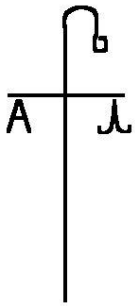


E-Series

I Am



"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep." –John 10:11-15

This past Sunday, it was wonderful to hear some of the ways that you have seen evidence of Easter. To hear those testimonies, to hear all the ways in which you were willing to witness to God's resurrection power at work in and among us, was truly inspiring to me.

This coming Sunday, I THINK we will be reflecting together on John 10:11-18. In this passage, Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd." When we read these words in English, they don't seem all that odd. But, in Greek they are. Jesus says, "ego eimi." Literally translated to English that would be, "I am, I am." Jesus does this several times in the Gospel of John. "I am, I am the Gate." "I am, I am the door." "I am, I am the Good Shepherd." "I am, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Why would Jesus speak in such a redundant manner?

Many of you will remember some of the parallels we have explored lately between the Gospel of John and the Old Testament. This may be one more of those.

When the Israelites, God's chosen people, were in slavery to Egypt, they cried out to God, and he heard their cries (God always hears the cries of the oppressed). So, God decided to deliver them. One day a young Israelite named Moses was walking through the desert when he saw a bush that was on fire but was not being consumed. God spoke to him from that bush and told him to go to Egypt and lead his people out of slavery. After some hemming and hawing, Moses asked, "Well, when I they bring me before Pharaoh, what should I tell him? Who do I say sent me?" God's answer is priceless. "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14)

I AM who I AM. I will be who I will be. I AM, I AM. That is God's name. It's a name that Jews consider too holy even to utter. It can only be written. YHWH (YaHWeH—there are no vowels in Hebrew). I AM who I AM.

When Jesus says, "I am, I am the Good Shepherd," he's not stuttering. It's a clue. It's a statement. Jesus is subtly testifying to something that John has already said at the beginning of the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word *was* God, and everything was brought into being through the Word...and the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:1ff). Jesus is tacitly saying that he is the I AM from the beginning.

Take some time to read and reflect on John 10:11-18. What else is Jesus saying here? How is God speaking to you in this passage?

Glad to be a Sheep,
Pastor Michael