

Enfolded in God's love

Notes on the Bible readings

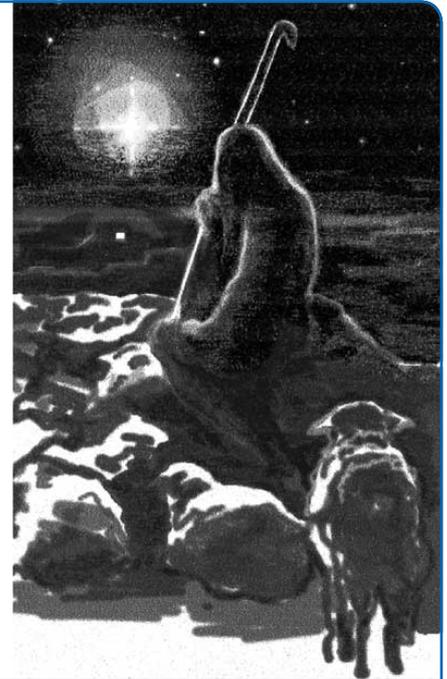
- Today's passages deal with the protection God offers his people, and suggests the care and selfless service we should give to others. In Acts, we read the follow-up to last week's story of Peter and John healing the lame man. We are reminded of the disciples' care for one of the least in society, their healing of him in the name of Jesus, and then God's empowerment of them through his Holy Spirit, when they are subsequently questioned by the Jewish Sanhedrin about the authority by which they act.

- 1 John speaks in direct support of the lessons learned in the Acts passage. John entreats his readers to love and serve others with practical actions (v.18), and reassures them that God's Spirit will abide in them, as they abide in God. But Peter's rejection of Jesus' words meets with a fierce rebuttal. Through Peter's mouth, Jesus hears the temptations of Satan, and 'turning and looking at his disciples' (v.33) so that they all hear, he publicly sets the record straight.

- Both the much-loved Psalm 23 and John 20 use the image of a shepherd who offers pastoral and practical care to his flock. In the psalm, God is the shepherd; in the Gospel, it is Jesus. Shepherds are lowly figures but their protection and care is sacrificial. Read post-Easter, the full truth of Jesus' sacrifice is resoundingly evident; and were it not for Jesus' promise of help, the challenge for us to follow in his footsteps would be almost too much to bear.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What is the role of the shepherd?
- ▶ How do you enfold others in God's love?
- ▶ How does our resurrection community offer protection and service?



A prayer of praise and adoration

*Let our prayers ascend like incense,
scenting the air with praise
to overcome the stench of sacrifice;
for you, Lord, made yourself the lamb that was slain for all,
the one who let humanity do its worst,
and you overcame it all, to the glory of God.
You are worthy of all praise and adoration.
Let our prayers raise the roof,
filling the air with harmony,
to overpower the discord of all our bleatings,
for you are the Good Shepherd of the sheep.
You lead us in the ways of God,
through the hills and valleys of this world.
You are worthy of all adoration and praise.
Amen.*

A prayer for the week

*Lord, send us out like sheep who know their shepherd well,
with wisdom to follow in Christ's footsteps and obey his commands,
and the power of his Spirit to guide and bless us. Amen.*

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Live your faith

Be aware of moments when you are cared for, and when you care for someone else. Give thanks to God for the former, and look for more opportunities to do the latter.