

**Sermon Given at the Anglican Parish of Kingscliff -St James Kingscliff & St Mark's
Pottsville, 26 April 2026. 4th Sunday of Easter.**

Bible Readings: Psalm 23 & John 10:1–10

Title: Who Is Jesus to You?

A journalist once asked Pedro Arrupe, the well-known Jesuit priest, a simple but profound question: "Who is Jesus for you?" The journalist probably expected a nice answer—"Jesus is my brother" or "my Saviour" or "my friend." Instead, Arrupe said: "For me, Jesus is everything."

That question is for you and me today. Who is Jesus to you? Not who your Sunday school teacher said He was. Not who your parents believe He is. Not who the pastor or priest said He is. You.

Let me tell you when I had to answer that question for real. It has been 23 years this month since I arrived in Australia on 1 April 2003.

Those first few years were incredibly difficult. Just two weeks after arriving, my visa situation became uncertain when I realised that the people running the seminary I had come to join were not kind or supportive. They threatened to cancel my visa if I chose to leave.

One night, with nothing but my backpack, I made the decision to walk away. I left the seminary in Goulburn and walked for several kilometres before a police officer picked me up and took me to a petrol station in town. It was late—there were no trains or buses to Canberra. Not wanting to spend the night out in the cold, I took a taxi from Goulburn to Canberra. It's about 90 kms.

From there, I bought a plane ticket to Melbourne, hoping to reconnect with a Nigerian man I had met on the flight from Hong Kong. But when I arrived, he had already left.

I found myself alone in Melbourne, living out of a backpacker hostel—no home, no security, no certainty. Each night, I lay awake, afraid, holding onto faith, and quietly whispering the words of Psalm 23. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want..."

But honestly? I did want. I wanted my visa fixed. I wanted a bed that wasn't shared with strangers. I wanted to not feel forgotten. I missed my family.

Still, I kept praying it. Every day, I would go to St Francis in Lonsdale street to cry and pray. I lived on \$5 Macdonald's cheese burger daily as I was saving the money my family gave me when I was coming to Australia as my religious visa didn't allow me to work.

One evening, broken and wandering the streets of Melbourne, on Queensberry street near Lygon street, a stranger stopped. He saw me—really saw me. He told me that he'd been studying and a voice said to him go and get a drink from Lydon street, something that he wouldn't normally do. He was a Nigerian student from the same part of Nigeria where I came from. He listened to my plight and invited me to come and live with him and another student. Both of them helped me find someone who could assist me eventually to get another religious

visa and to stay in Australia after 8 months of waiting and a migration tribunal court case. Kene was a Good Samaritan. Not an angel with wings—just a man who let Jesus be everything through him.

And in that encounter, I understood something I had only recited before. Psalm 23 isn't a magic charm. It's a relationship.

The shepherd and the sheep have a symbiotic bond. The shepherd depends on the sheep for wool, clothing, food and sustenance, and the sheep depends on the shepherd for pasture, protection, safety, and wellbeing. The sheep trusts. The shepherd leads. The sheep listens. The shepherd provides. Without the shepherd, the sheep wanders into death. Without the sheep, the shepherd's heart is not fully expressed. We were made for each other.

Jesus says in John 10: *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

But listen carefully: That abundant life is not material pleasures. It's not a visa granted on your timeline. It's not a comfortable hostel, a nice car or house or a full bank account. Those things come and go.

True fullness is knowing the Shepherd—even in the valley of the shadow of death. Even in Melbourne, homeless and afraid. Because if God is with me, I lack nothing that truly matters.

St. Ambrose put it this way: Oppressed by injustice? Jesus is **justice**. Need help? Jesus is **strength**. Fear death? Jesus is **life**. Walking in darkness? Jesus is **light**. Whatever you lack, Jesus is. Whatever you face, Jesus meets you there.

So who is Jesus to me? He is my Lord. My Saviour. My friend. My everything. Without Him, I am nothing. With Him, I share in the fullness of life and the reality of heaven itself—starting right here, even in the hard places.

And you? Maybe you're in your own Melbourne today. Your own backpacker's hostel. Your own visa or relationship or economic crisis. And you're asking, "If Jesus is everything, why does this hurt?"

Because the Shepherd doesn't promise a smooth road. He promises **Himself** on the road. And that is more than enough.

So pray Psalm 23 today and everyday. Mean it. Watch for the Good Samaritan that God will send. And let Jesus be everything—not just in your blessings, but in your brokenness.

God leads you beside still waters. He restores your soul. And Jesus waits at the gate, calling your name. **Will you follow Him?**

The Reverend Constantine Osuchukwu, 25 April 2026, AMDG.