

The Week of the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday, August 7, 2022

Scripture: John 10:2-5

I recently re-read a passage of scripture in John, chapter 10, beginning at verse 2. *“The man who goes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him; the sheep hear his voice as he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. When he has brought them out, he goes ahead of them, and they know his voice. They will not follow someone else; instead, they will run away from such a person, because they do not know his voice.”*

Several years ago, my husband and I were on a vacation trip in Alaska. We had the wonderful opportunity to visit many small towns and villages. The cruise ship could not come close to the dock because of the depth of the water so passengers had to be transported from the ship to the dock in small boats called tenders. This transfer was about a ten- or fifteen-minute ride. We had spent an enjoyable day walking around the town of Sitka when it was time to catch the LAST tender back to the cruise ship. We began to realize we were lost. We had hurried up and down several streets only to become more confused about our location. We had come ashore with very little money. At that time, we had no cell phone or credit cards. We were in a very difficult situation. Feelings of panic began to creep in. What were we going to do? We would be stranded in this town if we missed the last tender of the day.

Suddenly a young man appeared and said, “follow me”. I don’t know why, but without question, we followed him. He led us through the streets and right to the docks. The tender had begun to pull away and was beginning the trip back to the cruise ship. We began yelling and waving our arms as we ran down the long pier and, thankfully, the tender turned and came back for us. I looked around to thank the young man who had rescued us, and he had vanished! I believe, to this day, he was sent by God. An angel? Perhaps. A kind person? Perhaps. Did we somehow know his voice as one sent by God to help us?

I am reminded of a favorite hymn called “He Leadeth Me: Oh, Blessed Thought”.

*He leadeth me: oh, blessed thought! Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught!
What e'er I do, whe-e'er I be, still 'tis God's hand that lead-eth me.
He leadeth me, he leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me.
His faithful follower I would be, For by His hand he leadeth me.*

I pray that we will more often hear God’s voice calling and leading us.

Prayer: God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us, we pray to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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