

“A Hen, An Eagle, A Loving Mother, A Bear, & **My** Shepherd”

North East United Methodist Church

May 13, 2018 – Mother’s Day

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What NOT to Buy Your Wife On Mother’s Day:

1. Don’t buy anything that plugs in. Anything that requires electricity is seen as utilitarian.
2. Don't buy clothing that involves sizes. The chances are one in seven thousand that you will get her size right, and your wife will be offended the other 6999 times.
3. Avoid all things useful. The new silver polish advertised to save hundreds of hours is not going to win you any brownie points.
4. Don't buy anything that involves weight loss or self-improvement. She'll perceive a six-month membership to a diet center as a suggestion that's she's overweight.
5. Don't buy jewelry. The jewelry your wife wants, you can't afford. And the jewelry you can afford, she doesn't want.
6. And, guys, do not fall into the traditional trap of buying her frilly underwear. Your idea of the kind your wife should wear and what she actually wears are light years apart.
7. Finally, don't spend too much. "How do you think we're going to afford that?" she'll ask. But don't spend too little. She won't say anything, but she'll think, "Is that all I'm worth?"

Perhaps it’s not about buying something...perhaps it is about loving, respecting, acknowledging all one does, gives and sacrifices to raise a child.

Perhaps our lives are about loving, respecting, acknowledging all God does, gives and sacrifices to raise His children...each of us...up to Him...



The original Mother’s Day was begun over 150 years ago during the time of the Civil War.

Mrs. Anna Reeves Jarvis felt the pain that all mothers feel when they see their children suffering...She saw young boys, good boys, on both sides of the war, dying...She organized a special day for mothers who had sons fighting on both the opposing sides...a day

of prayer...a day for peace...a day for bringing comfort to those who were hurting...a day to pray for mothers and their children...Such a time continued until in 1907, Ann Jarvis, daughter of Mrs. Anna Reeves Jarvis suggested a national observance of a day each year to honor all mothers.

On May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day...calling for a *"public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country."*

No one deserves a special day all to herself more than today's Mom. A cartoon showed a psychologist talking to a mom, to his patient: *"Let's see,"* he said, *"You spend 50 percent of your energy on your job, 50 percent on your husband and 50 percent on your children. I think I see your problem."*

VIDEO – Anita Renfroe – “MomSense”

Watch video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXgoJ0f5EsQ>

But I couldn't pass up – I thought you had to see the Dad version – **VIDEO** – Anita Renfroe – “DadSense”

Watch video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nmvne6sRrs>

I think about how Deb has been there for Nate and Matthew...



...from the time we brought each of them home from the hospital to today...how she sacrificed her job and many of the things she wanted to stay home and raise our boys...



...protected them and cared for them...been there for them when they have been sick or hurt...



...taught them right from wrong...

And I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my own mom...



...who I lost just two winters ago and miss terribly...who loved and took care of me over the years...helped guide me on my life journey...

And my other mom...Deb's mom...who has supported and loved not only me, but my boys...



I don't believe there is any place where we can go to understand more, the relationship between us and God, then to look closely at the relationship between a mother and a child. Perhaps that is why God has blessed so many of us with children, to help us to see the relationship he wants with each of us...to help us to see how God sees us...

After an Emmaus weekend, I realized that God looks at me and each of you like Deb and I look at our sons while they are sleeping at night – We go in to check on them and sometimes just sit there watching them sleep – so perfect, so beautiful – so innocent – at those moments we realize that there is nothing our boys could do to stop us from loving them – they are our children – they are precious...we would give our lives for each of them...That is how God sees us – yes, there are times God is disappointed in us, frustrated with us, crying for us – but God will never stop loving us...we are God's children...

I John 3: 1-3 (NIV) - “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

On Mother's Day we are reminded that the Bible tells us that our God is like...a comforting and protective mother...watching over her children...

Luke 13:34b (NIV) God is described as a mother hen...



“...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings...”

Deuteronomy 32:11-12 (NIV) - God is described as a mother eagle...



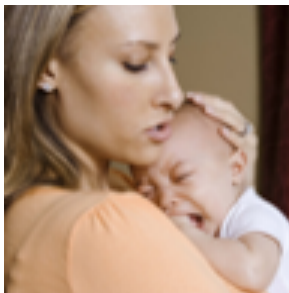
“...like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.”

Deuteronomy 32:18 (English Standard Version) - God described as one who gives birth...



“...You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.”

Isaiah 66:13 (NIV) - God is described as a comforting mother...



God: “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.”

Hosea 13:8a (NIV) - God is described as a mother bear...



"...Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open."

But what I want to talk about for a few moments this morning is how our relationship with God is like the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep...

Read John 10: 1-5 (NKJV) - *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out..."*



...And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Jesus explains His relationship to us through this parable of the Good Shepherd and the Sheep. The shepherd, Jesus, knows each one of us by name. Verse 3 states, *"...he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."*

A Palestinian shepherd did not drive his sheep but led them...they knew his voice...and the shepherd knew each sheep by name...seeing and caring for each sheep in the flock individually. The shepherd knows His sheep and the sheep know the shepherd; there is intimacy...a closeness.

The first verse of Psalm 23 says it all... ***"The Lord is MY shepherd."***

"MY shepherd." Jesus knows you intimately. Jesus knows what you like, what you desire, what you need. Jesus knows your troubles and the darkness that you're

dealing with in your life. Jesus is concerned about your world, your troubles. He knows you intimately, by name...you are a sheep of His fold.



Read John 10: 7-10 (NKJV) – ***“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.’”***

Jesus makes it clear that we are sheep in need of a shepherd. There are thieves and robbers standing ready to attack us, to steal us away... *“whoever enters through [the gate], through [Jesus, the shepherd], will be saved.”* We are sheep in need of a shepherd.

This is not a terribly flattering statement about us considering that sheep are not among God’s most intelligent creatures. Sheep get lost and cannot find their way back. They must be led to new pasture and fresh water. They cannot protect themselves from *“thieves and robbers”* and other dangers.

Isn’t this true of us? We get lost so easily...pulled astray by the temptations of the world...pulled away from Christ by the voices of society. Many times we cannot find our way to new and greener pastures, stuck in the past, stuck in our ways, afraid to move into the unknown, to trust our shepherd.



We must be *led* to deeper understandings of God’s love and greater blessings down the road. We must be *led* away from the things of this world and toward the things of God. We need God like the sheep need the shepherd.

Jesus says, “[You] *will come in and go out, and find pasture...[You will] have life, and have it to the full.*” Jesus will keep us on the right path...David wrote in the 23rd Psalm, *“He leads me in the paths of righteousness.”*



Elmer Towns, in Praying the 23rd Psalm, writes, *“The Shepherd is like a guide, taking the sheep where they ought to go. And what are the qualifications of a guide? He’s been there before and knows how to get his sheep to green pastures. He knows the safest paths. Best of all, he knows what is waiting for the sheep when they get to their destination...”*

...So the shepherd gathers his sheep together to lead them, guide them, and go before them to greener pastures. Notice the Shepherd doesn’t necessarily lead us in easy paths, beautiful paths or even prosperous paths...but always the right path.”

Are you allowing Jesus to guide your life? Isaiah 58:11 (NKJV) reads, ***“The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail...”***



Not only does the shepherd know us intimately, by name, and is ready to lead us through the unknown dangers that await, but most importantly, our shepherd is willing to lay down His life for us.

Read John 10: 11-18 (NKJV) - ***“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but***

I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”



Towns writes, “What kind of Shepherd do you want? You want one who knows your name. “He calls his own sheep by name.” You want a Shepherd who knows the future: “And when He brings our His own sheep, He goes before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. Your Shepherd is your [intimate] protector and guide. But your Shepherd also made the most incredible sacrifice in history. He was sinless, but He gave His life for sinful people, like you and me. He did not like the idea of dying any more than you do. He prayed, “O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Then He allowed soldiers to slap Him, beat Him with a leather whip and crown Him with needle sharp thorns. They finally nailed His hands and feet to a cross and lifted Him up for all to see, and a mob ridiculed Him. His strength was drained as He hung six hours in the blistering sun. Even then they did not kill Him. Jesus said, “*It is finished!*” And bowing His head, He gave up His Spirit and His life. Your Shepherd voluntarily gave up His life for you. He said, “*I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me.*”

Can you say, “*The Lord is my shepherd?*”

Do you know Him? Do you know that He knows you intimately? Are you allowing Him the guide you, to protect you? Are you trusting Him...the one who was willing to lay His life down for you?

Not **a** shepherd? Jesus is not one among many shepherds. There can only be one shepherd. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth and the life...no one comes to the Father except through Me.*” Not **the** Shepherd. Jesus is more than a great God... He wants a personal relationship with you...He wants you to say, “*The Lord is my shepherd,*” because that is what He is...

Not “*The Lord **used** to be my shepherd.*” So many have turned their backs on God due to some misfortune or perhaps because life is good; they think that they don’t need God at the moment... Whatever the reason one is no longer following the shepherd, the problem is not the Shepherd...the problem is with the sheep...the Shepherd never leaves the sheep. Not “*The Lord **will be** my shepherd someday.*”

Right now you are busy...you are having fun...you are starting a new job...you are pursuing an education...life is too hectic to say “*The Lord is **my** shepherd*” because you would have to make some changes. Jesus wants a close relationship with you today, just as you are.

If the Lord is **not** your shepherd, what is? Who shepherds you? Your family, your work, your possessions, your education, fun & entertainment? If anyone or anything else is your shepherd, you will never find the satisfaction and peace you seek in life.



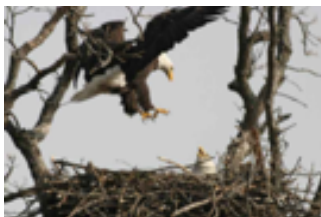
Is the Lord **your** shepherd?

We are children of a God...

- Who covers us like a mother hen covers her chicks with her wings...



- Who scoops us up in His talons and carries us like a mother eagle when we fall...



- Who created us and knit us together...



- Who comforts us in our loneliness and grief like a loving mother...



- Who sacrifices and rises up to protect us from the enemy, from harm, like a mother bear does her cubs



- Who is the Good Shepherd...Who knows each of us by name, leads us to greener pastures, protects us from the enemy, and willingly lays His life down for us.



May we accept our parentage...the relationship offered us...the adoption bestowed upon us...May our hearts sing out, *"How great is the love God has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!..."* May we be able to say, boldly, assuredly, confidently..."The Lord is **MY** Shepherd." Amen!