

The Good Shepherd Who Holds Your Hands

May 11, 2025

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John 10:22-30 ²² Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. ²³ And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. ²⁴ Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and *My* Father are one.

If a child is starving on the streets and one day you give them one loaf of bread, he is often truly grateful. If you give a child plenty of bread every day of their life, they may take it for granted and believe that they deserve it. We have a tendency to take for granted that which we receive every day.

Mother's Day is a reminder not to take for granted those who feed and nourished us. The point of Mother's Day is not so that one day a year we thank our mothers. The point is that once a year we are reminded not to take our mothers for granted and to be thankful every day of the year.

A mother gives birth to her children and then continues to give them life by giving them food and clothing and by grabbing the back of their shirts when they are about to do something foolish like trying to use a kite to fly off the top of a roof. A mother gives her life for her children through continual daily tasks of washing, cleaning, cooking, reading them bedtime stories and many other things. Our mothers are not perfect but whatever mistakes they may have made are nothing compared to 6,574 days of care, concern and love. The Apostle Peter reminds us:

1 Peter 4:8 love will cover a multitude of sins

As the scripture also says:

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies.

Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

A good mother is worth more than gold, but she can't do it on her own. It is a lot of work, a lot of worry, and a lot of

sleepless nights. What our mothers need isn't just thanks and praise, but help, strength, reassurance etc. They need support from their husbands but even more from their Good Shepherd Jesus.

Jesus reminds mothers and all of us that he is there for us. He is the Good Shepherd who cares for you and offers you both rest and forgiveness from all your mistakes. We may not be perfect mothers or children, but Jesus not only offers forgiveness but also promises to work all things for good. He not only promises to strengthen us for the difficulties ahead but to lead and guide us through the dark spot.

He is the Good Shepherd who is here to hold your hand.

John 10:22-24 ²² Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. ²³ And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. ²⁴ Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus was walking in the temple during the "Feast of Dedication." Dedication is a translation of the Greek ἐγκαίνια which is a translation of the Hebrew חנוכה (Chanukah). This

was the festival of Hanukkah, which celebrated the end of the reign of Antiochus IV and the rededication of the temple to worship of God after Antiochus had profaned it by setting up pagan worship in the temple.

It was a festival that celebrated liberation from a false and evil shepherd. He did not lead the people in peace and life but in death and destruction. It was a festival that look forward with eager anticipation to the coming of the one true Good Shepherd whom God would send to lead his people to pleasant pasture.

During this festival reading from Ezekiel 37 was a part of the liturgy:

Ezekiel 37:24 David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd;

As the people celebrate this festival and are reminded of the Lord's promise of a good shepherd, they come with excitement, anticipation, and also frustration to Jesus. "Tell us," They demand, "are you the Christ? Are you the good shepherd whom we have been waiting for?"

They were frustrated because they had been waiting so long for the coming of their shepherd. We however no longer have to wait our Good Shepherd is here and is present with us.

John 10:25 ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.

This verse reminds us of the foolishness of unbelievers. Just as the Jews do to Jesus so the unbelievers also press God, demanding that if he is real, if he exists that he show himself. They demand that he declare himself.

Just as Jesus answered the Jews so also God answers the unbelievers. He has already declared himself and they did not believe him. What good will it do for him to declare himself again? Indeed, God has declared himself on Mount Sinai, on Mount Carmel, in the baptism of Jesus, in the empty tomb and many other places. They would not listen then, why should he declare himself again?

Moreover, as Jesus reminds the Jews, he has also declared himself through his works. The works of Jesus and the mighty works of God declare him. The unbeliever looks at the sky and says how is it possible that the stars and galaxy exist, but we look at the sky and think what a wonderful thing God has done. More than that, God is known by his work in sending his son for our sins. This above all is the work of God that declares his love, that he send us our Good Shepherd.

We know God by his fruit. This is the fruit of his love that he died for our sin. This is the fruit by which we know God that he has become our Good Shepherd. He gave his life for us, therefore we have confidence that he will also give us every good thing.

26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

Probably one of the greatest anxieties of being a mother is knowing that your hands are not always strong enough to keep your little ones safe. But we have this assurance in all our worries that Jesus hands are strong enough.

Peter reminds us 1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

The job of a mother is a difficult one, but you are not alone. Your good shepherd has promised to carry you and your loved ones in his almighty hands.

It has sometimes been said, “God helps those who help themselves,” or “Do your best and God will do the rest.” That is not what Jesus says in our text. He tells us it is his hands that always hold us. He does this even though we are sinners by his grace. Even when you have sinned you can trust that God’s hands will hold you.

30 "I and My Father are one."

This final phrase is important in the context. Jesus seeks to reassure those who do believe that as the Good Shepherd he came and will keep them safe. All such promises however are useless, unless Jesus himself has the authority and power to back them up.

I could stand up here and give you all the promises about the economy or about the president that I want. Such promises would be worth less than the time it takes me to speak them, because I have neither the power nor the authority to speak about either. Jesus however makes it clear that he has the authority to speak about the promises of the Father, and that what he says the Father will do.

He has promised eternal life to those who listen to his voice and follow him. He will not lead us into death or an empty and worthless worship. Though he will at times lead us

through dark valleys he will always lead us out again into green pastures.

For those mothers who today for various reasons might be missing their children, put your trust in your Good Shepherd who will lead you through the darkness of this life to eternal life.

These promises from Jesus are sure and certain because he is equal to the Father. He has proven his power and his authority through his miracles. The Father also has declared his agreement with this statement when he spoke at Jesus baptism, on the mount of transfiguration and when he raised from the dead

Our mothers hold us not just when we are young but our whole lives. Jesus is our Good Shepherd who holds all of us in his almighty hands.