

Fourth Sunday of Easter

On a Monday evening in winter, I enjoy watching Only Connect on BBC 2. A series of four statements, pictures or music have a theme to be guessed in a limited amount of time. Sometimes very obscure! When I look at the Lectionary some weeks I find it to be a similar challenge. Not so this week, as the readings and post communion prayer all point in one direction. In some country churches this week is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. It can conjure a warm and cosy picture as in "All on an April evening" when the sheep with their little lambs passed me by on the road and I thought on the lamb of God.

When we lived in Poynings there were sheep in the field at the bottom of our garden. They took no notice of me when I went through their field; they didn't recognise my voice. On a hot day they sheltered in the shade of the hedge. If they fell over on to their back they were unable to get up without help from the shepherd. (The crook being designed to fit round the ankle –not the neck). Jesus knew what a good shepherd looked like.

Jesus had been taken to task in the previous chapter for healing the blind man on the Sabbath but he had received spiritual insight as well as physical healing which the Pharisees couldn't accept. The Pharisees then had to listen as Jesus pointed out the difference between the Good Shepherd and the hired hand. They still didn't understand that they were spiritually blind; but it didn't stop them wanting to stone Jesus.

So I suppose we must ask "what sort of sheep are we?" Do we blindly follow a voice which is not the Lords? Last week we were challenged to read our bibles so that we could hear God speaking. When we stay in the shade rather than getting involved, at least we can pray and when we fall down will we let Jesus put us on our feet again?

David in Psalm 23 knew the good shepherd, and that His goodness would lead him home, and he trusted in Him alone.

That's the way to go!

Jennie