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### **Weekly Letter – 21 April 2024**

Psalm 23 and John 10.11-18

#### The Perfect Shepherd

Psalm 23 is rightly cherished and loved throughout the world, for its innate beauty, and because it gently speaks to all people of God's commitment to his creation, and of his faithfulness to each life. Through Psalm 23 we gain an insight to who God must be, and always has been.

One of the human reasons why Jesus was able to converse with so many people so naturally and easily was because he built upon people's understanding of God through the Scriptures (O.T.). In his dialogue with people, doubtless he would have asked people (as he asks you), "from your understanding of the Scriptures, what do you hope for from God and life?"

Having heard what people desired, Jesus clearly responded in this way, "You should desire and expect the perfect shepherd". That is, you should yearn for someone that knows all your needs, and for the One who will never abandon you (10.11-14). (If you like reading the Bible, and of course you do, do read Exodus 6.7-8).

In his dialogue with his audience, Jesus is once again showing you how committed God is to the world. Therefore, 'The perfect Shepherd' must also be determined to give all that you need, for he has bound his life to yours. (That is quite a statement!) – remember God never imposes, only proposes!!

Of course God has given you complete freedom to choose, and Christ is only able to wait for you and step by step convince you through love. But if you are willing to respond to Jesus Christ as 'The Good Shepherd', then you open up a way, a path to be changed by God's gentle power.

What does this mean? Despite all the hardships that you have experienced, and will experience, you do not need to be afraid of the future. For the 'Perfect Shepherd' is saying, "you are not 'heirs' of any human country or culture, rather you are an heir in God's future. Yes, the future belongs to you, for the future belongs to God!

#### ***Stephen***

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling.  
Bible Readings: John 10.1-18: 1 John 4.7-12.**

**Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Christ Well**

## **Welcomers Wanted!**

We are looking for volunteers willing to go on a rota to greet people who attend Morning Worship, and who are able to be in Christ Well by 10 am if possible.

If you are willing to help in this way, please enquire when you are at church.

## **The Good Shepherd**

(Lectionary Readings: Acts 4.5-12: Psalm 23: 1 John 3.16-24: John 10.11-18)

### **Pray for people in need of a shepherd:**

frightened people embittered by experience,  
desperate people who are struggling to scratch a living,  
lost people who listen for the shepherd's voice.  
May they know God's love through the care of others.

### **Pray for people let down by their shepherds:**

abused by their teachers, exploited by their employers,  
failed by their politicians, mistreated by their parents.  
May they know God's love through the support they receive.

### **Pray to Christ the Good Shepherd:**

Lord Christ, who laid down your life for the sheep:  
when we are lost, seek us out, when confused, guide us,  
when disobedient, correct us, when thoughtless, teach us,  
when hungry, feed us, when afraid, restore us.

David Batchelor (URC Prayer Handbook 2024)

