

Announcements!

Weekly Bible Study We invite each of you to attend the mid-week Bible Study, held upstairs each Tuesday evening beginning at 6 pm. We encourage you to attend these vital and exciting studies!

Church Bowling Night We're going bowling! The church will host its annual bowling night, tentatively planned for December 2. Be ready for some good fun and serious competition!

Children's Church Our Children's Church is being reorganized and will soon be re-launched. If you have questions or concerns, please see Sarita Agee.

Power Boost! We have USB power packs available for your usage during our worship services! Simply plug in your device, press the button, and charge your device as you worship!

Words of Wisdom: The Trip Home...

A pastor had been on a long flight between church conferences. The first warning of the approaching problems came when the sign on the airplane flashed on: Fasten Your Seat Belts. Then, after a while, a calm voice said, 'We shall not be serving the beverages at this time as we are expecting a little turbulence. Please be sure your seat belt is fastened.'

As the pastor looked around the aircraft, it became obvious that many of the passengers were becoming apprehensive. Later, the voice on the intercom said, 'We are so sorry that we are unable to serve the meal at this time. The turbulence is still ahead of us.' And then the storm broke . . .

The ominous cracks of thunder could be heard even above the roar of the engines. Lightning! lit up the darkening skies, and within moments that great plane was like a cork tossed around on a celestial ocean. One moment the airplane was lifted on terrific currents of air; the next, it dropped as if it were about to crash.

The pastor confessed that he shared the discomfort and fear of those around him. He said, 'As I looked around the plane, I could see that nearly all the passengers were upset and alarmed. Some were praying. The future seemed ominous and many were wondering if they would make it through the storm.'

'Then, I suddenly saw a little girl. Apparently the storm meant nothing to her. She had tucked her feet beneath her as she sat on her seat; she was reading a book and every-thing within her small world was calm and orderly.'

'Sometimes she closed her eyes, then she would read again; then she would straighten her legs, but worry and fear were not in her world. When the plane was being buffeted by the terrible storm when it lurched this way and that, as it rose and fell with frightening severity, when all the adults were scared half to death, that marvelous child was completely composed and unafraid.' The minister could hardly believe his eyes.

It was not surprising therefore, that when the plane finally reached its destination and all the passengers were hurrying to disembark, our pastor lingered to speak to the girl whom he had watched for such a long time. Having commented about the storm and the behavior of the plane, he asked why she had not been afraid.

The child replied, 'Cause my Daddy's the pilot, and he's taking me home.'

There are many kinds of storms that buffet us. Physical, mental, financial, domestic, and many other storms can easily and quickly darken our skies and throw our plane into apparently uncontrollable movement. We have all known such times, and let us be honest and confess, it is much easier to be at rest when our feet are on the ground than when we are being tossed about a darkened sky.

Let us remember: Our Father is the Pilot. He is in control and taking us home. Don't worry!



Welcome to the

Everlasting Covenant Church



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Follow Us:  "The Everlasting Covenant Church", Birmingham, AL



"THE_ECC2015"

Eric R. Agee, Jr., Pastor

November 26, 2017

Vision Statement:



Enhancing Our Knowledge of Jesus Christ, Empowering All Believers for Ministry, and Encouraging Continuous Dedication to the Lord.

Order of Services

Fellowship/Refreshments – 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School – 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Services – 11:00 a.m.
Announcements & Recognition of Visitors

Call to Worship: Scripture Reading & Prayer

Tithes and Offerings; Prayer of Thanksgiving

Praise and Worship Selections

Sermon

Invitation to Christ

Benediction

Sheep...

Taken from <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2622/sheep-need-a-shepherd>

I have often heard that sheep are among the simplest of livestock. That is to say, sheep are quite vulnerable without a shepherd. They are vulnerable to their enemies such as wolves and the thieves mentioned in John 10. They are also vulnerable to themselves as they tend to wander from the flock. Although I have limited knowledge of sheep, it seems that a sheep that ventures from the watchful eye of the shepherd is bound for trouble. As dependent as they are on a watchful shepherd, I seriously doubt that sheep realize their dependence on the shepherd. They probably scarcely notice the shepherd's presence until they feel the pull of the staff when they are pulled from danger. At the other end of the spectrum, human beings are creation's most complex thinkers. We have the capacity to understand and process amazing quantities of facts and information. We can make complicated decisions. We are not very much like sheep. Yet, Jesus uses the parable of the good shepherd to teach his followers about the relationship offered and sought by God with God's creation. Jesus recognized an important tendency of humanity. Perhaps we are more like sheep than we realized.

The image and metaphor of the shepherd is a familiar one throughout scripture. It is utilized so often probably because it would have been easy to understand for contemporary recipients of the stories and teachings. Perhaps the best-known use of this metaphor is Psalm 23. "The Lord is my shepherd" is probably one of the best-known verses of scripture in the Old Testament. The image of God as our shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death is an image of comfort that indeed comforts many throughout life and death. In John 10, Jesus uses this metaphor as he attempts to teach his followers and the Pharisees about his role in their lives as well as his future with them. In the verses preceding today's passage, Jesus refers to himself as the gate that separates the sheep from danger. In verses 11-18, Jesus returns to the metaphor of himself as the good shepherd. The good shepherd is different from a hired worker because he is willing to lay down his life for the sheep. A person who is hired to watch the sheep is not invested in them like the shepherd and will likely desert them when danger approaches. Jesus suggests that as the good shepherd, he will not desert the flock and will indeed be willing to lay down his life. Jesus also alludes to the universal reality of his eventual sacrifice. In verse 16, Jesus acknowledges that there are more sheep that are not inside the sheep pen. These sheep also need him as shepherd and will be brought in to join the rest of the flock, and all will have the same shepherd. Finally, Jesus alludes to his own choice in laying down his life. Not only is it his choice to lay down his life, but his choice to take it up again. Through a postresurrection Christian lens, we can clearly see this allusion to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus indeed could have chosen to forego his death, but chose instead to face death and return from the dead.

As you can imagine, the religious authorities did not respond well to Jesus' depiction of himself as the good shepherd who has come to both lie down and take up his life for his sheep. Although some were challenged toward belief, others thought Jesus was crazy, and worse yet, blasphemous. I imagine there was another facet of this metaphor that would have been difficult for Jesus' listeners. We are accustomed to the concept of the Lord as shepherd and us as sheep. Jesus' listeners would have been less accustomed to this idea and would have had firsthand knowledge of the sheep and shepherd relationship. For Jesus to describe himself as the shepherd of the sheeplike people was probably difficult for the people to hear. They probably mistook his wise teaching for egotism. We have the advantage of knowing the rest of the story. We can see the gentle wisdom in Jesus' teaching. We know that he did just what he said and chose to lay down and take up his life for us.

I will admit, however, there is something a little disheartening about being described as a sheep. It is difficult to admit our likeness to animals that so depend on a shepherd for survival. We are much more accustomed to being shepherds in control than sheep so in need of leadership. Yet, when it comes to our relationship with God, Jesus understands our human tendencies better perhaps than we understand ourselves. When it comes to our faith, we are very much like sheep in need of a shepherd. Like sheep, we have the tendency to follow. Like sheep, we often confuse true leadership with the kind offered by hired hands (shepherds who are in it for the wrong reason). Like sheep, we are endangered by those who prey on our vulnerability, the spiritual wolves. Like sheep, we are perhaps most vulnerable to ourselves and our tendency to wander away from the care of the shepherd and the safety of the flock. We certainly need a good shepherd, like Jesus, who is willing to care and sacrifice for us. Accepting that we are indeed like sheep is the hardest part for many people. It is our human nature to want to be in control of our lives. Yet, to be a follower of Christ, we must accept our spiritual likeness to sheep and our need for a good shepherd. As we continue to ponder the great news of the resurrection, may we be ever aware that to fully experience Christ, we must allow Christ to be the shepherd of our lives.

Sermon Notes

Scripture: _____

Subject: _____

Notes: _____

Enhancing Our Knowledge of Jesus
Christ of Jesus
Empowering All Believers for Ministry
Encouraging Continuous Dedication to the Lord to the