

Our Great Shepherd
Hebrews 13:20-21

Introduction: Steve mentioned on Sunday that if you've been at Faith very long, you may recognize our passage for today as one of the "benedictions" that we pronounce at the end of our worship service. These verses connect the resurrection of Jesus Christ with His ongoing role as "the great Shepherd of the sheep." Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, He is able to shepherd us through this life. And the reality is . . . we are sheep in need of a Shepherd. Thankfully, we don't have to journey through this life harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

Opening Discussion: In what area of your life right now could you really use God's guidance?

Read Hebrews 13:20-21

1. According to this passage, who is God and what has He done?
2. What is significant about our being called "sheep?" In what ways are we sheep needing a shepherd?
3. How does Jesus describe himself as a shepherd (Read John 10:11-15)?
4. What does Hebrews 13:21 say God does in our lives?

Steve said:

God is actively equipping us to do everything He's called us to do. He is actively working in us those things that are pleasing in His sight. God uses anything and everything to accomplish His will in our lives. Nothing is off limits to God. Of course He uses His Word to shape and mold our thinking and our desires. But He also uses circumstances, other people, conversations, and whatever else we might experience in our lives.

5. In what area do you feel a need for God to equip you to do His will?
6. How does it make you feel to know that God is actively engaged in bringing you to maturity?

Steve said:

Of course God's commitment to accomplishing His will in our lives doesn't imply that we're passive or uninvolved in the process. Scripture makes it very clear that our wills are to be fully engaged in pursuing God. But our pursuit of Him is a response to His pursuit of us. In Philippians 2:12-13 Paul wrote, ". . . work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." The only reason we can pursue a life of obedience is because He is already at work in us – giving us the ability and the desire to please Him.

7. In what way do you sense you need to cooperate with God in the process of growing into maturity?

Steve said:

The question that you and I have to answer is simply, "Will I allow Jesus to be my good Shepherd?" Will we turn to Him in faith and will we follow Him in faith, allowing Him to accomplish His good purposes in our lives. Spiritual maturity isn't a matter of becoming so competent and self-sufficient that you no longer need a Shepherd. Spirit maturity involves coming to the place where you are convinced, "I am a sheep. I will always be a sheep. I need a Shepherd for my soul."

8. How consistently do you live with the belief that you are sheep in need of a shepherd for your soul?
9. What does it look like in your life right now to "allow Jesus to be [your] good Shepherd?"