

The title for today's message is: **Safe in our Shepherd's Arms**

Jesus said: ***I am the good shepherd.***

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, amen

We have all seen pictures of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Maybe you even have one hanging in your home.

Now one of the most well-known pictures of Jesus is the one where He is among a flock of sheep, carrying a lamb in His arms close to His heart.

Certainly a picture which was made to illustrate what Jesus said right here in our text: ***"I am the Good Shepherd."***

With these words Jesus imprints in our hearts His love and power as He touches us with the promise of His gracious Shepherding.

It's a picture that we should hold in our hearts and minds as the Holy Spirit comes to us through these words that Jesus spoke.

Hold the Good Shepherd picture in your heart as we focus on the theme: **Safe in our Shepherd's Arms.**

Look, we are saved because of two things, first because of His love for us, as He laid down His life for us.

And second, because of His power, which took up His life again in victory for us. Yes, we are **Safe in our Shepherd's arms.**

In about three weeks from now we will honor our mothers on Mother's Day for all the sacrifices she made for us in order to train us, nourish and care for us.

Sacrifices that flow from our mother's Love for us. Yet, even the greatest sacrifice our mother's made for us.

They do not compare to the sacrifice the Good Shepherd made because of His love and compassion for us.

There's just no doubt that the good shepherd's love for us is much greater and much stronger than any human love.

His love reached from the heights of the highest heaven to the depths of the deepest pit. For you see the Good Shepherd is in fact, God.

That's right, He is the Almighty, the Eternal. He is the glorious Son of the Father. And what are we? We are nothing but dust and ashes.

We began life in rebellion against Him because we had no true love for God or desire to obey His will.

There was no natural bond of affection between us, like between a mother and a child.

Yes, we strayed away from Him into the muck, just like a dumb sheep. We are helpless and easy prey without Him, like a lamb in the wild woods.

Without Him, we wander over the ravine to our death, but that's how great His love is, His undeserved love that we all call grace.

His love is so great that He reached down to the depths of our sinfulness, right into the slimy, murky pit of our death and hell to pull us out.

His love rescued us, while we were still His enemies. His love rescued us to make us His sheep and lambs, all to hold us safe in His arms.

And this love that reached out so far for us is stronger than any other love. His love is so strong that He carried the full weight of our sins.

He carried the full burden of our punishment as He carried our sin to the cross where He laid down His life for you and me.

No one else, not even our mother's, could do what God did for us. And we can't even imagine the pain that our God took in our place.

Now, here in our text Jesus shows His great love for us by contrasting the Good Shepherd with a hired hand

Jesus said regarding the hired hand: ***He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.***

Jesus then said: ***I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.***

How great a love that sacrificed Himself for His sheep, not because He was forced to, but willingly out of His unconditional love.

Jesus said: ***No one takes it from me (meaning His life), but I lay it down of my own accord.***

Here Jesus makes it clear that His sheep were not only the Jewish believers who at the time He was speaking to.

But He says: ***I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.***

There's simply no doubt that Jesus' great, love, is for you and me and all who believe in Him.

He wants to keep us safe in His arms. Listen to His voice, believe His words of promise, trust in His forgiving love and follow Him.

Yes indeed, the Good Shepherd who loves us so much that He died for us, is indeed alive and well.

He has won the victory over Satan and death. Yes, He has won the victory for all believers.

And remember, that roaring lion, that ravenous wolf, the devil himself, cant devour us as long as we're with and following our Good Shepherd.

We're safe in His arms where death no longer has a hold on us. Look, all who die believing and trusting in Jesus as their Savior, continue to live with Him in heaven.

And when Jesus comes again in His glory on the Last Day, He will bring with Him the believers who have fallen asleep in death.

He will raise all the dead and give to us and all believers glorious bodies.

In 1 John chapter 3 were told: ***we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.***

Look until that final victory, you and I can live each day in confidence as we take to heart the words of our Good Shepherd and listen to His voice.

He feeds us with the quiet waters and green pastures of His Word, His Word restores our soul with His promise of forgiveness, peace, life, and salvation.

Even in the dark valleys of life we need not fear evil, for He is with us. He wants to strengthen our faith to bear up under even the greatest hardship.

Even though the nations and world around us rage and plot and take their stand against our Good Shepherd.

He enables us, to speak His Word with great boldness, just as He did for the Apostles.

We speak because we know that we are safe in His arms. Nothing is beyond the power of our Good Shepherd, nothing.

This, too, is how our Good Shepherd is of greater comfort to us than even our mothers.

Maybe the most difficult part of being a mother or a father is when we're unable to help our children.

But remember, Jesus is never unable to help His sheep, He is the Almighty, so entrust yourself, and your children to His care.

Keep listening to His voice, keep believing His promises, yes, keep following our Shepherds voice, as He carries us in His strong arms.

Praise God that we are indeed; **Safe in our Shepherd's Arms**

Amen.

Let us pray: O Lord your Son said: "I am the Good Shepherd." Lord we pray to Hold that picture in our hearts and minds as we hear Your Word.

Lord allow us to remember His Words in our Baptism, and as we receive the Lord's Supper this day and every time we come to His table.

Lord keep us mindful that these are the tools our Good Shepherd uses to care for us and to keep us close to Him.

Lord we are your "little lambs," have us say to ourselves and to picture ourselves safe in your arms. For in your love you laid down your life for us.

Yet in your power you took up your life in victory for us. Thank you for keeping us safe in your mighty arms. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.