

Easter IV
May 2-3, 2009

“The Power to Provide”

Text: John 10:11-18

David wrote: “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:15-16) Everything you need is provided for by God. Of course, it is upon his timing, but David assures us that it is that time that we need it.

In our text, Jesus speaks of the greatest providing of all. As the Good Shepherd he lays down his life for the sheep. This is the greatest providing that God does for us because in this giving his life is given for us that we might live forever with him. Here is the interesting part: he does so willingly. This is something that Jesus desired to do for you! Several times in this text Jesus makes it clear that no one takes his life from him but that it is something that he desires to do.

Speaking before his ascension in heaven Jesus said: “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20)

In the gospel for today, we can see this power of God at work in the greatest way for our salvation. But if he is able to do that, he gives us everything else that we need because he has-

THE POWER TO PROVIDE

I. Through the care the Good Shepherd gives

II. The Good Shepherd brings life out of death

I.

A.1. “As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so I will seek out my sheep that have been scattered, so I will seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.” (Ezekiel 34:12) This is what a shepherd does and it is one of God’s favorite images of himself, his Son, and those who care for his children.

Jesus gives this same care as he promises. In this chapter he sets up a distinction between false shepherds and true shepherds in their care for the flock. Some shepherds fleeced the flock, if you will. They were only interested in what the flock could bring to them. They were not interested in the welfare of the flock. Jesus makes it clear: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” This is true with shepherds; they will put their lives on the line in order to protect the flock.

2. If you have ever seen the movie, “Dave” this idea of protection and providing comes out very clearly. Kevin Kline plays Dave who runs an employment agency, but is also a double for the president Bill Mitchell. After the president dies and his wife begins a new life, Dave’s services are no longer needed. In parting, his secret service agent says to him: “I would have taken a bullet for you.” Jesus did that for you when he laid down his life and went to the cross.

In verse 18 Jesus says: “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 the authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” This is the death

and resurrection of your Savior that we especially celebrate in the Easter season.

B.1. Verse 12 talks about the hireling and the fact that he is interested in his own skin. When danger comes, he is far away from the scene. He is not about to be involved. The sheep have no worries when the good shepherd is there, he will protect and provide.

This is our comfort with our Savior Jesus Christ. We know we will always be provided for by him. This is a parable or metaphor, but we understand what Jesus is talking about. Like the earthly shepherd in and even greater way he provides for our every need.

2. Jesus has a rather large flock. On one occasion he told the Canaanite woman: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24) Here we can see that he has a larger flock and all have in common that they hear his voice. Later on in this chapter he says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27) Good and false shepherds are known for their teaching. Throughout history there have been those who have misled the church, on Jesus are the good shepherd.

II.

A.1. Jesus now moves from the imagery of the shepherd to the point of what he has been talking about. It is his life given for you that you would be assured that you will live forever. If an outsider were to view the crucifixion it would seem as helpless defeat. You and I know differently as the Apostle Paul pointed out: "But we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (I Corinthians 1:23-24)

The death of your Savior did not end things, but rather brought life out of death. Jesus says that God loves

him because of what he does in death and resurrection and this is our message. This weekend we are celebrating 45 years of pastoral ministry for Pastor Garvue, several of which have been served here. We also in prayer remember other church workers who are privileged to bring this message.

2. What Jesus was all part of God's plan for your salvation. He has had it in mind from eternity. It is the only way that it could be accomplished. The world believed that it can make up the difference with God. The fact of the matter is that only Jesus could and it was something that he did willingly for you.

B.1. Jesus concludes: "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 the authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." What Jesus says is certain. It is something that he has accomplished and it is something that comes from his word. The one who accomplished this for you tells you in his own words that it is the truth.

2. Jesus certainly has the approval of his Father and your Father. He has the authority or power to accomplish all that he had. I mentioned Matthew 28 earlier where Jesus says that all authority has been given to him. Either this is the most absurd claim ever made or it is the truth. This power is one that goes with his church of all ages until he returns again. We have a message to bring to a world that is in need of certainty.

Jesus possesses all power and he used this power for you. He provides for your every need, but in the greatest way he provides for your greatest need it is his power to provide it. Amen.