

Sermon - May 8, 2022 - Easter 4 - Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, when we think of Jesus, our Good and Beautiful Shepherd. Every year, on this, the fourth Sunday of Easter, our Gospel is from the 10th chapter of John in which Jesus calls himself the good shepherd. You might like to read the entire 10th chapter at home? Jesus calls himself the good shepherd or the beautiful shepherd. He also says he is the gate by which we the sheep enter the fold. People at that time are not understanding him though. Jesus says 'I and the Father are one.' And that is not received well. They say he's comparing himself to God.

In this morning's Gospel, Jesus is reassuring. He says we, his sheep hear his voice. If we can hear his voice, he is nearby. Jesus says he knows us his sheep and that we follow him. He gives us eternal life, that is, life with him and that we will never perish. We are in his hands and no one will snatch us out of his hands. So here is another image. We are in his hands. We are safe...in his hands.



This image of the hands is picked up in this wood print by an artist called Scott Erickson.

The hands are in the shape of a heart. The hands hold a rowboat in choppy water. Does this image capture the security of being in God's hands and that nothing is able to snatch us away from there?

But the print also images something more. The boat is in the midst of somewhat troubled waters. The currents are swirling around. There is and will still be trouble and challenge, when we are in God's hands. Trusting in God does not remove challenges.

Second, the rowboat has paddles: in God's hands is still an active belonging that is, we have a part to play. We participate, we do what we can, we take up the oars.

We can row and guide the boat. We have our part to play.

Following Jesus, listening to his voice, letting ourselves be known by him—and knowing Jesus—this is the Easter Resurrection new life. We are called to this life with the risen Saviour every day, every minute. The same power that sustains everything, including God's own self, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, is the same power that allows us to recognize the Saviour's voice, to know intimately our good God, and to follow after him. Let us go forward trusting we are in God's hands, listening for our Lord speaking and ready to row our boats as best we can. Amen.

PRAYER



Forty Days of Practice

JUSTIN MCROBERTS
& SCOTT ERICKSON

Postscript: The Print shown is on the cover of a book by the artist called Prayer: Forty Days of Practice A simple yet profound guide to facilitate the instinctively human desire to pray. You can get it on Amazon.

This unique book has short prayers and thought-provoking imagery, interspersed with contemplative reflections and suggested practices, The simplicity of the prayers and the aesthetic appeal of the images will inspire people in every facet of life, including those with no real religious background at all.