

April 21, 2024

My Sheep Hear My Voice

[John 10: 11-18](#)

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

In 1998, our family, along with approximately 60 other West Virginians, participated in a WV Volunteers in Mission trip to Russia, led by the Rev. Tom Clark. Our project was to build playgrounds in orphanages outside of Moscow. Getting to the orphanages required us to travel through airports and subway stations and ride in planes, trains and buses.

Upon arriving at the airport, we quickly learned that we could not understand the language, could not read the signs, and basically had no idea where we were going or how to get there. We were totally dependent on Rev. Clark to lead us and keep us safe in a very foreign land.

If you ever had the privilege of meeting Tom, one thing that stood out was his distinctive voice. It was deep and loud and strong and could be heard above the noise and confusion of the airports and the subways as he told us to stay together, follow him, and do not stray. In those circumstances, he was like a shepherd leading his sheep.

In our Bible passage for today, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd" and a few verses later he says "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me." (John 10:27)

I must be honest and say that many times in my life I have struggled to hear Jesus's voice, struggled to find the direction I was praying for, or struggled to find the peace I was searching for. Why was I not getting an answer? So many times I thought to myself, it would be so much simpler if the voice was loud and distinctive and could be heard above the noise and confusion of life. But I have come to understand that, at least part of the time, is not the way it works.

A pastor recently reminded me of the Parable of the Lost Sheep, in which the shepherd leaves the 99 sheep to find the one lost. Would the shepherd have left the 99 if he did not know they were safe, protected, and would be fine? In those periods of life when we cannot hear the voice of the Lord, is it possible to imagine that he is not responding because he knows we are safe and protected and trusts us to find the right direction and make the correct decisions?

May it be so.

Prayer: *God of grace and mercy, open our hearts and minds to hear your message to us and give us the ability to discern your voice above the noise and confusion of the world. Help us to know that even during those periods of life when we cannot hear your voice to trust and know that you are always there watching over us. Amen*

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