



Call to Worship - Let us pray

O Lord, our shepherd and master, sheep often have the reputation of following blindly. This morning we follow you with our eyes wide open, eagerly listening for what you have to say to us. Amen

Hymn - STF 479 - The King of love my shepherd is

<https://youtu.be/8w98JJGY7A>

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|--|---|
| 1 The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never ;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine for ever. | 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me ;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me. |
| 2 Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth. | 5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight ;
thy unction grace bestoweth ;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth ! |
| 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me. | 6 And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never :
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever. |

Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877)

Prayer

Glory to you O God: you raised Jesus from the grave,
Bringing us victory over death & giving us eternal life.
Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation
You overcame death & opened the gate to everlasting life.
Glory to you, O Holy Spirit:
You lead us into the truth & breathe new life into us.
Glory to you, Father, Son & Holy Spirit,
Now and for ever. **Amen**

Scripture: St John's Gospel Chapter 10 verses 22 – 30.

Reflection

I'd like to start by telling you a story. *"It involves a new kind of ultra-modern airplane which was on an experimental flight full of reporters and journalists. A few minutes after the takeoff the captain's voice was heard from the loudspeakers: "I'm delighted to be your pilot, and the captain of this airplane on its first historical flight. I can tell you that the flight is going well. Nevertheless, I still have to tell you about a minor inconvenience that has occurred. The passengers that are sitting on the right side can, if they look through the window, see that the closest engine is slightly vibrating. That shouldn't worry you, because there are four engines, so you can feel perfectly safe. And, we are at the unbelievable altitude of 62,000 feet, flying at a speed of 1,050 mph as planned . . . But, if you're looking at that engine, maybe you can notice that the second engine is glowing, or more precisely one could say that it's burning. That shouldn't worry you either, since there are two more engines on the left side, and the altitude and speed are still as planned . . ."*

"Those of you that are sitting on the left side shouldn't worry if you notice that one engine on that side has been missing for about ten minutes. But, I must ask for your attention of one thing that seems to be a little more serious. Along the aisle, all the way through the plane, a crack has appeared. Some of you are, I suppose, looking through the crack and seeing the waves of the Atlantic. Those of you that have very good eyes can notice a small life boat on those waves that has been thrown out of the plane. Well, ladies and gentlemen, your captain is speaking from that life boat."

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations very similar to that plane flight. Everything around us seems to be falling apart and the person in charge seems to be as remote as the captain in the raft on the ocean far below. Maybe we have had more than our share of those times when our plane was coming apart and our Captain seemed far off. I assure you the Captain was closer than you think. There is no power in this world

that can snatch us from God's hand. God is our shepherd " our best Friend. Our God is greater than anything else. Won't you trust this great God today?

If you feel you are in the situation, where God seems far away, I suggest you read Jesus' words in John, chapter 10 beginning with the 27th verse: "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." God, the person in charge of our lives, is not remote from us. He is our Shepherd and he is leading the way. Leading us; giving us eternal life; assuring us we will never perish; and, my friends, no one can snatch you out of His hands. Amen

For you to think about:

- Do you have times when you feel far away from God?

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for all who grieve today: risen Christ, **hear our prayer.**

For those mourning the loss of their land, or their home, or their identity...

For those mourning the loss of their dignity, or their independence, or their understanding...

For those mourning the loss of their health, or their mobility, or their strength...

For those mourning the loss of someone they love...

risen Christ, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

(based on a prayer published in Roots for this Sunday)

A prayer for Ukraine

Holy and Gracious God, We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders. We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear. We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness. We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace. We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ. Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine. And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son. Lord have mercy. Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Hymn – STF 351 - In Christ alone my hope is found

<https://youtu.be/eDTcw0t2JA8>

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|---|---|
| 1 In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song ;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease !
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand. | 3 There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain :
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again !
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine —
bought with the precious blood of Christ. |
| 2 In Christ alone ! — who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe !
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save :
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on him was laid ;
here in the death of Christ I live. | 4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me ;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand ;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand ! |

Keith Getty (b. 1974) & Stuart Townend (b. 1963) Words and Music: © 2001, Thankyou Music.

Blessing

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and those you love, this day and for ever more. **Amen**