

The Lord's My Shepherd  
By Stuart Townend

"I tell you the truth,"  
Jesus said again,

# I Am The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd  
lays down his life  
for the sheep."

(John 10:11)



The  
**LORD** Is My Shepherd



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Old Orchard Church  
Third Sunday in Lent — March 11, 2012  
10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

## Descent to the Cross: I Am the Good Shepherd

The imagery of the Bible is pastoral—  
for the people of God have been shepherds.

The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
were shepherds.

The feeding and watering of the sheep,  
the care and increase of the herds,  
were their natural occupations.

When Moses fled from Egypt,  
he went to the hill country of Midian  
and became a shepherd.

David was a shepherd off tending his sheep,  
when he was called to become  
the great king of Israel.

The poetic and prophetic picture  
of the shepherd  
and his care for the sheep of his flock  
stretches from Genesis through Revelation.

Jesus is the fulfillment of all the types and dramatic images—  
the Great Shepherd of the sheep:

**“I am the good shepherd.**

**The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

**...He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**

**When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them,  
and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”**

(John 10:11, 3b-4)



### Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: from Ezekiel 34

Gospel Reading: Luke 15:1-7

### Today's Sermon

“The Only Setting for Kingdom Doctrine, Discipline, and Dangers”

Acts 20:17-38

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

## Being a Sheep

None of Adam's sons and Eve's daughters like to admit that they need help. The spirit of independence and autonomy that marks each of our wayward hearts is captured in the last two lines of the poem, “Invictus”:

I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

But when Christ came claiming to be the Good Shepherd, he challenged that human pride, implying in John 10 that at the core of being a Christian is a heartfelt awareness that I am as weak, as vulnerable, and as stubborn as a silly sheep—in short, that I desperately need help and that Christ came into the world to lay down his life for me and then to call out to me—to me, personally:

“Let me be your Shepherd-Helper;  
you need to be cared for and led!”

There's been a great deal of bad teaching down through Christian history on the theme of the Christian's weakness and “helplessness.” Too much of it has implied that the “self” is all bad and that Christ came to annihilate the self. But Christ came, in fact, to give me my self—otherwise, he never would have explained to me how I can find “my life”:

**For whoever wants to save his life will lose it,  
but whoever loses his life for me will find it.** (Matthew 16:25)

The paradox, of course, is that the way I save my life is precisely by making the choice to lose it: giving up my autonomy, admitting my helplessness, and surrendering all that I am and do to Christ. The late John Stott, one of the great under-shepherds of Jesus Christ in the late 20th century, put the biblical teaching well when he said, “we must be fearless in affirming all that we are by creation, and ruthless in disowning all that we are by the fall.”

But the self is not nothing, and the call to acknowledge that we are foolish sheep who need Christ to atone for our waywardness and to shepherd us is not a call to huddle in a corner, whining, and simpering in self-doubt, but a call to put our hand in Christ's and accomplish something for him.

—Ron Lutjens

