BIBLE STUDY
April 15, 2024

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Acts 4: 8-12
John 10: 11-18
1 John 3: 1-2

1. **Acts 4: 8-12**
   - The healing of the crippled man in chapter 3 still impacts chapter 4. After Peter has given his speech attributing the cure to the power of Jesus who is risen from the dead. Peter preaches the kerygma—the proclamation of the death, resurrection, and glorification of Jesus as Lord. The chief priests, the Sadducees, and the temple guard arrest Peter and John for preaching the name of Jesus. The leaders of the people ask the disciples by what power and by what name have they performed this act.
   - V. 8: Peter once again manifests a boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit as he begins to speak.
   - V. 9: Peter states the charges. They are being questioned about a good deed they did to a cripple.
   - V. 10: Peter boldly proclaims that the cripple was healed in the name of Jesus—he again proclaims the kerygma—Jesus, the Nazorean, whom the people crucified and whom God raised from the dead.
   - V. 11: Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 which early Christians saw as referring to Jesus—the one rejected but who now is the one on whom the Church is built.
   - V. 12: Jesus is the only name through which one can be saved. In those times, the Roman emperor was considered divine and was referred to as "savior" and "god." Peter makes clear that Jesus is the only one who saves.
2. **John 10: 11-18**
   - Chapter 10 presents one of the most beloved titles of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Before introducing the title Good Shepherd, Jesus identifies himself as the gate of the sheepfold. Everyone must enter and depart through him.
   - V. 11: Another of Jesus' "I am" statements. Bread of Life, Light of the World, Gate, Good Shepherd, Resurrection and the Life, the Way, Truth, and Life, Vine). Good has multiple meanings of handsome, righteous, and noble. Jesus is the Good Shepherd because he is willing to lay down his life for the sheep.
   - V. 12: The Good Shepherd is contrasted with the "hired man" who works for profit and has no commitment or care for the sheep. He will abandon the sheep when trouble comes.
   - V. 13: The hired man is a mercenary who is only interested in profit. Implicit in the hired man image is that of the religious leaders of the people who have enriched themselves through the sheep. Ezekiel first presented the image of the religious leaders as corrupt shepherds to do not care for the sheep but are only interested in themselves and their profit.

- V. 14: The Good Shepherd knows each of the sheep and the sheep know him. There is a relationship between the shepherd and the sheep just as there is a relationship between Jesus and us.
- V. 15: Our relationship with Jesus mirrors the relationship between the Father and Jesus. That Jesus will lay down his life for the sheep is emphasized.
- V. 16: Jesus' mission will extend beyond the flock of Israel to include all people. Jesus looks forward to the day when all people will belong to the one flock of Christ with one shepherd.
- V. 17: God the Father loves the Son because of his willingness to lay down his life for us, the sheep. Jesus will lay down his life, but he will also take it up again in the Resurrection.
- V. 18: Jesus states that he gives his life freely and he will take it up again freely. Jesus is not a tragic hero whose fate is dictated by fate. He is a free agent who freely and voluntarily gives his life for us. He has the power to lay it down and take it up. This is what the Father wishes the Son to do. This verse is the meaning behind the burial cloths in the empty tomb on Easter Sunday. John sees the cloths lying in sperate places and it says to him that Jesus has taken his life up again by his own power through God. Unlike Lazarus who came out of the tomb bound with burial cloths, Jesus is able to rise himself and free himself.