

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
COMPASS, PA

April 21, 2024 – EASTER 4, YR. B

The Rev. Dr. Nina George-Hacker

Homily: “*Live. Pray. Speak.*”

Acts 4:5-12 (Peter testifies that a man is healed through the power of the Risen Christ)  
Psalm 23 KJV (The Lord is our Shepherd; we shall want for nothing)  
1 John 3:16-24 (We are to love and serve one another, as Jesus loved and served us)  
St. John 10:11-18 (Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep)

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“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd” (John 10:16). Can you sense the insistence in Jesus’ voice, as He describes Himself as the Good Shepherd? Yes, He knows and loves you and me, and takes care of us. But there’s something else on His mind too. Jesus has other sheep, not just in another field next door, but those who are not of *His* sheep pen—at least, not yet. In speaking of these other sheep, Jesus expresses a sense of urgency: I *must* bring them also!

He doesn’t say, if I feel like it, or if it’s convenient, but I *must*. They too will listen to My voice, Jesus says, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd. Jesus cares deeply about people who are not yet believers in Christ. The way Jesus talks about those other sheep, it seems there are two kinds of people in the world: Christians and “not-yet-Christians.”

Whom do you know that’s not yet a Christian? How many of them are you related to? How many of them are your friends, coworkers, or neighbors?

God surrounds each one of us with these not-yet-Christians, those other sheep that are not yet part of His Church, and He gives us the chance to witness to them. But how do we do that? Since Episcopalians are notoriously allergic to evangelism, how do we witness to people about Jesus Christ?

The process can be expressed in three simple words: ***Live. Pray. Speak.*** Step one is to ***live***. When you are in the workplace, you live as a Christian. When the rest of your co-workers are using profanity or not trying very hard to do a good job, you don’t act that way. Instead, you let your light shine, that they might see your good deeds and glorify God (Matthew 5:16). You resolve to be the best employee that place has ever seen. You work hard, you’re honest, you don’t swear, you’re kind and friendly. You live this way in front of your coworkers, because a lot of them are not yet Christians, and they’ll notice what you’re doing. And for those of you who are retired, this also applies to how you act around your neighbors—and your family and friends!

Step two is to ***pray***. For example, “Dear God, please lead all the people in my life who don’t yet know You to a life-transforming encounter with Christ. Help me to share with them what You have done for me. Cause them to be curious about why I live as I do, believe what I believe, and then ask me questions. Anoint the words I say that I might speak clearly about how Jesus is our Savior from sin. Dear Lord, bless these sheep that are not of Your sheep pen. Cause them to believe in You.”

And as you ***live*** and you ***pray***, you ***speak***. That’s step 3. God constantly brings opportunities into our lives where we have a chance to show and to speak about, to share, our Christian faith. But do we take advantage of those moments? Your co-worker will ask what you believe and why. Your friend, your relative—who knows, maybe even a total stranger—will want to know what you believe; what you think; what’s your opinion; why you live the way you do; what do you do on Sunday mornings; and why don’t you sin like everyone else. These conversations are coming your way. Are you ready for them? Are you ready to be a witness for our Savior Jesus Christ?

Recently, I was chatting with the lady who cleans our apartment once a month. I can't even remember how the conversation turned to how I came to know the Lord, but before I realized what was happening, my conversion story tumbled out of my mouth. I knew she was listening very carefully. After she left, I had to sit down, feeling a bit stunned, as I murmured in amazement, "I just shared my testimony with Sue!"

Then, at Lancaster General Hospital this past Monday, I was chatting with a medical technician in the hallway, and before I knew it, somehow we were talking about what a difference it makes to believe in Christ. He wasn't "buying" my point of view. But by the way in which he answered, I suspected he might go home and think about it.

Hey, I'm as gun-shy as many of you are about evangelism. *My* calling is to be a preacher and teacher, not an evangelist. And yet, Jesus has asked *every believer* to bring Him new sheep.

**Live. Pray. Speak.** I believe that if we ask God to help us do these three things, the Holy Spirit will bless us and everyone who listens to us, or observes how we live.

I'm reminded of a story about a pastor who was serving at a mission church in downtown Chicago. He lived right there in the city, and had promised God he would not go to bed without witnessing to at least one person a day. It was getting late and he was about to turn in when he realized he hadn't witnessed to anyone that day. He wanted to keep his promise to God, so he went out into the street at night, and walked up to the first person he saw, a man standing by a bus stop.

"Are you a Christian?" he asked. The guy screamed at him, told him he was doing more harm than good in the world, and that Christians were "worthless!"

One week later, that same man attended the pastor's church. "I'm sorry for what I said," he told the preacher after the service. "I haven't been able to stop thinking about my life, God, and my soul, since you talked to me last week at the bus stop." By the grace of God—and the minister's courage in approaching him—that man came to faith in Christ and turned out to become one of the hardest-working volunteers and faithful Sunday School teachers in that congregation.\*

Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd." Until Jesus returns, we are the only ones who can carry out this assignment to recruit sheep for our Shepherd.

Would you be daring enough to make that kind of pledge to God? "I will witness about Jesus every day to someone. I won't go to bed until that happens." Too much? Maybe start small: "I will share my faith in *some* way with a non-believer, this month, or by the close of this year."

### **Let us pray:**

Dear Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, and we know there are other sheep who do not yet follow You. Bless us with Your sense of urgency for their salvation, as we live among them. Grant us opportunities to share our faith, and anoint the words we say with Your Holy Spirit and with power. Lead those to whom we witness—either by word or example—to hear Your voice and follow you. *Amen.*

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\* Adapt. Don Schultz, "I Have Other Sheep," 24 April 2012, [SermonCentral.com](https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/i-have-other-sheep-don-schultz-sermon-on-evangelism-the-lost-166439) <<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/i-have-other-sheep-don-schultz-sermon-on-evangelism-the-lost-166439>> 12 April 2024.