

Jesus cannot let them stay in this state. Jesus is the good shepherd for everyone. We only get half the story in today's reading, as the following verses in the Bible tell how these same people are fed in the famous miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus does not just look after their spiritual needs, he provides for their physical needs too. He really is a good shepherd.

## Application

The image of the good shepherd can show us a few things about Jesus. Jesus as shepherd echoes the image of King David in the Old Testament, working as a shepherd before he became king. Jesus comes from the line of David as was prophesied in today's first reading. The genealogy of Jesus is detailed at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel to prove his relationship with King David. But Jesus truly is a shepherd king, ready to care for his flock rather than to take on the grandeur of power.

Picturing Jesus as our shepherd also emphasises God's kindness to us. Jesus takes on the role of caring for all our needs and guiding us through life if we will follow him. As he takes on this lowly role of shepherd, we can see that God isn't distant or unapproachable. In Jesus, God is physically present and is ready to meet all our needs.

The image of the good shepherd also highlights our weakness and folly. Compared with God's greatness we are as helpless as sheep. We may rather not think of this, preferring to be proud of our achievements and status, but it is good for us to be reminded that we are all dependent upon God's grace. Fortunately for us, through God's grace we are given the great gift of Jesus to be our shepherd, and we can be confident that if we follow him we are in the very best of care.