

(John 10:7-14, NIV84)

Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-

If you've ever seen the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*, you probably recall one of saddest scenes being when George Bailey, who has wished he was never born, goes to the house of his mother, knocks on her door and when she answers, he says: "Mother!" But she recoils and suspiciously asks: "Mother? What do you want?" George pleads hopefully: "Mother, this is George, I thought sure you'd remember me." But without any recognition whatsoever she says, "George who?" She doesn't know him.

It's A Wonderful Life is a story of fantasy, but there are real-life situations where people, if they suffer from amnesia or Alzheimer's, genuinely do not know or recognize family members or friends. Those who have dealt with such conditions know how devastating it is not to be recognized by those whom you love.

Infinitely more devastating would be to be told by Jesus: "I never knew you." But wait! Jesus is the omniscient God, how could He not know anyone? The fact is, those who do not look to Jesus in faith, but think they can live without Him, will ultimately get their wish: they will be without Him for all eternity. What a horrible prospect!

Thankfully we know Jesus, and more importantly He KNOWS us! And what is equally wonderful is the sort of "amnesia" that Jesus has toward our sin: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12). We who trust in Jesus will never be put to shame; we will never be sent packing by our God who does not know us. We know our Shepherd and in Him we "have life, and have it to the full." Rejoice in that truth every day.

Members with you of Jesus' flock, known by our Good Shepherd,
Pastor Golm

May 15

"Only One of Each of Us"

I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. Isaiah 43:1

After the Sunday-school teacher had spoken to her class at great length about the love of God, especially about how he showed his love for us by sending Jesus to be the Savior, she decided to ask a probing question.

In her general review she asked the children: "Why do you think God loves us all so very much?" There was a long, unbroken silence as each child "thought hard" for the proper answer. Finally, a timid little six-year-old raised her hand and ventured tentatively: "Because he has only one of each of us?"

What an answer-even though it ended with a question-mark! Yes, among many other reasons, God loves us "because he has only one of each of us".

Or does that sound like a childish answer -the naive reply of a kindergartner? It may at first seem so; but beneath those words lies a theological truth, a truth which, the more we ponder it, the more it gives a deeper meaning to your life and mine. Suppose we repeat the little girl's reply: "God loves us all so very much 'because he has only one of each of us".

If that is true, and it is true, then in those inevitable moments when we feel so insignificant, so unimportant, so lost in the teeming mass of humanity, we can always remember that, in the eyes of our heavenly Father, we are something special, something unique. He does have "only one" of each of us. And, no matter who we are, rich or poor, black or white, red or yellow, famous or unknown, the great God of heaven speaks to our single, solitary self and says: "I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." What an assurance! In moments of loneliness, depression, or seeming defeat-throughout changing scenes of life, we can speak these words of confident faith

The LORD my Shepherd is, I shall be well supplied.
Since HE is mine and I am HIS, What can I want beside? Amen!