

The Lord is My Shepherd

(Sermon #5)

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The Lord is my Shepherd. That is the start of the passage of Scripture that we'll be looking at today, in Psalm 23. The Lord is my Shepherd. Why did David write such a Psalm as this? Why would David use an analogy of the Lord being the shepherd and of him being the sheep? Before he was king of Judah and then Israel, David was a lowly shepherd. If anyone would know what it was to be a shepherd and what it was like for the sheep it would be him. He gives many facets to the life of a shepherd and the sheep but the beauty of this analogy and what we can find in this passage of Scripture is that **Jesus** is that Sovereign Lord, and Shepherd, and Sustainer, and Source, and Sanctification, and Safety, and and Savior to all of His sheep. And through this analogy of Jesus being the Shepherd we can find that you can't have one without the others. Why is that? Because that is who Jesus IS! Jesus is not just our Sovereign Lord. He is not just our Shepherd. He is not just our Sustainer. He is not just our Shield. And He is not just our Savior. He is all of that because that is who He IS. Let us then go Psalm 23.

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
2. I shall not want.
3. He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
4. He leads me beside the still waters.
5. He restores my soul;
6. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
7. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
8. For You are with me;
9. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
10. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
11. You anoint my head with oil;
12. My cup runs over.
13. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
14. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

First off in Psalm 23 is "The Lord."

Who is the Lord that he speaks of? The same Lord Jesus who Paul said in

Colossians 1:15-18, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Preeminence meaning Jesus is before and above all created beings. All things were created through Him and for Him. Jesus is the very image of God, He is of God, and He is the **Sovereign** or supreme ruler of all.

So David acknowledges first of all that He is the Lord. He says, "The Lord is my Shepherd." We were created for Him to be our Shepherd. Just as Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd He says also in John 10 that His sheep "hear His voice; and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out." He also says that He is the only way into the sheepfold. Jesus also said that He is the Good Shepherd in John 10:11,14, and in Hebrews 13:20 Jesus is referred to as the Great Shepherd, and then in 1 Peter 5:4, He is referred to as the Chief Shepherd. He is the same Lord that David spoke of. The Lord of Psalm 23 is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God and He is to be our Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd! The Lord is my **Shepherd**! Let's continue on in the passage to see further what that means.

-I shall not want.

As Jesus is called the Good Shepherd, David says, "I shall not want." Undoubtedly throughout the ages, there have been good shepherds who watched over their flocks and then there were bad shepherds who only watched over the flocks because it was their job. Some sheep were well taken of while others were sickly and deprived. A Good Shepherd would ensure their flock would not have want of anything but would put their trust in the good shepherd to provide for them. When Jesus said He is the Good Shepherd He then said that He knows His sheep and is known by His own. He is saying that He knows His sheep, He knows their need, He knows what is best for them so that they shall not want. Jesus said "your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." He is the good Shepherd who will ensure that we shall not want of anything. Does that mean you'll never be physically hungry or thirsty? Does that mean that you'll never want more spiritually? No, but as we follow Him He will supply all of our needs. Remember how God said He tested the Israelites in the wilderness saying, "that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know." And yet we now have the true manna from heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ of which He feeds us and leads us to the place where we can say, "I shall not want." He is Sovereign, He is our Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and He is our **Sustainer**.

- "He makes me to lie down in green pastures;"

- "He leads me beside the still waters."

- "He restores my soul"

All three of those speak of Jesus, our Great Shepherd, taking care of our body and spirit, all of our inner being. He is our source of Bread, as He is the Bread of Life, He is our source of living waters, that restores our soul. In a book called A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, the author speaks of having a sheep farm with lush pastures that his flock enjoyed. Right next to his property was another sheep farmer who did not take care of his sheep and the grounds that they had to graze on was not fit for their well being. The neighbor's sheep looked sickly and pathetic and would stand by the fence that kept them from enjoying the pastures of the good shepherd. The author wondered what those poor sheep must have thought as they longed for the good life in the pasture of the well taken care of sheep. The good shepherd took care of his sheep and they did not want anything else. The sickly sheep wanted what they had. Do other people want what you have or do you want what they have. I'm talking spiritually. Are you content in your spirit by being led by the Good Shepherd to green pastures and still waters that restores your soul. If you are the one who is looking at the sheep who are content in the care of the Good Shepherd, you can know that He is always willing and wanting to add to His fold. You don't have to want any longer for what you see on the other side of the fence. Jesus said, "I am the door [to the sheepfold, to the green pastures, to the still waters]. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." He is not only our Sovereign Shepherd and Sustainer but is the way to the green pastures and still water that will restore your soul! Jesus is our **Source!**

- "He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads us in His righteousness for His name's sake. Just as with the sheep who all tend to go astray, there is none of us who can have the righteousness that pleases God. Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that **He** can be our righteousness. In the analogy of the shepherd and the sheep, the shepherd keeps the sheep in the right way to where they should go. Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. Psalm 85:13 says, "Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway." It reminds me of a story that may or may not have really happened but it makes a good point. A shepherd will generally lead a flock by walking in front of the sheep to get them walking in the right direction. In that, the shepherd watches out for any hazards ahead and looks for any predators that may be waiting in the bushes. One time a group of tourists were traveling through the countryside in Israel and they saw a shepherd and up ahead of him was a flock of sheep. The tour guide had them stop the vehicle and he got out to ask the shepherd why he wasn't leading the sheep in a traditional way. As he walked toward the shepherd, the shepherd ran

away and the flock started to run every which way. Hearing the commotion, a man from in front of the flock ran up to the tourguide. The man, with concern in his voice, asked what was going on. It came to be that apparently it wasn't the shepherd that was at the back of the flock, but a thief. The Good Shepherd leads us in His Righteousness and is watching to make sure that we are on His path. As Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Proverbs 20:24 says, "A man's steps are of the Lord; How then can a man understand his own way?" Jesus said that He is the Way." When we believe on Christ as our Savior, He gives us His Holy Spirit, that He puts inside of us to guide us in His Righteousness and in His Truth that is in His Word, the Holy Bible!" Jesus is our Way, He is our Truth, He is our Life!" He is our **Sanctification**. Sanctification means to be set aside for God in His Holiness. We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus and in His Righteousness. When we are called into eternal life in Christ we are called into His righteousness, to where we are then lead in His righteousness, to be holy, set apart for His holiness, His glory, His purpose, and His praise. We are called unto Jesus, to be set apart into His flock of sheep that have no blemish because He leads us in His perfect path. What happens when we stray off of that path. The Good Shepherd goes back to get us back on His path. His path is Righteousness. When we stray from His path He will correct us and leads us back onto the right path. That is Who He is. That is His desire, His will for us as He sets us apart to walk in His righteousness. In 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, the Apostle Paul says, "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." Glory to God, for He is our Sovereign, Shepherd, Sustainer, Source, and Sanctification. That is who He is!

- "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."

There is plenty that David could draw from in his experiences to say all of that. In testifying to King Saul and his troops of his resume, David said that he had killed a lion and a bear before and that he was not afraid to go against the giant named Goliath because he knew that his God was greater than all of his enemies. Even when death was before him he knew that he could trust God to deliver him. Even in the very face of death we too can fear no evil. He is our safety, our shield if you will. We can have great comfort in knowing that the battle belongs to the Lord. As it says in Psalm 121, "The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore." When we are led by the Good Shepherd,

we can have great comfort in knowing that we can fear no evil. Even when He uses His rod to correct us He is also using that rod to keep us from harm. Sort of how God can use His hand to correct us and give us punishment, His hand can also be to protect us. All the while Jesus, our Good Shepherd is leading us back to His perfect path, in His righteousness, in His way from harm;

-You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

This too speaks of Jesus as our safety. For sheep there may be poisonous plants that could bring the sheep harm and of course there is always the potential for predators. As the sheep are led to a plateau of lush grasses the Shepherd prepare the way on the plateau or table for them to graze safely. For us, we may think that we can rush ahead for where we believe He is leading us only to be met with harm. Many times we have to as David says in Psalm 27, to "wait on the Lord." Many times we have to wait on God's time as He says in Isaiah 40:31, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." When Jesus is leading us either down into a valley or up onto a plateau, only He knows what is ahead and so we must wait on Him to lead us there.

-You anoint my head with oil;

-My cup runs over.

For the sheep, there are times as summer comes that flies and gnats become so unbearable to the sheep that they will run crazy. The shepherd will pour oil on the heads to keep them from being harrassed by the pests. With us too we may be waiting for that anointing oil as we are being harrassed by the pests. We can trust that if we continue to follow our Shepherd, that He will anoint our head with oil to keep us from the evil ones. Not only that but when He fills us with His Holy Spirit it is intended for that overflowing of the Spirit to be used for others in the flock. Just imagine that oil pouring on the ground from our head and then others rushing to it to rub their heads in it for relief. Better yet, they see the source of the oil coming from the Shepherd and so they follow the Shepherd for that same anointing.

We can trust that Jesus is our **Safety and** Our Sovereign Lord is our Shepherd, Sustainer, Source, Sanctification, and Safety.

-Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
-And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Jesus is our Sovereign Lord, He is our Shepherd. Jesus is our Sustainer, He is our Source. Jesus is our Sanctification, He is our Safety. And Jesus is our **Salvation!** Jesus paid the price for our sins

by shedding His blood and dying on a cross and then on the third day
He conquered death so that we can have eternal life in Him.
And surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!