

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
4th Sunday of the Easter Season
2021—B Cycle



“[Man Carrying Sheep](#)”

image courtesy of [Pavel Czerwinski](#)
at [Unsplash.com](#)

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

Opening Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

Prayer based on Psalm 23

Be my shepherd, Lord,
and bless me with all good things
that I may be refreshed
with your overflowing cup
and dwell in your house forever.
Amen.

Source: [Ludolph of Saxony](#), d. 1378

Translation in traditional English, from the [Sarum Psalter](#)

Fourth Sunday of Easter Season Readings

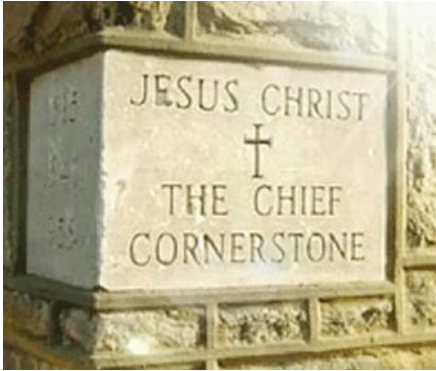
Acts of the Apostles 4: 8-12 “Jesus is the stone rejected by you, the builders, who has become the cornerstone.”

Psalm 118: 1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28-29 “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.”

First letter of St. John 3: 1-2 “See what love the Father has bestowed on us.”

John 10: 11-18 “I am the good shepherd.”

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (4: 8-12)



“Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke up, ‘Leaders of the people! Elders! It is a fact, that we are being examined today for a good deed done to a cripple. How was he healed? You, and all the people of Israel, must know, that this man stands before you cured, through the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazorean. You had him crucified. But God raised him from the dead. Jesus is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation in anyone else; for there is no other Name given to humankind, all over the world, by which we may be saved.’”

Personal Reflection

The Jewish leaders bring Peter and John before them for questioning. These leaders belong to the Sadducees, who did not believe in resurrection of the dead. These men believe they alone possess the truth, because they are more learned and have authority in the Temple hierarchy. The two poorly educated men before them have dared to refute their statements. Peter marvels at the absurdity of standing trial for having healed a sick man. This text shows that all of us, regardless of our upbringing and level of education, can give powerful witness to Christ and to the truth—if we are willing to get involved. It also shows how wrong we can be at times if we act the same way.

“We are being examined today for a good deed done to a cripple.”

— *When did I ever get in trouble for doing what I considered a good thing? Who objected to my words and/or actions? How did I respond? What was the outcome?*

“Jesus is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.”

— *When did I suffer rejection in my life? What person or institution rejected me? How did that rejection open new and better opportunities for me?*

All of us can be witnesses of Christ and of the truth—each in our own way—by our lifestyle and actions.

— *What is my unique form of witnessing to the truth of Christ? To whom do I give witness?*

Responsorial Psalm 118 (1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28-29)

Note: A different set of verses in Psalm 118 appeared in the responsorial psalm for the 2nd Sunday of Easter.

Processional song of praise.

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.

Alleluia! Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
his loving kindness endures forever.
It is better to take refuge in Yahweh
than trust in the help of humans.
It is better to take refuge in Yahweh
than trust in the might of princes.

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.

I thank you for having answered me,
for having rescued me.
The stone rejected by the builders
has become the cornerstone.
This was Yahweh's doing
and we marvel at it.

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.

Blessed is he who comes in Yahweh's name!
We praise you from the house of Yahweh.
You are my God, and I give you thanks.
You are my God, and I give you praise.
Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.

Personal Reflection

The Jewish faithful chanted this Hallel (praise) psalm when their holy day processions entered the Temple in Jerusalem. The people and their leader alternated with the choir of the Levites. At the end, the priests gave Aaron's blessing to the newly freed Hebrew slaves (Num 6: 23-24: "May Yahweh bless you and keep you! May Yahweh let his face shine on you and be gracious to you!")

The people of Israel sang their thanksgiving to God who saved them from death and raised them up. They offer thanksgiving to God who chooses the poor and the despised of this world and builds his kingdom with them.

Later, Christians applied the statement, "The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone," to rejection of Jesus by his people.

"I thank you for having answered me, for having rescued me."

— *When in my life did God "rescue" me from some physical, mental, or spiritual danger? What were the circumstances? How did it affect or change my life? What positive good did it bring about?*

— How have I “repaid” the Lord for that rescue blessing?

A Reading from First Letter of St. John (3: 1-2)

“See what singular love the Father has for us: we are called children of God, and we really are. This is why the world does not know us, because it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children, and what we shall become has not yet been shown. Yet, when he appears in his glory, we know we shall be like him, for then we shall see him as he is.”

Personal Reflection

Every human being, every animal, every plant—the entire Universe—is a “child” of God. John reminds us that, as followers of Christ, we are God’s children in a unique and special way. So must live as such because of that love. How do we demonstrate that we are God’s children? By breaking away from sin, keeping the commandment of love, and openly expressing (living) our faith. John calls our attention to two particular points:

1. In order to become like God our Father, we need to seek perfection (though we will never attain it);
2. As God’s children, we will one day return to dwell with our Father who created us.

“See what singular love the Father has for us!”

— *When have I experienced God’s “singular love” for me? When and how did I recognize that love? How has it changed my attitudes and behavior?*

— *What does it mean in my own life to be “perfect,” when I know that no one is ever truly. . . perfect? Whom do I credit for the goodness that is in me?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (10: 11-18)



Jesus Good Shepherd

Source: Grace Lutheran Church, Yorba Linda, CA

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Not so the hired hand, or any other person who is not the shepherd, and to whom the sheep do not belong. They abandon the sheep as soon as they see the wolf coming; then the wolf snatches and scatters the sheep. This is because the hired hand works for pay and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father. Because of this, I give my life for my sheep. I have other sheep who are not of this fold. These I have to lead as well, and they shall listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock since there is one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down freely. It is mine to lay down and to take up again: this mission I received from my Father.”

Personal Reflection

We can imagine one of those sheepfolds in which the flocks of various shepherds are gathered together for the night under the vigilance of one caretaker. At dawn, each shepherd calls his own sheep, who recognize the shepherd's voice and let their shepherd lead them out. The Hebrew Scriptures foretold the day in which God would come to gather together his dispersed people to live in their rightful land.

Jesus is that Shepherd. He came to accomplish what was announced by the prophets, but he will do it his way, not in the way we expect. The Jews of his time expected the Shepherd/Messiah to revive their former prosperity. They would again be Yahweh's privileged nation among all other nations. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had other ideas.

"I have other sheep who are not of this fold. These I have to lead as well, and they shall listen to my voice."

— *Who might these "other sheep" be among my own circle of family, friends, and acquaintances? What role must I play in their "hearing" their shepherd's voice?*

"This mission I received from my Father."

— *What life mission have I received from the Father? How has it played out in my life and actions over the years? What new mission do I sense God calling me to—no matter how small or life-changing?*

The Week Ahead

Journaling Prompts

— *Based on this weekend's Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do this week regarding . . .*

(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and

(2) my life as an emissary of the Risen Christ, charged with bringing his values and grace to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?

— *Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?*

Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern? Why do I hesitate?

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings about events occurring in your life today and what you see happening in the world.

For Inspirational Viewing/Listening

Music:

[The Good Shepherd](#) from [Tommy Walker Ministries](#), vocal by Eileen Walker.

Video:

Bishop Barron's [Easter Homily](#) (2020)

Book:

[Night Driving: Notes from a Prodigal Soul](#) by Chad Bird

(Note: Just finished reading this and put the following review on Amazon: "*Night Driving*" blew me away! I've never read such a brutally honest memoir of faith possessed, lost, and found again. I found his descriptions of Scripture as story after story of human stupidity and failure and God's unending, patient, and faithful pursuit of his creatures. Reminded me of the classic poem, "[Hound of Heaven](#)," by [Francis Thompson](#).—AJG)

Again, I recommend this most wonderful yet down to earth Easter Season book: [The Risen Christ: The Forty Days After the Resurrection](#) by Carryl Houselander (Kindle Edition, also available in [paperback](#)). Originally published in 1954, this book is as timely today as ever.

Preview of Next Week's Scriptures

5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 9: 26-31 "When Saul (of Tarsus) arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples but they were all afraid of him."

Psalm 22: 26-28, 30-32 "Let the coming generation be told of the Lord that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born the justice he has known."

1 John 3: 18-24 "Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."

John 15: 1-8 "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit."

Closing Prayer

(edited for use here)

O God,
Shepherd of all your people,
deliver me from all the troubles,
worries and cares that assail me,
that I may always do
what is pleasing in your sight,
and remain safe
in the care of my Good Shepherd,
Jesus Christ my Lord.
Amen.

Source: [Pastor Paul C. Stratman](#), based on [a prayer from the Roman Breviary](#).

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

NOTE: *In last week's reflection, I used the term "eternal Purgatory" in one of the reflection questions. This is not a theological term. I made it up specifically for use in the question in which it appeared. I apologize if this caused any confusion.--AJG*

The Sunday readings are from [Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words](#))