



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the article and testimony

Article by Pastor Geoffrey Maritim



The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd is unlike cattle rustlers or bandits that commonly raid in some parts of Africa. A rustler invades rather than getting into the pen. They do so during the wrong time, mainly at night. Neither do they go in from the gate, but they enter from any or every direction. As they enter in, they pull down the enclosure or jump over it. Worse still, the animals are harassed and driven out forcefully without considering the well-being of the pregnant or young ones. The creatures are then driven through rough terrain with no water or any form of feed on the way.

But Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the Door (John 10:1-13). He is the owner of the sheep who does the opposite of what bandits do. It is He who keeps the sheep secured in the pen in the first place. He hedges and leads His people. He leads his own to good spiritual food and drink, like a good

shepherd does to sheep. He loves, nourishes and protects His people. Other stories of Jesus' earthly ministry reveal that He is the builder of our faith. He led the disciples through experiences that revealed who He was. He protected their faith and lives from the enemy. He also leads, builds, and protects us. He put his life on the line for the sheep through dying on the cross, and He cares for us even now.

Called by Name

Like pastoralists who give a name to each of their livestock, Jesus knows His children by name. He know their address. He knows what each needs as well as the things they go through. He cares and loves each of them. His children on the other hand recognize their Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. They discern the voice of the Lord through knowing what the Bible says. They know who He is and what He wants. They know that He is good, faithful, merciful, and holy.

They know that He is the LORD above all other lords. They obey His commandment of love.

A Satisfying Life

Pastoralists guide their livestock to a place where there is pasture and water. They guide them away from dangerous terrain, wild animals and bandits. In the same way

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

- John 10:10

Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, leads his own away from destructive ways. He protects from those who hate us – the devil and demons. Moreover, He leads his own to a life of freedom and rest. He fulfills the purpose for His people. God’s will is to provide a full and satisfying life to all who follow Him.

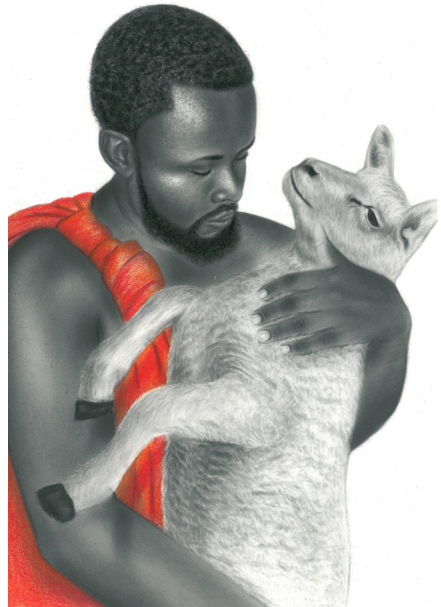
The Thief’s Purpose

Rustlers steal livestock for slaughter or sale. The live-

stock are mishandled all the way. This manner of handling resembles what Satan does to people. The devil is full of hatred. His chief purpose is to see that people are robbed of anything good. He entices us but also instills fear, anger, bitterness, and all manner of pain. He separates people from the love of God, family, friends, and fellow Christians. In the end Satan’s intent is that people would experience everlasting separation from the life-giving God.

Voices that Lead Astray

There are many voices in the world today that can lead us astray. There are those who



claim to be representatives of Christ. Others even claim to be Christ. They are self-exalting but not Christ-exalting. These voices exploit or fleece God's people spiritually and materially. They stage manage miracles and signs. This is done by enrolling some people to fake sickness or paralysis. Crutches and wheelchairs are transported along with the trained people to crusades in stadiums and other places. Ignorant and innocent people are taught a gospel of works and material prosperity accompanied by fake signs instead of the true gospel of Jesus. It is a stealthy way in which even Christians are misled.

Listening to God's Voice

God's children are called to listen to God's voice and follow the Chief Shepherd alone. His voice utters true love. It is the voice of life and freedom through faith, love and holiness. There is no work we have to do in order to earn acceptance with God. Christ finished all on the cross. Life and peace with God are free gifts that are offered to us. It is unlike Satan's voice which offers false promises based on works, self-centered-

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."

- John 10:14-15

ness, and exploitation. Furthermore, we are not to listen and follow several voices at the same time, as is common among many in Kenya. There are people who claim to follow Christ but also African traditional religion. Others follow Christ and Allah, Christ and New Age, or Christ and money, in addition to others.

Following God Day by Day

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks to us today. We can listen to God's voice and discover His will for our lives as we spend time with God each day. He is able and willing to guide us each day concerning His purpose for our lives. As we dwell in the place of prayer accompanied by the reading of the Bible, we will hear Him. Fel-

low believers and our Christian leaders assist us to hear God and follow His voice as well because

He speaks to them as well. God is good, loving and faithful to His children.