

“The Hired Babysitter”

John 10:11-18

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By Rebecca Enney

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, sees the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be eaten by the wolf. He does not love the sheep. I am the good shepherd.” Said Jesus. “I love my sheep. I will lay down my life for my sheep.”

As you know, Uncle Floyd is the sexton at church. This story takes place on Saturday afternoon. Uncle Floyd had to work at church because there was a wedding. Ken, he is 16 years old, is Barabas’s babysitter when Uncle Floyd works a wedding. And so it was that Ken and Barabas and Jeter went to the playground.

Barabas really loves his dog Jeter. Actually, his dog’s full name is Derrick Jeter, but Barabas just calls him Jeter for short. Sometimes he just calls him Jet.

If any of you have a pet, you know how very much a pet is loved. Every day when Barabas gets home from school, Jeter is there at the door, jumping and barking and wagging his tail. Jeter is SO happy to see Barabas. And when Barabas is sick, Jeter lies on the floor right next to the bed. And if Barabas has to run to the bathroom to throw up, Jeter runs over with him. Jeter goes camping and canoeing and to the playground with Barabas. Jeter is like his best friend. Jeter always loves Barabas. Barabas always loves Jeter.



So here it is Saturday afternoon and Ken and Barabas and Jeter are at the playground practicing some pitching and hitting. Suddenly, there was a commotion across the street. They could hear fire sirens and within a minute three big fire-trucks roared up in front of the house there. And an ambulance and a police car and other volunteers arrived by car. There must have been a chimney fire in the house. The neighbors all came out to watch the excitement. Fortunately, the fire was under control quickly and within ½ hour, most of the people left and the trucks left and only a few firefighters were there talking.

It was at that moment that Barabas noticed that Jeter was not there beside them. Barabas looked back at the ball field, but Jeter was not there either. In fact, Jeter was no where in sight! “Where’s Jeter?!” Barabas said to Ken. They looked and called for the dog. They walked the whole playground, calling and calling, “Here Jett, here Jett,” but no Jeter.

Ken looked at his watch. It was almost 6:00pm. Time to get Barabas home . . . and . . . Ken was meeting his friends at 6:00 to go to a Harrisburg Senators game.

“Well, it’s time to go Barabas,” said Ken. “But we can’t! We didn’t find Jeter yet!” said Barabas in a very worried voice. Barabas was almost in tears. Where could Jeter be?

“Sorry kid, it’s 6:00pm and that’s all I’m getting paid for. Time to get you home.” And Ken started down the street, with Barabas reluctantly following, always turning back, always looking for Jeter.

Barabas and Jeter are like sheep who need a good shepherd. They need someone to look out for them. You and I are like sheep who need a Good Shepherd. Little Baby Leah Rachel, who was baptized this morning, is like a little tiny lamb. Us lambs and sheep need a Good Shepherd, not someone who will walk away at 6:00pm, like Ken, the hired babysitter did.

Jesus is not a hired babysitter. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. Jesus will never walk away when we need his help. He said “I love my sheep. I will lay down my life for my sheep.” . . . TO BE CONTINUED . . .