

How does the Good Shepherd guide His flock?

+ *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts, be now and always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.*

In the past, God led His people in many different ways; but if we are looking for God's guidance today, things are much simpler – just follow Jesus! (Hebrews 1:1-2) As we saw in today's Gospel, Jesus is the **“Good Shepherd”** and He promises to guide His sheep – we simply need to hear His voice (John 10:27).

So, how then do we hear Jesus' voice in our busy daily lives?

2,000 years ago, Jesus shepherded His people both by teaching them Himself, and also by sending out Apostles authorized to speak on His behalf (Matthew 9:36-39). Jesus then gave His Apostles the Holy Spirit so that they could complete the inspired, *“God-breathed”* Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16) The Holy Bible remains fully sufficient to *“thoroughly equip”* us for every good work that God has prepared for us to do (2 Timothy 3:17), and this means that in every circumstance of our lives, the Word of God is a *“lamp to our feet and a light to our path”* (Psalm 119:105).

Holy Scripture gives us clear moral instructions, but still leaves us the freedom of self-will. The best example of this can be found in the Garden of Eden, where God commanded Adam not to eat from the one tree which would harm him, but also gave Adam the freedom to eat from any of the other trees as and when he liked (Genesis 2:16-17). Similarly today, God has given us moral commands and principles for our lives, but when there are two or more good options before us, He has given us the right as His children to choose freely between them.

Sometimes, when faced with several good choices, we may wonder whether one option might be better than the other? When we are struggling to discern which way forward is the “best” and most in line with God's will for us (Philippians 1:10), we can seek guidance from others (Proverbs 15:22), and especially from our Good Shepherd, who delights to give wisdom generously to all who Him ask in faith (James 1:5) And so, as we weigh our different options, we are able to trust the LORD to lead us in the way He wants us to go (Proverbs 16:9). This means that when the moment comes to make our big decisions, we do not need to worry that by making the “wrong” choices we could miss out on God's best plan for our life.

Where necessary, the Good Shepherd will guide us both internally and subconsciously (Proverbs 21:1) turning our heads by His promised Holy Spirit *“to will and to act according to His good purpose”* (Philippians 2:13); and also externally and circumstantially, as He carefully arranges all things (Psalm 104:10-14) down to the very smallest detail (Matthew 10:29-30) to fulfill His sovereign plan. In fact, the Good Shepherd is so committed to guiding His children, that in exceptional cases He may also even use special or supernatural means such as visions or angels to make sure we stay on the right path (Acts 12:6-11; 16:9)

One thing is certain, and that is that we are God's precious flock (Acts 20:28) and Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He calls each of His sheep by name (John 10:3) and we are very precious to Him, so precious that he laid down His life for us.

We do not need to know all the details of the journey our Good Shepherd is planning for us (Deuteronomy 29:29) our job is simply to trust Him, listen to His voice in Holy Scripture, and follow where He leads (John 10:27) in humble obedience. This is one of the ‘risks’ of being a person of faith; trusting the Good Shepherd for everything in life.

Although right now you may find it hard to believe, but one day you will look back in amazement at how Jesus has led you, weaving a path through your pain, your mistakes and even your sins, to reach His perfect destination for you. (Genesis 50:20 in the life of Joseph)

Until then, Jesus' command is simple: hear Him and obey Him as He leads you on life's journey. *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen