

WEEKLY REFLECTION

One of the titles commonly attributed to Jesus is “Immanuel”, God with us. We heard last week that He came to seek and to save the lost. (Lk 19:10) This week, Jesus tells us that He came so that we might have life, and have it abundantly. (Jn. 10:10)

Truly, Jesus came to give us abundant life. But He prefaces His statement with a thief who comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. While His words are directed towards the Pharisees who have missed the point completely, He refers also to Satan, the enemy, the adversary.

1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil as a roaring lion, who prowls around seeking people to devour. He steals our identities, makes us forget that we are beloved children of God. He steals our love as he tricks us into focusing on ourselves instead of others. He came to steal, kill, and destroy our peace, joy, and hope—leaving even the followers of Christ bare and destitute, wondering at this so-called abundant life that we were given.

But not all hope is lost. We have Jesus, who is at once the Good Shepherd (v.11) and the Door by which His sheep enter. (v.7) The Good Shepherd would lay His life down for His sheep (v.11b), and the sheep who belong to the Good Shepherd know His voice. (v.4) Anyone who enters in by Jesus will be saved, and they will go in and find pasture. (v.9)

Church, do you know the Good Shepherd? Are you sheep who know Him? Who recognize His voice, who trust Him and follow Him to green pastures? He is the only One through which we can have life, and life abundant. He is the only One who will lead us there. Trust not in your work, your studies, your achievements, your health, your wealth, your family and friends—not anything. For He alone came to give us life, that we might have it to the full.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

How have you experienced the enemy's attempts to steal, kill, and destroy? Were you able to stand firm in the Lord? How can you recognize and how might you resist these attempts in the future?

QUESTION TWO:

Scripture gives us examples of people that God called specifically by name, e.g. in Gen. 22:11; Gen. 46:2; Ex. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:10; Luke 10:41; and Acts 9:4. Who are these people, and what happened as God called them by name? How does that encourage and / or convict us, as we remember that God also calls His sheep by their names? (Jn. 10:3)

QUESTION THREE:

Psalms 23 paints a beautiful picture of what it means to have life in Jesus, and to have it abundantly. Take the time now to read through the psalm in full, and think about the areas of your life that don't match up with the picture painted. Why might that be the case? How does Jesus compel you to move towards the life He has for you?