

Sunday, October 6, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「The Good Shepherd and the False Shepherd」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue
Ezekiel 34:4~6, 11~12, John 10:1~12

❶ **【I understand the voice of the real shepherd】** Verses 1~2 "Whoever enters the sheeppen without passing through the gate and comes over other places is a thief and a robber, and he who enters through the gate is a shepherd." There is. In the Old Testament, God was often compared to a shepherd, and man was likened to a flock of sheep. The famous one is Psalm 23:1~3, "The Lord is the shepherd, and I lack nothing, and He will rest me in the fields of green grass, and by the waters of rest, he will bring my soul back to life." There is. Therefore, sheep refer to human beings. The "sheep enclosure" would be "the world, the community, and the church." What is a "gate"? In Palestine, the whole village had a communal sheep enclosure (shed), and when the sheep from all over the village came back from the field, they were put in it. The enclosure had a door (gate), and only the gatekeeper had the key, and only the official shepherd hired by the villagers opened the door. Here, Jesus is the official shepherd sent by God. There were many unofficial shepherds, false shepherds. Such was the case with the leaders who led society at that time, especially the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Herodians, and Essenes. Man, the sheep, does not listen to their voices, but obeys the voice of Jesus, the true shepherd. It is written that the sheep hear the voice and do not follow the others. It is interesting to note that it says, "Discern their voices" (v. 3), "The sheep know their voices" (v. 5), and "They do not know the voices of others." When you listen to a pastor's sermon, you know, "Oh, this is indeed a word from God." When they hear a fake pastor's sermon, they don't listen to it, saying, "This is not a word from God, it's something different," and they "run away" (v. 5) from the pastor. This is because there is oil in the believers, and it is possible to distinguish the real from the fake. "I have written about those who seek to deceive you, but there is always in you the oil that has been poured out by the Son, ... This oil teaches us about all things." (1 John 2:26~27) This oil is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit identifies false teachers who smell different from Christ, who is the same as Him, and teaches believers. The deceit does not smell of Christ, it smells foreign, and he feels that there is something unsafe.

● This is still happening now. I've heard stories of pastors scattering their followers. A certain church had nearly 100 members, but as soon as the pastor came, the number dropped to 30. The pastor said to the congregation, "You can stay in the church until 12 o'clock, and if you stay in the chapel after that, I will call the police." Then they will all run away.

② **[Through Jesus to life]** Verse 7 says, "I am the gate of the sheep," and verse 9 says, "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me shall be saved." There is. This time, Jesus refers to himself as "the gate of the sheep." Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall, and you had to go through a gate to get out. Among them was a gate named "Sheep's Gate", through which the shepherds took their sheep to the pasture. In the same way, in order for us to gain eternal life, we must go through Jesus. Christ is the gate to God the Father, the gate to heaven. Jesus is connected to heaven. Passing through the false gate can lead to death and darkness. "Enter through me" symbolizes the baptismal ceremony. Baptism is the death and resurrection of Christ. It is only when we become one with Christ that we enter the kingdom of heaven.

● When you go to the Miyakojima Detention Center, there is a gate, and when you pass through it, almost everyone rings "beep" here. There, you will be inspected by a metal detector and you will have to leave your mobile phone and other items that you cannot bring outside. There are certain things you can't take with you to enter heaven. Throwing it away is called "death." Things that are alien to Christ, things that are perishable, and bad thoughts are stuck in us, and the effort to throw them away is to die.

③ **[Christ is the Good Shepherd]** Verses 10~11 say, "I have come that the sheep may receive life and receive it in abundance. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." There is. Chrysostomos in the 4th century said, "When he leads us to God the Father, he calls himself the gate, and when He protects us, he is called the shepherd." Here, Jesus referred to himself as the "Good Shepherd." Because there was a "bad shepherd." The characteristics of the "bad shepherd" are written in front of it. They are called robbers, and it is written that they "steal, slaughter, and destroy" (v. 10). They approach you for God's sake, for your sake, but they really come for their own benefit. They use and sacrifice others for their own sake. The work of the devil is clear and "destruction". It destroys the relationship between God and man, destroys the relationship of trust between human beings, and destroys society. This is the sign of what came from evil. Jesus, on the other hand, was the opposite, coming to restore and restore what had been destroyed, to unite the two. Binding, healing, and life-giving, these are the signs of what comes from God. Jesus came to give life to man, the sheep. Not only to receive life, but also to receive it abundantly. He came to give us a life so abundant that even if we received it with both hands, it would overflow. It says, "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." A true shepherd sacrifices himself and lays down his life for the sake of man. The good shepherd gets smaller and poorer, and the sheep grow bigger and richer. The shepherd is happy when the sheep grow bigger, become

more energetic, and become more vibrant.

④ **【Why was there such a thing as a clergy?】** As I learned in the history of the church, the early church eventually had three things. These are the Bible, the Creed, and the Priesthood. "Occupation" means that there was a profession separate from the laity, such as "bishops, elders, and deacons." Bishops are now called "bishops, bishops, and chairmen." The term "elder" is a member of the Protestant religion, but it is originally a priest who has received the ordination of hands, and it refers to a "priest or pastor". Deacons are also not laity, but "auxiliaries, deacons, and evangelists" (Deacon in English) like Stephen and Philip. There are those who claim that such a system is an evil created by those in power in the church, but they are wrong. It did not come from power, but from the authority of God. If left unchecked, the church will become chaotic and chaotic. Such was the case with the Corinthian church. There were more and more teachers who claimed to be the leader, saying that they had received revelation from God, and who were speaking the false gospel in the absence of the apostles and Paul. Therefore, Paul asked, "Did the word of God come out of you, or did it come only to you?" (1 Corinthians 14:36). That is why teachers were appointed to carry on the teachings of the apostles. There are those who say that the clergy system is discriminatory and evil, and that all churches should be flat, but that is not true. It is not discrimination, but distinction. Distinction is not evil. Distinction is for work. The distinction between men and women is God's creation for work. The very fact that there is a choice means that there is a distinction from the beginning. The reason why God distinguished and established teachers is to serve the believers with His work.

It's the same with the way we read the Bible. No matter how you read it, there are as many interpretations as there are people. Even the Unification Society uses the same Bible as we do. But I interpret it differently. Is that a good idea? So it became necessary to establish a creed. We were all born out of necessity. "For God is not a God of disorder, but a God of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

● Chrysostomos, bishop of Constantinople in the 4th century, wrote his "Treatise on Priesthood" in the sense that he declined when he was asked to become a priest. He said, "Anyone can become a priest for himself, and it is easy for him to fulfill his own salvation, but it is not easy to become a priest for many and give salvation to them. This priesthood can only be done by a few. This is because it is an intermediary between God and man for the sake of the world. For the priest is the one who has been given majestic authority from above, and his position above the angels is of God's creation. The priest must have the same image as Christ, endure persecution, become an offering to God, and lay down

his life for many. It's not a duty that you can do." I wrote.

I don't consider myself to be the Good Shepherd. In the book of Ezekiel we read: "You... Do not try to feed the herd. ... Do not bring back those who have been hunted down, nor seek those who have been lost" (Ezekiel 34:2~4). Same for me. I scattered a number of people. We are not actively seeking the lost. You will be rebuked by the Lord in heaven. I've seen a lot of good pastors. In the past, pastors and priests spent time on their followers. I know a pastor who became a guarantor of an honorarium of 30 million yen for his followers and paid it. There was also a pastor who went to the homes of church members in the middle of the night and prayed door to door. Some, like Father Kolbe, laid down their lives in their place. The love of Christ made it so. It's not about logic, it's about practicing love. I think that's a real pastor. I'm not even close to my feet. I think of you as Jesus' and His sheep. I didn't buy it by laying down my life, but because Jesus bought it. To serve you is to serve Christ, and I want to serve the members of any church. If we don't feed our sheep, Christ will be angry with us. Pray that I may be a good shepherd. Follow Christ and pray that you will live like Him.