

## **Introductions to Scripture Lesson for Sunday, April 25, 2021**

### **Introduction to the 1 John 3:16-24:**

Our first reading this morning comes from the first letter of John and speaks of love as not just a word or a feeling, but as an action. William L. Self writes, “The consistent test of genuine Christianity in this [passage] is whether our actions match our professions, whether our feet and our tongues are in alignment.” Our actions should match our words. Listen as we read 1 John chapter 3, verses 16-24.

### **First Reading: 1 John 3:16-24 (NRSV)**

“We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?

“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, not in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

“And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.”

### **Introduction to John 10:11-18**

Our gospel selection for today is one of the most familiar passages in the gospel of John. In it, we hear Jesus call himself The Good Shepherd, describing to us his oneness with God in thought and in will. Jesus will later pray “that they may be one, as we are one,” describing the beloved community, highlighting that we are called to unity of mind and mission. Hear now as we listen to the words of our Good Shepherd as they have been recorded and translated.

### **Gospel Reading: John 10:11-18 (NRSV)**

[Jesus said,] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”