

Study of Psalm 23 – May 19, 2021

Psalm 23. Written by David, a shepherd. The Shepherd of Israel.

23:1 - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 - He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 - He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 - Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 - Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

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.

This study - closer to God; understand His nature as “Good Shepherd.”

Vs. 1 – The Lord is My Shepherd

- **God as Shepherd** – this relationship (shepherd & sheep) was given to us by God himself. First conceived in God’s mind.
 - **Isaiah 40:11** – “Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.”
 - **Jeremiah 31:10** – “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”
 - **Ezekiel 34:11-16** - “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. 13 I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. 14 Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills. 15 I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. 16 I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak...”

- A practical & profound relationship between Creator & people. God's people found comfort in this idea:
 - **Genesis 48:15** – When Jacob blessed Joseph, he referred to God as: “The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day”
- **How good the life of any sheep is depends on who owns it.**
 - Some are gentle, kind, selfless & devoted - sheep thrive.
 - But some are careless, lazy & cruel – sheep suffer.
 - If God is your shepherd – you should know His character.
 - The God who put stars in place & holds back waves...
 - The God who created billions of micro-organisms & DNA...
 - The God who would leave 99 sheep . . . in good hands!
 - This study is going to show God's character.
- **“The Lord Is My Shepherd” – Do you belong to Him?**
 - God created us as object of His affection. To love. Apple – eye.
 - Some deny that relationship. Some refuse “ownership” of God.
 - We're created w/ ability to choose. Adam/Eve refused 1 rule.
 - God took 2d step - restoring relationship; took penalty Himself:
 - **Is. 53:6** – “All we like sheep, have gone astray, each ... has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
 - **Jesus:** “I am the Good Shepherd who gives his life for His sheep.”
 - **We belong to God twice.** Created. Bought – price. It is within His right to claim us as His own.
 - **Phillip Keller** – bought first sheep from \$ earned. Blood, sweat, tears.
 - Sheep became His life. They don't take care of themselves. They require endless attention & meticulous care.
 - No accident we're called sheep. Stubborn; mob instinct; fear... but sheep thrive under the right Shepherd. **Ex:** tenant shepherd.
 - Some fear that to be under God's ownership is to be under the rule of a Tyrant. But they don't know the Good Shepherd.
 - Jesus showed us God's character: He was kind, patient, tender.
 - Noticed lepers. Included outcasts. Women. Children.
 - Those who belong to the Shepherd bear His mark.

- Sheep bear mark. **Ex:** slave – freewill – Hebrew household, life.
- Mark is pain for both. Our mark is the cross.
 - Take us cross daily and follow me. Following? Allow – lead?
 - Some admit there is a Shepherd, but aren't willing to come under His management?
 - Jesus warned – “Lord, in your name we did many wonderful things,” but He will say “I never knew you.”
 - Willing to surrender freedom to follow His direction?
 - Recognize God's claim on you? Willing to be in His pasture?
- David was thrilled – Lord is my Shepherd. Happy to belong to Him.
- **I Shall Not Want.**
 - **Main concept:** not lacking. Have needs met.
 - **Second idea:** being content under the Good Shepherd's care.
 - David knew lack. Hunted. Lived on run. Estranged son Absalom.
 - Mature view of Christian life. Trouble will happen. “I have overcome the world”
 - Prosperity isn't necessarily blessing; nor poverty. Contentment.
 - Welfare of the flock is dependent on the owner's management.
 - Sheep next to Phillip's were pitiful. Owner could care less. Saw them as sheep fit only for the slaughterhouse.
 - Need green pastures in summer, hay in winter. Protection from wolves, parasites. Shelter in storms. Fresh water.
 - The Master in people's lives makes the difference.
 - Some joyless, affluent people are under the wrong ownership. Buying happiness doesn't last. Restless. Greedy. Drugs.
 - Wealthy in life, yet bankrupt in spiritual values.
 - Yet there are humble homes, people rich in spirit. Love abounds; People who radiate joy & peace; that come thru tragedies of life.
 - They are under God's care & they know it. Contentment.
 - They know the Shepherd will give them what they need.
 - They know the Shepherd finds joy in seeing contented sheep

Song of the week – “Shepherd of My Heart” by Sandi Patty 7-7-21- Open