



DAILY SCRIPTURE & PRAYER RESOURCE
for the
WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
20 MAY – 27 MAY 2012

DAY 7—SATURDAY 36 MAY

Changed by the Good Shepherd

Scripture

1 Samuel 2:1-10 *Not by might does one prevail*
 Psalm 23 *You are there with your rod and your staff*
 Ephesians 6:10-20 *Be strong in the Lord*
 John 21:15-19 *Feed my sheep*

Feed my sheep (John 21:19)

Reflection

Those who prevail over suffering still need support from on high. That support comes through prayer. We read about the power of Hannah's prayer in the first chapter of 1 Samuel. In the second chapter, we find Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving. She realised that some things happen only with the help of God. It was through the divine will that Hannah and her husband became parents. This text is an example that strengthens one's faith in what would seem to be a hopeless situation. It is an example of godly victory.

The 'good shepherd' of Psalm 23 guides his sheep even through the darkest places, comforting them with his presence. Those who place their trust in the Lord have no need to fear even the shadows of dissolution or disunity, as their shepherd will lead them into the green pastures of truth, to dwell together in the Lord's own house.

The letter to the Ephesians urges us to *be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power* by putting on spiritual armour: truth, righteousness, proclaiming the good news, faith, salvation, the word of God, prayer and supplication.

The risen Lord urges Peter – and in his person each disciple – to discover in himself a love of him who alone is the one true shepherd. If you have such love, then *Feed my sheep!* In other words, nurture them, protect them, empower and strengthen them – because they are mine and belong to me! Be my good servant and tend those who have loved me and who follow my voice. Teach them mutual love, cooperation, and boldness as they go along the twists and turns of life.

As a result of divine grace, the witness to Christ that has been confirmed in us obliges us to act jointly for the sake of unity. We have the ability and the knowledge to bear such witness! But are we willing to? The good shepherd, who by his life, teaching and conduct strengthens all who have put their trust in his grace and support, invites us to minister with him unconditionally. Thus fortified, we will be able to help one another on the road to unity. So let us become strong in the Lord, that we may strengthen others in a joint testimony of love.

For reflection/discussion

1. Who are 'the lost'? Aren't we all a little lost (at least)?
2. Is it always right to hang in there in what seems to be a hopeless situation? Or is it sometimes better to give up and move on? How do we know which is best?
3. How does Jesus the good shepherd inspire us to comfort, revive, and restore the confidence of those who are lost?
4. In what ways can Christians of various traditions strengthen each other in confessing and bearing witness to Jesus Christ?
5. For us today, what can be the meaning of Paul's exhortation: "Be strong in the Lord.... put on the whole armour of God"?

Prayer for the Day

Father of all, you call us to be one flock in your Son, Jesus Christ. He is our good shepherd who invites us to lie down in green pastures, leads us beside still waters, and restores our life. In following him, may we so care for others that all see in us the love of the one true shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.



National Council of
Churches in Australia
Faith and Unity Commission