**SUNDAY**

**5/8/22**

**SERMON**

**JOHN 10:22-30**

There once was a shepherd who lived in the Scottish Highlands.

This shepherd had a daughter, and he would take her with him

 when he went out on the moors to take care of the sheep.

What the little girl liked best was to hear the call of shepherd.

His voice sounded so free and beautiful

 as it carried across the valleys of the moors.

As the years passed the little girl became a beautiful young woman.

Before long she went off to one of Scotland's great cities Glasgow.

It was there that she was determined to build a life.

On her arrival, she would write back home to her parents every week.

But as life began to take her by the hand,

 her letters soon dropped off in their frequency

 and before long there were none.

Rumors begin to filter back home to the shepherd and his wife

 that their daughter had started hanging out with some unsavory characters,

 and they were having a very negative influence on her life.

One day one of the boys from back home ran into her in the city streets,

 and she acted as if she did not even know him.

When the old shepherd heard this,

 he gathered a few things together,

 dressed in his rough shepherd's clothes

 and went to the city to find his daughter.

For days he looked for her.

He looked everywhere: the slums, the rows of houses, the markets, the taverns,

 and everywhere in between, but to no avail.

So after all of his searching he became very discouraged,

 and thought that he had lost his daughter to the evil city.

As he started the long trek back home,

 just as he was on the outskirts of the city,

 he remembered his daughter

 had always loved to hear the voice of the shepherd calling out to the sheep.

So he turned around,

 and motivated by his sorrow, and his love,

 he began to stalk the streets.

His voice rang out the shepherds call.

The citizens of the city all looked at him as if he had lost his mind.

He walked the streets of the degraded neighborhoods.

Inside of one of those houses,

 his daughter sitting among those who had led her astray,

 heard his voice.

With great astonishment she heard that call of the voice of the shepherd,

 the voice of her father calling out to her.

She leaped up, and rushed out to the street,

 and ran into the arms of the old shepherd, her father.

Then he took her back home to the highlands of Scotland

 and brought her back to her family and God.

God is always calling to us.

When we listen to His voice, we discover His great love for us.

Sheep require more attention than any other livestock.

They just can't take care of themselves.

Unless their shepherd makes them move on,

 sheep will actually ruin a pasture, eating every blade of grass,

 until finally a fertile pasture is nothing but barren soil.

Sheep are near-sighted and very stubborn, but easily frightened.

An entire flock can be stampeded by a jack rabbit.

They have little means of defense.

They are timid, feeble creatures.

Their only recourse is to run, if no shepherd is there to protect them.

Sheep have no homing instincts.

A dog, horse, cat, or a bird can find its way home.

But when a sheep gets lost, it is a goner unless someone rescues it.

God loves us.

Whenever we are lost, He will search for us, and bring us close to Him again.

Once, a Sunday School teacher asked her class:

“How many of you can quote the 23rd Psalm?”

Several students raised their hands,

 including a little girl who was only four years old.

She stood up and declared loudly,

 "The Lord is my shepherd.

 I've got all I want.”

She had the words mixed up a bit, but she understood the message perfectly.

We are never alone.

Our great Shepherd is always watching over us, and caring for us.

Jesus told us:

 My sheep hear my voice.

 I know them, and they follow me.

 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.

 No one will snatch them out of my hand.

We need to stay close to our Shepherd.

Some sheep come to the Shepherd daily

 to rub against his legs and wait for a pat on the head.

Sheep which stay close to the Shepherd reach the water first.

Those next to the Shepherd get to the sweetest grass first.

And they are near to Him when fear is high.

But most of all they get to enjoy life with the Shepherd by their side.

When we stay close to the Shepherd,

He will make sure all of our needs are met.

Unfortunately, some of us like to stray.

But Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

He comes looking for us.

And He calls us by name.

AMEN