

a sermon from MATTHEW 18:11-14:

OUR ETERNAL GOOD SHEPHERD SEEKS US WHEN WE GO ASTRAY!

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I. A PRAYER

Thanks be to Thee, O Lord JESUS CHRIST, for all the benefits and blessings which Thou, O Eternal Good Shepherd, hast given to us, for all the pains and insults which Thou hast borne for us in rescuing us from the deepest pits of despair, destruction and death! O Thou most merciful Watchman, Protector and Redeemer, may we know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly and follow Thee more nearly. May we remain, both now and forever, always in Thy Presence within Thy Pastures of Peace! These things we ask in The Name of GOD The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. AMEN. ¹

II. A PROPOSITION

The Lord JESUS CHRIST is our Good Shepherd, pursuing us when we go astray towards sin and death, rescuing us from the deepest pits of destruction, carrying us back into His everlasting pastures of peace and rejoicing when we return therein!

III. A SCRIPTURE - MATTHEW 18:11-14 – OUR ETERNAL GOOD SHEPHERD

¹¹ For The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

¹² How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

¹³ And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

¹⁴ Even so it is not the will of your Father Which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. ²

IV. INTRODUCTION – WE ARE ALL AS LOST SHEEP

We are all as lost sheep. Think back, if you will, to a time when many men were shepherders. This was the case when GOD Incarnate came to walk among men as The Messiah JESUS CHRIST. Now sheep are known to be very prone to wandering away from their shepherds care and the safety of the sheepfold. They fall prone easily to terrible perils as a result. They seem at times to even seek out the deepest pits of suffering and destruction to fall into, obstinately searching out the darkest places of affliction and death.

Their only hope of survival, life and protection is to remain and dwell within the sheepfold under the watchful and caring staff of their shepherds. And their only hope, when they wander astray and fall prey as a result to imminent destruction, is for the shepherd to pursue them, rescue them from the jaws of destruction and carry them back upon his shoulders to the safety of the shepherd's green pastures.

¹ 1, Catholic Family Prayer Book, p 241, adapted from prayer of Saint Richard of Chichester, "Saints and Holy Ones." Prayer attributed to St. Richard of Chichester, 1198 – 1253 AD, an English bishop "who aided the poor and fought against corruption in The Church."

² 2, KJV, MATTHEW 18:11-14.

So it is also the case with mankind. We are very prone to wandering away from The Good Shepherd – our Lord JESUS CHRIST – His loving care and the safety of His sheepfold, The Church. We fall prone easily to terrible perils of the world, the flesh and the devil as a result. We seem at times to even seek out the deepest pits of suffering and destruction to fall into, obstinately searching out the darkest dungeons of affliction and death!

Our only hope of survival, life and protection is to remain and dwell within The Sheepfold of our Good Shepherd, The Church. And our only hope, when we wander astray and fall prey as a result to imminent destruction, is for our Good Shepherd – The Saviour Himself – to pursue us, rescue us from the jaws of destruction and carry us back upon His shoulders to the safety of His Green Pastures!

Now where else in The blessed Scriptures do we find a picture of such Divine care and mercy employed to teach us of GOD's love for us? Is this picture of The Almighty as our Eternal Good Shepherd also to be found in PSALM 100? Recall that beautiful Old Testament picture of GOD The Father as our Divine Good Shepherd, for which reason That PSALM is titled simply, "A PSALM of Praise!" Verses 1-2 open, "Make a joyful noise unto The LORD, all ye lands. Serve The LORD with gladness: come before His Presence with singing."³ Why? Because our Eternal Good Shepherd loves us so much, that even if we were the only sheep that ever wandered away from Him, He would still have come at His First Advent to rescue us at The blessed Cross!

So the psalmist continues in PSALM 100:3-5, "Know ye that The LORD He is GOD: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His Pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name. For The LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations!"⁴ Let us walk together through the four verses our Lord's parable here in MATTHEW 18, finding its reflection in PSALM 100, and behold what we shall see!

V. THE STATE OF ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S FIRST ADVENT

Consider the state of Israel at The Time of CHRIST's First Advent. Recall what opposition and criticism CHRIST was dealing with in the persons of those hardhearted and haughty rulers of the remnant of ancient Israel. There were the self-righteous Pharisees – fanatical practitioners of "externalism in religion"⁵ - who, though confessing there to be a life after death, smothered the common man to death with a never-ending complex of man-made, mile-high fences erected about The Word of Life.

³ 2, KJV, PSALM 100:1-2.

⁴ 2, KJV, PSALM 100:3-5.

⁵ 3, Scofield KJV, commentary on MATTHEW 13:33, p 1016, footnote 4, (2). "The use of the word ["leaven"] in The N.T. explains its symbolic meaning. It is 'malice and wickedness,' as contrasted with 'sincerity and truth' (I CORINTHIANS 5:6-8). It is evil doctrine (MATTHEW 16:13) in its threefold form of Pharisaism, Sadduceism and Herodianism..."

There were the cold-as-death intellectual Sadducees – apostles of “skepticism as to the supernatural and as to The Scriptures”⁶ - who, though professing allegiance to The Almighty and His Law revealed through Moses and the prophets, denied the power of The Eternal Lawgiver by denying that the righteous would dwell in The Presence of The LORD in the next world. There were the Herodians – agents of “worldliness”⁷ and enemies of godliness who, reveling in the passing pleasures of the world, the flesh and the devil under the patronage of the corrupt King Herod and his crooked cronies of Rome, could care less about the nation, the people or The Law of The LORD.

And then there were the people themselves, hungering for GOD’s Messiah to come, that they might be freed from their daily earthly sorrow and suffering under all these corrupt rulers and oppressors, lost in the pits of despair and destruction. Into this sad mix of that suffering ancient society, a time and place very much like our own age today in The West, comes The Eternal Good Shepherd Incarnate – JESUS CHRIST.

VI. THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SAVE THAT WHICH IS LOST

The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost. Our Lord begins this parable of “The Lost Sheep [and] The Seeking Lord”⁸ in MATTHEW 18:11, “For The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.”⁹ Now this Title, “Son of Man,” is a most interesting one. We find this title in EZEKIEL 2:1 – “Son of man” - where The Almighty calls and commissions His prophet Ezekiel the man to speak His Words of repentance and righteousness to the captive Jewish people in Babylon and soon-to-be sufferers in Jerusalem. In EZEKIEL 1 the prophet records that he beheld a frightfully overwhelming and glorious vision of The Almighty.

Now in EZEKIEL 2:1-5 he records The Words which the very voice of GOD revealed to him, “...Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And The Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard Him that spake unto me. And He said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against Me: they and their fathers have transgressed against Me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith The Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them!”¹⁰

⁶ 3, Scofield KJV, commentary on MATTHEW 13:33, p 1016, footnote 4, (2).

⁷ 3, Scofield KJV, commentary on MATTHEW 13:33, p 1016, footnote 4, (2).

⁸ 3, Scofield KJV, MATTHEW 18:11-14, p 1024. Title given by Scofield to this parable of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, “The Lost Sheep; The Seeking Lord.”

⁹ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 18:11.

¹⁰ 2, KJV, EZEKIEL 2:1-5.

About 600 years later,¹¹ and not much has changed, for the hearts of GOD's people are still not listening to the voice of The Almighty. They are still walking in rebellion and transgression against The Most High. They are still impudent and stiffhearted. This, even though now GOD is not merely speaking through His Law and prophets via human agency to His people, but now stands there before them and amidst them literally in the flesh and face to face!

So "The Son of Man" comes – **הַמָּשִׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ**¹² – HAMMASHIYACH YESHUA',¹³ The Messiah JESUS. He is under this messianic Title "Son of Man" representative of the race of mankind, fully human, but without sin. But He is also The CHRIST, The Anointed One of The Almighty, The Son of GOD.¹⁴ Our Good Shepherd knows what it is like to suffer as one of us. He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world to rescue us from sin and death, that He might bring us back into His Sheepfold, The Church earthly and eternal. The Son of Man is able as our Good Shepherd to do this because He is also The Son of GOD, fully Divine and fully Man but without sin.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw by The Spirit of The Most High The coming Cross of The Saviour, for he records in ISAIAH 53:5-6, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."¹⁵ Now while JESUS spoke this parable, He had not yet done His work for us on The Cross. But He proclaims that He as The Good Shepherd of GOD – as GOD Himself – comes to seek the lost, those who are dying and dead in suffering and sin, cut off from Himself.

The confession of The Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD declares exactly This Truth of the nature of The Person of our Good Shepherd JESUS CHRIST, "Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach and confess one and The same Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST: The Same perfect in Divinity and perfect in Humanity, The Same truly GOD and truly Man, composed of rational soul and body; consubstantial with The Father as to His Divinity and consubstantial with us as to His Humanity; 'like us in all things but sin'..."¹⁶ Only such a Divinely Human Good Shepherd saves us!

¹¹ 3, Scofield KJV. Scofield dates EZEKIEL 2 circa 595 BC, p 841. He dates MATTHEW 18 circa 33 AD, p 1025. 595 + 33 = 628 years, or about 600 plus years between the ministry of the prophet Ezekiel and the last year of the public ministry of The Messiah JESUS in His First Advent.

¹² 4, HNT, MATTHEW 1:1.

¹³ In my transliteration of The Hebrew, I represent the letter א aleph = ' and the letter ע ayin = "

¹⁴ 3, Scofield KJV, MATTHEW 8:20, note 1, p 1006. The Messianic Title of JESUS CHRIST of "Son of Man" denotes His racial kinship with us and all of mankind. His Messianic Title of "Son of GOD" denotes His full Divinity as The Messiah, Who had to come as fully GOD Incarnate in order to atone for our sins and those of the whole world.

¹⁵ 2, KJV, ISAIAH 53:5-6.

¹⁶ 5, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 467, p 131. "II. The Incarnation."

So The Anointed One – The Immanuel Who is GOD with us, our – **חַטָּאת**¹⁷ – HACHATTA'T,¹⁸ becomes in our place The Perfect “Sin Offering” offered up to atone for the trespasses of our souls against His Law - pays the price of our sins for us in our place, a price which we ourselves could never pay! Only The Eternal Good Shepherd – fully Divine and fully Human but without sin - can do so, as ISAIAH 53:10 foresees, “Yet it pleased The LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin...”¹⁹ Only our Eternal Good Shepherd is capable of seeking we who are lost and pulling us from the pit!

Therefore The Catholic “Chaplet of Divine Mercy” prayer²⁰ of Saint Faustina reads, ““Eternal Father, I offer you The Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.”²¹ How good is The Creator towards us? As PSALM 100:5 declares, “For The LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.”²² His goodness, mercy and truth fully shine upon us from The Cross of our Eternal Good Shepherd, Who comes seeking we who are lost in the depths of despair, darkness and death because of we are still an impudent, stiffhearted and rebellious people, gone astray like lost sheep! We cannot save ourselves, but are wholly dependant upon Him!

VII. OUR ETERNAL GOOD SHEPHERD PURSUES US WHEN WE GO ASTRAY

Our Eternal Good Shepherd pursues us when we go astray. JESUS continues His parable for us in MATTHEW 18:12, “How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?”²³ Here we see that the 99 sheep who remain in the shepherd’s sheepfold rest under his protection and peace. It is the hundredth lost sheep that wanders away out of the sheepfold that the good shepherd goes forth to find, even while the 99 sheep remain in the safety of the fold.

So it is with us. And what man knows this more than he who has been rescued from the cold death of the mountains of sin by the strong arm of The LORD Himself? What lost sheep of such men know This Truth better than the Christian who, just as he is about to perish from the jaws of the wolves of this fallen world, is snatched to safety by The Eternal Good Shepherd’s staff? The enemy of our souls beaten back, the wounds of affliction dressed, the broken bones of our lives set straight again, He places us upon His shoulders and carries us back to His Pastures of peace and safety, to The faithful Church!

¹⁷ 6, BHS, LEVITICUS 4:8.

¹⁸ In my transliteration of The Hebrew, I represent the letter א aleph = ‘ and the letter א ayin = “

¹⁹ 2, KJV, ISAIAH 53:10.

²⁰ 7, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Association of Marian Helpers, “Eternal Father, I offer you The Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.”

²¹ 8, Saint Faustina, “Divine Mercy in My Soul,” # 475, p 207.

²² 2, KJV, PSALM 100:5.

²³ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 18:12.

The psalmist says of such happy sheep so rescued by the very hand of GOD in PSALM 100:3, “Know ye that The LORD He is GOD: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His Pasture.”²⁴ As Charles Spurgeon says, no man “...can know himself until he knows his GOD. JEHOVAH is GOD in the fullest, most absolute, and most exclusive sense, He is GOD alone; to know Him in that character and prove our knowledge [of Him in our lives] by obedience, trust, submission, zeal and love is... [the only true end of man] which only Grace can bestow!”²⁵

But what is This Divine Grace? Divine Grace The Almighty’s favor poured out upon us, of which we have no right to claim, nor deserve it in any way. It is His “...free and undeserved help that GOD gives us to respond to His call to become children of GOD, adoptive sons, partakers of The Divine Nature and of eternal life.”²⁶ Without this, we can not receive justification for our souls, by the merits of JESUS CHRIST’s work on The Cross, before The Judgement Seat of JEHOVAH. Like the lost sheep that has wandered astray into death and destruction, we must await rescue by our Eternal Good Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST!

For if The Holy One of Israel did not pursue us - sending His preceding Grace before us, applying His saving Grace upon our lives and souls, and keeping us with His sustaining Grace – none could we ever enter into His Kingdom, either The faithful struggling Church on earth, or The triumphant victorious Church in Heaven! Without the active and undeserved Saving Love Incarnate poured out for us and upon us, none would either enter – much less remain – within The Eternal Shepherd’s Pastures!

As Saint Augustine says of GOD’s Saving Grace poured out upon us, “Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with GOD Who works, for His mercy has gone before us... so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with GOD: for without Him we can do nothing!”²⁷

Even when we by our own effort seek to keep The Laws of The Most High – no matter how externally righteous we may think ourselves and appear to men – we can not save ourselves. Therefore the psalmist declares in PSALM 119:174-176, “I have longed for Thy salvation, O LORD; and Thy Law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and let Thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy Commandments!”²⁸

²⁴ 2, KJV, PSALM 100:3.

²⁵ 9, Charles Spurgeon, Treasury of David, Volume 2, PSALM C, 3, p 234.

²⁶ 5, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 1996, p 538. “II. Grace.”

²⁷ 5, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 2001, p 539. “II. Grace.”

²⁸ 2, KJV, PSALM 119:174-176.

VIII. OUR LORD & THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN REJOICE WHEN WE ARE SAVED

Our Lord and all the angels of Heaven rejoice when we are saved. CHRIST declares next in MATTHEW 18:13, “And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”²⁹ Saint Luke records more Words of CHRIST of this parable in LUKE 15:4-7, “...And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”³⁰

Not only must The Eternal Good Shepherd save us when we go astray into sin and darkness, cutting ourselves off from both He Who is our Creator and Redeemer, but He must carry us back into His Kingdom upon His very shoulders when we fall! And though all the hosts of Heaven rejoice daily with The Almighty for the righteous saved who remain within The faithful Church, even more so do they sing songs of gladness before The Throne of The Most High when a sinner falls away and is retrieved by the arm of The Lord! The righteous in CHRIST have been made safe by The Lord within His Pastures. It is the lost sinner that CHRIST must still seek out and save!

The psalmist declares in PSALM 100:4, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name.”³¹ This speaks of GOD’s Temple that once stood in Jerusalem, over which The Presence of The Almighty hovered above the holy of holies, The Shekinah Glory of the LORD, The Same Pillar of Cloud by day and Pillar of Fire by night that once guided the ancient Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, through the wilderness of Sinai and into The Promised Land!

So Moses declares in EXODUS 15:13 The LORD’s glorious Divine Mercy towards us His lost sheep, “Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto Thy holy habitation!”³² O Eternal Good Shepherd, Thou hast now come down from out of The Pillar of Cloud by day and Fire by night to meet us face to face at The Cross, to lead us in Thy Mercy - **בְּחֶסֶדְךָ**³³ – BECHASEDCHA,³⁴ - in Thy Divine kindness, affection, lovingkindness, goodness and redeeming favor from all our enemies and especially from death, both of the body and of the spirit!³⁵ For Thy Mercy alone allows us to dwell within Thy holy Presence, both now and forever, within Thy Sheepfold, Which is The faithful Church on earth and in Heaven!

²⁹ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 19:13.

³⁰ 2, KJV, LUKE 15:4-7.

³¹ 2, KJV, PSALM 100:4.

³² 2, KJV, EXODUS 15:13.

³³ 6, BHS, EXODUS 15:13.

³⁴ In my transliteration of The Hebrew, I represent the letter א aleph = ‘ and the letter א ayin = “

³⁵ 10, WTM Morphology + Whittaker’s Revised-BDB Lexicon, B3297 **חֶסֶד** - CHESED, noun masculine – “goodness, kindness,” page 338.

And how can we, once we see how much our Eternal Good Shepherd loves us from all that He has done for us and blessed us with, not pass through His gates with thanksgiving? How can we then not enter into His courts with praise? As Charles Spurgeon says here, “So long as we are receivers of [His] mercy, we must be givers of thanks [to Him]. Mercy permits us to enter into His gates; let us praise that mercy...” which precedes, pursues and preserves us within His Pastures!³⁶

As Saint John records in JOHN 10:7-9, “Then said JESUS unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep... by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” Again we find CHRIST looking forward to offering up His very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity on our behalf at The Cross, for He declares further in JOHN 10:11, “I am The [Eternal] Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”³⁷

A good shepherd was a brave and ever ready defender and rescuer of his flocks, ready to do bloody battle to protect and save his charges. But lay down his life, that a mere sheep in his place might live? A parent might willingly die to protect and rescue his child. But for a mere sheep? And here the comparison between a mere human shepherd of sheep and our Eternal Good Shepherd’s love for each of us diverges beyond our understanding! But such is the picture that CHRIST paints on our behalf of Himself! He did lay down His life for us, and then He took it up again at His resurrection! So The Lord prophecies of Himself in JOHN 10:17, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” for us!³⁸

IX. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN DESIRES THAT NONE SHOULD PERISH

Our Father in Heaven desires that none should perish. Here The Messiah completes for us the parable in MATTHEW 18:14, “Even so it is not the will of your Father Which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”³⁹ Indeed, are we not only as lost sheep, but as helpless little children as well, totally dependant upon The LORD taking pity upon us for the sake of His great mercy and love for us? Is this not exactly why The King of the universe took upon Himself flesh in The Person of The Messiah JESUS? And not only Israel, but now He has expanded His Kingdom into The Church, that all men might be made His adopted children?

The angelic host and all of creation do sing out in joy when the sinner repents and returns unto The LORD! As John Calvin says, “...though it would be more agreeable to the wishes of angels... that men should always remain in perfect integrity [before The Almighty], yet as in the deliverance of a sinner, who had been already devoted to destruction, and had been cut off as a rotten member from The Body, the mercy of GOD

³⁶ 9, Charles Spurgeon, Treasury of David, PSALM C, 4., p 234.

³⁷ 2, KJV, JOHN 10:11.

³⁸ 2, KJV, JOHN 10:17.

³⁹ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 18:14.

shines [even] more brightly...!”⁴⁰ Therefore the heavenly host sings out in joy at the beholding of The Divine Mercy of The Eternal Good Shepherd towards us His lost sheep, For His rescue of us when we fall into the pits of death! For we once were lost, but now are found in CHRIST!

This is The Great Love wherewith He hath loved us from before the beginning of creation, which brings The Kingdom of GOD in Heaven to earth at The Cross, The Center of the universe and the focus of The Divine Mercy from before the foundations of the world were laid down by His hand! We are those little ones whom GOD ordains that should not perish! We are those lost sheep who, by His Grace, are brought safely into The Pastures of His Presence, The very Body of CHRIST, The Church! So the very gates of Heaven have opened up and extend to the four corners of the earth, redeeming His saints and restoring creation back to The Creator at The Cross!

Therefore we should, as the psalmist calls us to do in PSALM 100:1-2, “Make a joyful noise unto The LORD, all ye lands. Serve The LORD with gladness: come before His Presence with singing.”⁴¹ John Calvin sees here The Kingdom of Heaven having arrived and now expanding across the earth to draw in all of mankind! So he counsels us to hear the call of the psalmist, who “...invites the whole of the inhabitants of the earth indiscriminately to praise JEHOVAH, ...[seeing], in The Spirit of prophecy, to refer to the period when The Church would be gathered out of different nations” from all the lands of the earth!⁴²

CHRIST goes out among all men, carrying back from the wilderness both Jews and Gentiles into His Kingdom! As Saint Paul says in ROMANS 1:16, this is the work of His Grace for us declared in “...The Gospel of CHRIST: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek!”⁴³ So we are illuminated by The Incarnation, Which shines the mercy of GOD upon us in The Person and work of The Messiah JESUS, Who reveals Himself to us here in this awe-inspiring parable of Divine Mercy as our Eternal Good Shepherd!

X. IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, here is the picture set before us, as Wycliffe observes, “A shepherd counted his sheep at the close of each day to make sure that none had strayed. If one was missing, he searched for it immediately.” He went forth without delay and “...tracked down the sheep.” And when he found it, beating off the predators and bandaging up its wounds, he carried it back to the sheepfold upon his very shoulders, for “unlike most animals, a sheep cannot find its own way back to the fold.”⁴⁴ Then he rejoices with his

⁴⁰ 11, John Calvin’s Commentaries, Volume XVI, Harmony of MATTHEW, MARK and LUKE, LUKE XV, 10, p 341. “There will be joy in the presents of the angels.”

⁴¹ 2, KJV, PSALM 100:1-2.

⁴² 12, John Calvin’s Commentaires, Volume VI, PSALMS 93-150, PSALM C, [Verses 1-3], page 83.

⁴³ 2, KJV, ROMANS 1:16.

⁴⁴ 13, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, LUKE 15:4-7, P 1053-1054.

fellow shepherds! This The Messiah JESUS Himself does for us, laying down His own life for us at such a terrible cost!

From this simple parable of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, we have seen these four wondrous things of His great love and mercy towards us at The Cross: First, that The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost – The Messiah comes to redeem us by laying down His very life for us at The Cross. Second, that our Eternal Good Shepherd pursues us when we go astray – The Divine mercy goes before us, saving us and then preserving us. Third, that The Sacred Heart of JESUS rejoices when even one is saved – the sinner who is redeemed causes our Lord and all the hosts of Heaven to give glad thanks before His Throne! Fourth, that our Father in Heaven desires that none should perish – that we as his sheep, his little children, should enter His Presence and dwell both now and forever in His Pastures!

And so we end as we began, with this proposition: The Lord JESUS CHRIST is our Good Shepherd, pursuing us when we go astray towards sin and death, rescuing us from the deepest pits of destruction, carrying us back into His everlasting pastures of peace and rejoicing when we return therein! Let us therefore praise His Name at all times. Let us dwell always within His Pasture The Church. Let us seek the peace of His Presence both now and forever at The blessed Cross. And let us be thankful. In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. AMEN.

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