

The Fourth Sunday of Easter – Sunday 30 April 2023

• Acts 2.42-27; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2.1-10; John 10.1-10

Sheep and stones. Selling everything you have and holding all things in common. Today's readings share a thread of the communal, of collectivity, of connection. They are reminders that we are more than individuals, that we are each precious and part of a larger whole at the same time. There is not one stone in the temple that isn't important, but its importance lies in being part of the whole structure. One stone is not a cathedral. One sheep is not a flock. Together we make up the whole, and we make the whole by sharing. Like sheep, like bricks, we are made for being with each other.

- Pray that we can allow ourselves to be shepherded, so that we might feel supported and tended. Pray that we can allow ourselves to be hewn, so that we can better support others.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, the Anglican Church of Hong Kong.

Text: Joshua Catt St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023

Reflection

Readings - Sunday 30 April 2023 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sentence

"I am the good shepherd," says the Lord, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." *John 10.11*

Collect

God of all power,
you called from death our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep:
send us as shepherds to rescue the lost,
to heal the injured,
and to feed one another with understanding;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

First Reading: Acts 2.42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 23

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd:
therefore can I lack nothing.
- ² He will make me lie down in green pastures:
and lead me beside still waters.
- ³ He will refresh my soul:
and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.



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- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the face of those who trouble me:
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely your goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life:
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2.1-10

¹ Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation - ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone, A cornerstone chosen and precious; And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner", ⁸ and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumbled because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

For the word of the Lord, ***Thanks be to God.***

Gospel: John 10.1-10

¹ "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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