

A couple of months ago, on St. Patrick's Day, I came up with a few jokes and believe it or not some people have actually asked if I had any more St. Patrick's day jokes! Well this morning I've got the next best thing: Mother's Day Jokes!

So, ready or not, here's the first one: Why is a computer so smart?

It listens to its mother board!

Next joke: What did the mother rope say to her child?

"Don't be knotty."

Joke number 3! A son says to his mother: "Mom, the teacher was asking me today, if I have any brothers or sisters who will be coming to school."

And the Mother replies: "That's nice of her to take such an interest in you. So what did she say when you told her that you're the only child?" (The boy's response?) "She just said..." "Thank goodness!"

Speaking of teachers, did you hear about the Sunday school teacher who asked one of her students this question? She said: "Tell me, Susie. Do you say prayers before eating?" Susie's response? "No, ma'am, I don't have to. My mom's a good cook."

How about one more? Why did little Johnny chop his joke book in half? **Because his** Mom told him to cut the comedy!

Speaking of which it is time for *me* to cut the comedy and get on with the sermon! So in all seriousness God's richest blessings to all the Moms worshiping with us here this morning. We really are so thankful to God for all that our mothers do for us. Not only do go through all of arduous work of bringing us into the world, but once we have arrived, dedicate hours and hours every day to make sure we are loved and provided for until we reach adulthood! In so many ways moms show their love and care for us our whole lives long!

Our text for this morning's message is our assigned Gospel lesson, especially John 10:27 where Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"

Who would you say knows you the best, better than anyone else in the whole world? What person would that be? On this Mother's Day, a very likely person that comes to mind might just be your Mom!

If you're married, perhaps it's your spouse. Or perhaps for you, your father is the one person in the world who knows you better than anybody. Maybe it's a brother or sister, or best friend. Who is it that oftentimes knows what you are about to say, even before you say it? Who is it that can predict the

things that you're going to do? Who can finish your sentences for you? Who knows the funny things about you, your habits, the good and the not-so-good. Who knows you, better than anyone else?

Ultimately, no other person in the whole world knows you better than you know yourself. Even the people that are closest to you really don't know you the way you know yourself. There are certain things you keep inside, certain thoughts you don't want to share, certain things that bother you or scare you or interest you, and no one knows about those things except for you. Of all the people in the world, the person who knows you the best is you.

But, don't forget about how well Jesus knows you. 'I know my sheep,' Jesus says in our Gospel reading. He tells us He is the Good Shepherd, and that He knows His sheep. But what does that mean to be known by Christ? And how well does Jesus *really* know us? Today we'll spend some time thinking about those questions, as we focus on this wonderful picture of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who knows us, His sheep.

To me it's amazing how a shepherd can actually tell the differences between all his sheep. From a casual point of view, all sheep look pretty much the same. Sure, sheep come in different shapes and sizes, but for the most part, if you've seen one sheep, you've seen them all. Right? Actually, that's not true. A shepherd spends a *lot* of time with his sheep, and as he does, he gets to know the different personalities of each one of them. That one over there, he might say, likes to stray away. This one over here, he gets tired all the time. And this one, well, he's very bad at finding pasture. And ya gotta watch out for that one – he's mean. And that other one over there is always running ahead – overconfident. Each sheep has its own quirks, its own personality, different strengths and weaknesses, and a good shepherd will know what those different things are about his sheep. He knows them.

In the same way, Jesus says that He knows you. "I know what your personality is like," Jesus says. "I know your strengths and I know your weaknesses." Jesus knows you. But it goes deeper than that. When Jesus says that He *knows* you, it means more than you and I can really comprehend.

The Bible says that Jesus knew each one of us even before the creation of the world. Long before you were born, He knew who your parents would be. He knew what your genetic makeup would be. He knew what your family life would be like as you grew up as a child. Before you were alive, Jesus knew all these things about you.

Today, He knows things about you that you don't even know about yourself. He knows what you were like as a two-year old – something you can't

remember. He knows how your brain works. He knows what different things you are predisposed to, both good and bad.

Over the last few years, I've become especially aware of all the personality tests that exist on the internet to help you understand yourself better. Sometimes after taking one of these tests and reading about the results you hear people say, "Hey, I just learned something new about myself!" Jesus could say, "I already knew that." He knows you much better than you will ever know yourself.

What do you think Jesus' opinion about you is, since your whole life is an open book to Him? Remember, He knows not just your personality, but your thoughts. All those things you keep to yourself, those secrets deep in your mind, He knows what those secrets are. And He knows your history - those sins you've committed in your life, and you know what they are - some of those sins are things you don't want anyone to ever know about. But Jesus knows about them. He knows everything about you. Every thought you've ever had, every word you've ever spoken, every deed you've ever done, even the secret things, Jesus knows.

What do you think His opinion is, about you? Not very good? "If Jesus knows me that well, He must not think very highly of me. He must see me as a very sinful person." Remember, your whole life, including your private life is an open book to Him. Perhaps you might be thinking, "If this is true, then I'm lost. I must be going to hell. There's no way Jesus would want me in heaven with Him, since He knows all these things that I have done in my life."

Jesus **does** know you. But instead of punishing you, look at what He says: Right before the start of today's text, in John chapter 10 verse 15, He says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Instead of punishing you, or being angry at you, Jesus lays down His life for you. Now is this something that a shepherd would normally do, lay down his life for his sheep? No! A shepherd will do the best he can to fight off any wild animals, but even a caring and conscientious shepherd isn't going to just lay down his life, and let a wild animal kill him. Any normal shepherd would tell you, "Hey, it's not worth it." Besides, what good would it do? After the wild animal kills the shepherd, there's no one there to protect the sheep!

But this is what Jesus did for you. Satan comes, and he wants to drag you down to hell with him. "He deserves it!" Satan says to God, "He breaks your commandments all the time!" But Jesus steps forward. And Jesus doesn't fight Satan. Instead, Jesus lays down His life, and Satan takes it. Satan thinks he's won, and that he can attack **you** next. But then, Jesus rises from the dead, and

that changes everything. By laying down His life for you, He took away the punishment that you deserve for your sins. By laying down His life for you, you no longer have to worry that God is going to punish you for your sin. It doesn't work that way – Jesus has already been punished for you. Your sins are forgiven. And in case you have any doubts, remember Jesus rose from the dead. That's the proof that you really are a forgiven child of God.

And now, when Jesus says that He knows you, what that means is this: He doesn't know you anymore as a sinner who deserves to be punished. When Jesus looks at you now, He sees you as someone who has had their sins taken away. He sees you as someone who has been forgiven. He sees you as someone who will not be punished, but instead, be blessed by God the Father. Jesus sees you as a sheep that belongs in His flock, a sheep that He wants to take care of your whole life through.

He loves you. He loves you with a love that you'll never fully be able to understand. That love led Him to lay down His life for you. Today, through His holy Word, He reminds you that He knows you better than anyone else in the world, and He forgives you. What a **comfort** that is! Let's keep following Him and keep trusting Him as He leads us through life on this earth to one day dwell with Him in the house of the Lord forever! Amen.