

PSALMS WE NEED TO SING
“MY FAITHFUL SHEPHERD”

Psalm 23

August 26, 2018

Psalm 23

*“The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of
my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.”*

INTRODUCTION: **Psalm 23** is referred to as the
“everybody psalm.” The little child learns it as his
mother’s knee, the youth seeks its wisdom in hours
of temptation and uncertainty, and the aged quote it

with quivering lips as the Angel of Death approaches.

This Psalm written by David dates back 30 centuries. Some think he wrote it as an old man, approaching the end of life's journey, looking back over his life and rejoicing in the goodness of God. Others think he wrote it as a youth, out there on the Jerusalem hills, his father's flock around him, his harp in his hand, and his soul aflame with the great thought which had just come to him.

It has been said that you cannot personalize **Psalm 23** until you possess the truth of **Psalm 22**, it is here we see the Good Shepherd crucified on the cross.

John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

He is our Great Shepherd in that He arose from the dead and cares for His sheep.

Hebrews 13:20

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,"

He is our Chief Shepherd in that He is coming again.

1 Peter 5:4

“and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

In **Psalm 23** even though a flock is implied, it is not in view here, only the Lord and the Psalmist.

17 times the Psalmist refers to himself and 13 times to the Lord. While the Shepherd’s gracious provision is detailed the emphasis is upon the Giver rather than the gifts.

It is not just everybody’s Psalm, but it meets everybody’s need. Whatever the urgency or necessity, the Psalm assures us that if the Lord is our Shepherd, He will be there always.

I. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD 1

A. A Possession Based On A Relationship

“Lord” – word for Jehovah and contains 3 tenses of the verb “to be.”

He will be – future

Being – present

He was – past

Eternal God is the One Who is, Who was,
and Who is to be.

“My” – stresses the personal relationship;
not a shepherd, or the Shepherd, but **my**
shepherd.

1. A Shepherd Leads
2. A Rancher Drives
3. A Hireling Runs Away

John 10:12-13

“But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.”

4. A Shepherd Is The Door

John 10:7

“Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.””

Speaks of **Divine Protection**.

B. His Provision Based On A Relationship

“I shall not want” – every need will be met by the guiding, providing hand of the Shepherd. Apart from Him there is nothing that we need or desire.

KEY THOUGHT: walking daily in a trust relationship with the Lord is the source of blessings that overflow in abundance.

With the Shepherd’s protection and provision, the sheep are safe and satisfied; the sheep lack for nothing.

II. THE SHEPHERD GIVES DIRECTION AND REFRESHMENT 2-3

A. Direction 2a

Charles Spurgeon, *“The Lord as our Shepherd provides green pastures, which is the truth of the Scriptures, always fresh, always rich, and never exhausted.”* When, by faith, we are enabled to find rest in the promises, we are like sheep that lie down in the midst of the pasture. We find peace, rest and refreshment, serenity and satisfaction.”

It is the Lord who graciously enables to perceive the preciousness of His truth, and to feed upon it (the power to appropriate the promise).

They know the **“green pastures”** (His Word) but they are not made **“to lie down”** in them.

B. Refreshment 2b-3

“He leads me beside still waters” – waters of rest; this can serve as an invitation and a promise.

John 7:37

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.””

“To drink” – means to take in, to accept, or to believe. This person accepts and assimilates the life of God in Christ to the point where it becomes a part of him.

Pictures one thirsty for God.

Augustine, *“O God, Thou but made us for Thyself and our souls are restless, searching, till they find their rest in Thee.”*

God alone knows where the still, quite, deep, clean, pure water is found that alone can satisfy His sleep and keeps them fit and strong.

Remember, the very One that leads us is also the One that refreshes us.

“He restores my soul” – brings back; He deals with the distressed soul that’s in need of restoring.

Psalms 42:11

**“Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.”**

Pictures a cast sheep.

Our Shepherd is One who refreshes, restores
and rescues.

Psalms 56:13

**“For You have delivered my soul from
death.
Have You not kept my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?”**

**III. THE SHEPHERD IS MY COMPANION
4**

Psalms 23:4

**“Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort
me.”**

IMAGERY

The darkness represents the uncertainty of life. Yet, **verse 3** teaches **“He leads me in the paths of righteousness, for His name’s sake.”** The straight paths at times do go through the **“dark places”** but God is present.

The presence, protection and guidance of the shepherd always go together. He is loyal to His sheep, for his honor and reputation are at stake.

“Valley of the shadow of death” – **“the paths of righteousness”** do not protect us from the valley, but the Lord who leads us through that depression of dark gloom (dark as death).

This verse tells about a **Place**, a **Presence**, a **Protection**.

Verse 1-3 speaks as to other sheep.

Verse 4 the address is to the shepherd directly; **“I”** and **“You.”** Most intimate discourse of deep affection.

Whatever we face, we are **“walking through.”**

Where we have a **“shadow”** we have 2 other things; a substance and a light.

“You are with me” – the light shining on the substance that casts the shadow.

Spurgeon on **verse 4**,

“The shadow of death is a blessed privilege to every true believer. For death shall be to him no death at all, but a very deliverance from death, from all pain, cares, sorrows, miseries and wretchedness of this world, and the very entry into rest, and a beginning of everlasting joy; a tasting of heavenly pleasures, so great that neither tongue is able to express, neither eye to see, nor ears to hear them, nor any earthly man’s heart to conceive them.”

“You are with me” – our Guide and Companion.

“Your rod and your staff they comfort me”

Rod – beat off the enemy

Staff – snatch us from harm’s way.

IV. THE SHEPHERD AND HIS PREPARATION 5

“Table” refers to **“something spread out.”**
A flat place in the hill country. After a steep climb, a place to eat and rest. A picture of the shepherd’s care for the sheep.

“anoint” – God’s power over distractions and irritations.

“my cup runs over” – God’s plenty; abundant provision.

V. THE SHEPHERD AS MY PROVISION 6

Psalms 23:6

**“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.”**

Picture a sheep so utterly satisfied with his lot in life, fully contented with the care he receives.

The word **“house”** – a family or household; the sheep is so deeply satisfied with the flock

to which it belongs, also satisfied with their Shepherd.

1. We should be proud to belong to Christ.
2. We should feel free to boast to others of how good He is.
3. We should look back and recall all the amazing ways He provided for our welfare.
4. We should be proud of the flock we are a part of.

A. Sheep Being Pursued By The Shepherd 6

Harry Ironside, *“God’s goodness and mercy are the sheepdogs that help keep the sheep where they belong.”*

Goodness – supplies our needs.

Mercy – blots out our sins.

Goodness – takes care of our steps.

Mercy – takes care of our stumbles.

**B. Sheep Being Promised By The
Shepherd 6b**

**“I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever”**

Surely Goodness and Mercy

*A pilgrim was I, and a wandering,
In the cold night of sin I did roam,
When Jesus the kind Shepherd found me,
And now I am on my way home.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life;
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life.*

*And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever,
And I shall feast at the table spread for me;
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days, all the days of my life.*

*He restoreth my soul when I'm weary,
He giveth me strength day by day;
He leads me beside the still waters,
He guards me each step of the way.*

When I walk through the dark lonesome valley,

*My savior will walk with me there;
And safely His great hand will lead me
To the mansions He's gone to prepare.*

CONCLUSION:

Verse 1-2: Childhood – Protection and Provision

Verse 3: Youth – Direction and Discipline

Verse 4-5: Middle Years – Not easy years.
Children growing up and bills to pay.

Verse 6: Mature Years – We don't understand why
something happens.

However, **HE IS THERE!**