

Read: John 10:11-18

A Few of My Favorite Things

John 10:11-18 (selected verses)

[Jesus said] "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I know my sheep and my sheep know me— . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep."

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

In the musical, *The Sound of Music*, A nanny named Maria sings a soothing song to the frightened children of Captain Von Trapp. The children ran to her room and huddled in her bed, shaking with anxiety. She takes their minds off the terrifying thunder and lightning storm by asking them to list some of their favorite things.

Before long, the children named everything from bunnies to crisp apple strudel and brown paper packages wrapped up with string! Maria has them dancing and jumping on the bed while singing, "When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when I'm feeling sad, I simply remember my favorite things, and then I don't feel so bad!"

In today's devotion, we have something far better than a song to sing if we're feeling bad. We have a Good Shepherd. The words of John chapter 10 are kind of like Maria's list of "Favorite Things" because they can combat any "dog bite" of depression or "bee sting" of sadness that life may throw at us.

So let's try making our list of "Favorite Things!" How about when you find yourself saying: "*I'm worthless. No one likes me.*"

Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep because I love you."

"I don't have any friends, and I'm lonely."

Jesus says, "I know you. I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

"People walk all over me. I don't get any respect from anyone."

Jesus says, "I'll let people walk all over me instead of you. I have the authority to lay down my life and take it up again."

When the dog bites or the bee stings, turn to John chapter 10 and read some of these favorite things from Jesus, our Good Shepherd!

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

- What are your favorite things? What are you scared of?
- Do you like singing? If you do, let's sing, "I Am Jesus Little Lamb."

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why is Jesus called the Good Shepherd? How do you know he's the Good Shepherd?
- Describe how a shepherd carries his sheep. Describe how Jesus carries his people.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Discuss: It is an insult to call someone a "sheep."
- In a world where everyone wants to be a lion, and the lion with the loudest roar is the King of the Jungle, why can we boast of being a lamb?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Good Shepherd, thank you for making us your little lambs and carrying us across your shoulder when the thunderstorms in life scare us! Help us to turn to you whenever life's troubles rise to meet us. Amen.