

Read: 1 Peter 5:1-4

The Good Shepherd Is Seen Through Faithful Shepherds

1 Peter 5:2,4 (EHV)

Shepherd God's flock, that is among you, serving as overseers, not grudgingly, but willingly, as God desires, not because you are greedy for money but because you are eager to do it... And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive an unfading crown of glory.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It was a pretty good Sunday for little Andy. His parents didn't need to take him out during the service. He sang his version of the songs and even said part of the Lord's Prayer that his parents had been teaching him. After the service was over, Andy really wanted to greet the pastor. So he ran up to the pastor, shook his hand, and with a big grin blurted out, "Good morning, Jesus!"

Why would a little child call their pastor "Jesus"? No pastor is actually Jesus. No pastor is the Good Shepherd. After all, every pastor is a human just like everyone else, so why would a little Andy call his pastor "Jesus"? It's because he sees Jesus in his pastor.

God's Word tells us that a pastor's job is to watch over and care for the souls of God's flock, like shepherds watching over sheep. A shepherd makes sure that his sheep get green grass to eat and clean water to drink. He protects them from dangerous animals and bad weather, even if he has to risk his own safety. He takes care of them when they get hurt. He puts a lot of work into taking care of those sheep, even putting their needs before his own.

Is that what Jesus calls pastors to do? Yes, but in a different way. It all starts with what Jesus did for pastors and their flocks. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus willingly and eagerly rescued us from the dangers of sin and death. He put our needs before his own. He even gave his life to give us life. Now he provides for our needs. He heals our hurts and guides us on the path to heaven.

Like the Good Shepherd, God provides pastors to care for our souls like a shepherd does for his sheep. Pastors share the love of Jesus with us. Jesus wants his pastors to serve willingly and eagerly as he did, out of love for people rather than money or power. He wants pastors to be an example for believers like us. Above all, he wants pastors to shepherd his people through the faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word. When pastors shepherd us with God's Word, we see Jesus through their loving care.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- In what ways is Jesus the Good Shepherd?
- Who does Jesus provide to take care of us, his sheep?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why did little Andy call his pastor “Jesus”?
- In what ways do you see Jesus in your pastor(s)?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- One of the most important tasks of a shepherd is to protect his flock. From what does a pastor protect his church flock?
- Why does God want us to pray for pastors? List three things you would include in such a prayer and then pray that prayer.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Good Shepherd, you care for every one of us, your sheep. Provide us with faithful pastors who will shepherd your flock with love and care like yours. Help them to feed us with your Word, and hold them close to your heart. Amen.