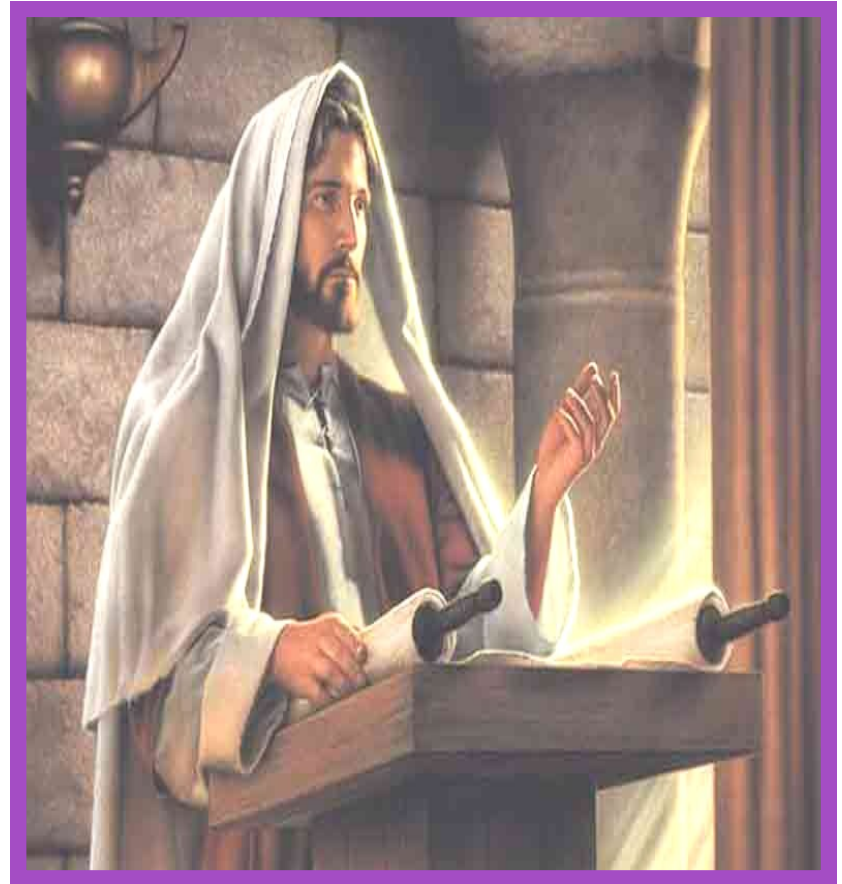


he be not a shepherd. Do you love Me? You said to Him Lord, Do you love Me? And he answered, I do love You. And Thou to him, Feed My sheep. Thou, You, Lord, by Your Own questioning, by the strong assurance of Your Own words, made of the lover a shepherd. He is a shepherd then to whom You committed Your sheep to be fed. You Yourself entrusted them, he is a shepherd. Let us now see whether he be not a good one. This we find by the very question, and his answer. You asked, whether he loved You; he answered, I do love You. Thou saw his heart, that he answered truth. Is he not then good, who loves so great a Good? Whence that answer drawn from his inmost heart? Wherefore was this Peter, who had Your eyes in his heart for witnesses, sad because You asked him not once only, but a second and a third time, that by a threefold confession of love, he might efface the threefold sin of denial; wherefore, I say, being sad that he was asked repeatedly by Him who knew what He was asking, and had given what He heard; wherefore being sad, did he return such an answer, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You? What! In making such a confession, such a profession rather, would he lie? In truth then, he made answer of his love to You, and from his inmost heart he gave utterance to a lover's words. Now You have said, A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things. So then he is both a shepherd, and a good shepherd; nothing it is true to the power and goodness of the Shepherd of shepherds; but nevertheless even he is both a shepherd, and a good one; and all other such are good shepherds.



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**SERMON ON
I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
151 - 3**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Sermon 88 on the New Testament (Parts 1-4 of 10)

Saint Augustine

[CXXXVIII. Ben.]

On the words of the Gospel, John 10:14 , I am the good shepherd, etc.

Against the Donatists.

1. We have heard the Lord Jesus setting forth to us the office of a good shepherd. And herein He has doubtless given us to know, as we may understand it, that there are good shepherds. And yet that the multitude of shepherds might not be understood in a wrong sense; He says, I am the good Shepherd. And wherein He is the good Shepherd, He shows in the words following; The good Shepherd, says He, lays down His life for the sheep. But he that is an hire-ling, and not the shepherd, sees the wolf coming, and flees; because he cares not for the sheep, for he is an hireling. Christ then is the good Shepherd. What was Peter? Was he not a good shepherd? Did not he too lay down his life for the sheep? What was Paul? What the rest of the Apostles? What the blessed Bishops, Martyrs, who followed close upon their times? What again our holy Cyprian? Were they not all good shepherds, not hirelings, of whom it is said, Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward? All these then were good shepherds, not simply for that they shed their blood, but that they shed it for the sheep. For not in pride, but in charity they shed it.

2. For even among the heretics, they who for their iniquities and errors have suffered any trouble, vaunt themselves in the name of martyrdom, that with this fair covering disguised they may plunder the more easily, for wolves they are. Now if you would know in what rank they are to be held, hear that good shepherd, the Apostle Paul, that not all who even give up their bodies in suffering to the flames, are to be accounted to have shed their blood for the sheep, but rather against the sheep. If, says he, I speak with the tongues of men, and angels, but have not charity, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. If I should know all mysteries, and have all prophecy, and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not charity, I am nothing. Now a great thing truly is this faith that re-moves mountains. They are indeed all great things; but if I have them without charity, says he, not they, but I am nothing. But up to this point he has not touched them,

who glory in sufferings under the false name of martyrdom. Hear how he touches, yea rather pierces them through and through. If I should distribute, says he, all my goods to the poor, and deliver my body to be burned. Now here they are. But mark what follows; but have not charity, it profits me nothing. Lo, they have come to suffering, come even to the shedding of blood, yea come to the burning of the body; and yet it profits them nothing, because charity is lacking. Add charity, they all profit; take charity away, all the rest profit nothing.

3. What a good is this charity, Brethren! What more precious? What yields greater light? Or strength? Or profit? Or security? Many are the gifts of God, which even the wicked have, who shall say, Lord, we have prophesied in Your Name, in Your Name have cast out devils, in Your Name done many mighty works. And He will not answer, You have not done them. For in the Presence of so great a Judge, they will not dare to lie or boast of things they have not done. But for that they had not charity, He answers them all, I know you not. Now how can he have so much as the smallest charity, who when even convicted, loves not unity? It was then as impressing on good shepherds this unity, that our Lord was unwilling to mention many shepherds. For it is not, as I have said already, that Peter was not a good shepherd, and Paul, the rest of the Apostles, and the holy Bishops who were after them, and blessed Cyprian. All these were good shepherds; and notwithstanding to good shepherds, He commended not good shepherds, but a good Shepherd. I, says He, am the good Shepherd.

4. Let us question the Lord with such little understanding as we have, and in most humble discourse hold converse with so great a Master. What sayest Thou, O Lord, Thou good Shepherd? For You are the good Shepherd, who art also the good Lamb; at once Pastor and Pasturage, at once Lamb and Lion. What sayest Thou? Let us give ear and aid us, that we may understand. I, says He, am the good Shepherd. What is Peter? Is he either not a shepherd, or a bad one? Let us see, if