

# Good Shepherd

John 10v11

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

So, it is the 19<sup>th</sup> December. Even people who refuse to think about Christmas too early may need to start thinking about it now.

But what do we think about when we think of Christmas?

As Christians, hopefully our thoughts will turn to the very first Christmas and the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

Do we think about the familiar nativity scene - Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in the stable with those unlikely visitors, shepherds and wise men, standing nearby?

Why did God choose shepherds to be the first people to be told the good news of Jesus' birth and to have the opportunity to visit Him in the stable? They wouldn't be quite as clean and tidy as the shepherds we see in nativity plays and in pictures.

After all, they lived outdoors with dirty, smelly sheep and I expect some of that dirt and smell would have rubbed off onto them. Shepherds weren't the most popular of people. But to God they were special and important.

Jesus described himself as 'The Good Shepherd'. Did he mean he was dirty, smelly and probably a bit scruffy? No. The important word in this name of Jesus is GOOD.

Jesus is the GOOD SHEPHERD.

Being a good shepherd is hard work and very time consuming. Even today, with the help of modern equipment, being a shepherd is demanding and requires commitment. A shepherd has to really love his sheep or he won't feel inclined to give them the care and attention they need every day of the year - whatever the weather- whatever he feels like-perhaps 24 hours a day at lambing time. Their needs are his priority. His sheep must be protected, fed and kept healthy.

So, why is Jesus the Good Shepherd?

Well, we know He loves us and cares about us 24 hours a day - 365 days a year. He never has a day off. Every day of our life is important to Him. His love and care aren't dependent on the weather or what else He has to do. He always has time for us.

WHAT A WONDERFUL THOUGHT.