'll try that again. There we go

16:51

We pray these words who on this day overcame death in the grave and by his glorious resurrection

17:02

opened

17:02

to us the way of life everlasting.

17:12

This Easter season, may we live expectantly,

17:20

watching for the gate to swing open,

17:25

that we may find places of security and places of freedom,

17:31

And may we hear the voice of the Good Shepherd,

17:35

the one who speaks to us assurance,

17:39

and who like Jesus says, "Peace, peace be with you."

17:48

Amen.