

DUMB SHEEP

“When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Matthew 9:36

THEME

We share much in common with sheep, including their thoughtless nature and utter helplessness. We truly need a Shepherd to guide us.

SONGS

Gracious Savior, Gentle Shepherd
Jesus Calls Us

SPECIAL PRAYER PREPARATION

Open with Luther's Morning Prayer

MESSAGE

Someone once said that of all the animals, sheep were the least intelligent. Their foolish carelessness often places them in danger or causes illness just because they are not smart enough to think of the consequences.

The first problem is their eating habits. Sheep don't have much of a life. They spend their entire time wandering from grass clump to grass clump trying to get their fill of grass. Often these eating habits take them in directions that are opposite from the rest of the flock. Sheep easily wander away because they are so intent in their eating, not paying attention to where they should be.

A second problem is that sheep also prefer to follow a leader. Often there is one sheep in a flock that commands attention from the rest. Without thinking for themselves, they blindly follow after the leader, regardless of any danger that it might bring. It has been reported that if the lead sheep falls off a cliff, the rest of the herd will usually be right behind him, never realizing how foolish their following may be. Certainly sheep are not brilliant animals!

A third problem sheep have is that they do not defend themselves. Not only will they refuse to fight back against a predator but will they also refuse to run away. Instead, they huddle together in a tight bunch, making themselves easy targets for the enemy.

Don't you feel a little sorry for sheep? Because they are so foolish they often place themselves in terrible situations. We can easily wonder why they are that way. But are we any different? How often aren't we like sheep that wander from the fold, not realizing that we are wandering away from the Savior. This often happens when we pile sin upon sin trying to cover up something that we did wrong.

Sheep also follow the wrong leaders who can easily march their followers off the cliff. As Christ's sheep, we also must be careful not to be misled by false teachers and sinful people who wish to lead us on the wrong path.

And just as sheep are helpless against those who are trying to destroy them, so we have no power on our own to fight against the devil's schemes. The only hope we have is that the Good Shepherd would watch for us when we wander away, that he would scold us when we begin to follow another, and that he would strengthen us, defend us, and protect us. Then we can really understand Jesus' words when he says, *“You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* Let us thank Jesus today and every day that he is always there to watch over us, his foolish, thoughtless sheep!