

## THE FIRST 15

Friday, June 14, 2024

Today is Friday, June 14 and we are studying what the Bible says about shepherds and sheep.

### OPENING PRAYER

*In the morning, I come to this quiet place and listen for the voice of my Shepherd. I calm my scattered thoughts and slow my breath. I dwell in safety under the Shepherd's thoughtful eye and loving care. He watches over my comings and goings, guides me to places of peace in a busy day, and leads me to discover the joy of a Sabbath heart. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE

***"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." John 10:14-18, 27-28***

### REFLECTION

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He says he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. There is an intimacy in the relationship between following sheep and loving shepherd. The sheep who belong to the Good Shepherd Messiah hear his voice, recognize his voice and follow him. They will not get lost or go astray for he leads them with a familiar sound. They will not get confused and follow another because they will realize the sound of the voice is different. No one can snatch these sheep out of the Shepherd's hand. They are safe. Jesus' sheep listen to his voice and follow him.

I consider how I experience the voice of my Shepherd Jesus. Perhaps I am aware of the unique sound of his soul whispers or soft spoken words. Words that guide me in the course of my day. Words that encourage me when I am down. Words that strengthen me when I struggle with temptation. Words that prod me to go the right direction. Words that challenge me to persevere on the best path. Words that warn me when I am heading in the wrong direction. Words that call me back to his side. Words that lift my spirits when I am weary. Words that instruct me in how to live. Words that comfort me when I am sad. Words that clarify truth when I am confused. Words that assure me when I am afraid. My shepherd Jesus knows my name and his strong voice wakes me out of my spiritual slumber. He calls me by name.

I consider the sound of my Shepherd's voice. What does God want me to know about the voice of Jesus in my life? Perhaps I am to listen more closely to Jesus and shut out the cluttered voices of the world. Maybe I need to focus on his voice above all else. Perhaps there are times

when I ignore his voice and prefer to choose my own path. Maybe I am overly influenced by the enticing voices of secular society that seek to lead me astray. God wants me to spend more time with my Good Shepherd, learning his ways, memorizing his voice, following his lead, and staying close by his side. As I go about the comings and goings of my day, I will listen carefully for the voice of my Shepherd.

**Ask:** How can I spend more time focusing on learning to listen to Jesus? When might I be missing out on what Jesus is saying to me?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, blessed Shepherd of my soul. Lead me and guide me in the way I should go. Carry me when I need to be carried. Call my name when I get too far ahead of you or lag behind you. Help me learn to walk at your Shepherd's pace trusting that you know the perfect timing for everything. Keep me in step with the plans you have for me and the places you want me to go. Where you lead, I will follow. I know your voice and will listen quietly for it throughout my day. Amen.*