



Introduction

David begins Psalm 23 with two everyday images that would have been familiar to his readers – that of a Lord, majestic in rule and reign as he leads in courtly procession, and a shepherd, dirty and threadbare from a life spent among his sheep.

The psalmist then blends these common images in an uncommon way. David tells us that the Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the One who alone can pardon our sin, is also a humble Shepherd who tenderly and sacrificially cares for His beloved sheep. They are one and the same, this King and this Shepherd; held together in perfect unity.

Psalm 23 is often classified as a hymn of confidence in the Lord's tender care. He is depicted as a Shepherd who cares for His sheep in verses 1-4, and a Host who cares for His guests in verses 5-6. Whether as Lord, Shepherd, or Host, our great God personally attends to His covenant people as individual sheep and as a unified flock.

This psalm mercifully spans all of life's experiences. It is a song for those delighting in peaceful green pastures, for those enjoying the richness of God's provision in the confidence that their souls are eternally safe with Him, and for those who are being shepherded through the shadows of a deep valley. Psalm 23 is for the saints who are confidently breathing out His praise and for those who are taking their final breath.

A personal note

Psalm 23 holds a special place in my heart. It is the Psalm that my husband and our youngest daughter memorized together, delighting in David's perfect words and rejoicing in the Kingly Shepherd of our souls. This psalm became even more dear when our daughter was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. It reminded us of the Lord's tender mercy, perfect plan, and promise to bring us through the valley. Our mighty Lord, who is also our wise Shepherd, restored our souls by leading us to quiet waters even as He also led our daughter through the valley of cancer. He taught us to fear no evil, but instead find full confidence in the rod and staff of His unbreakable covenant faithfulness. We can declare with all assurance that goodness and mercy followed us along every step.

The last line of Psalm 23, "...and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." is now engraved on our daughter's tombstone. We cannot read David's words without hearing our daughter's sweet voice confidently recite its truths. The declarations of Psalm 23 were true for David, they were true for us as we watched our daughter take her final breath, and they are true for you, dear reader. You are a child of the one true King, the Shepherd of your soul. Remember His truth. Do not be shaken.





Day 1

Biblical Focus: Psalm 23:1, *The Lord is my shepherd...*

Biblical Insight: The God of all creation is also the sacrificial Shepherd of my soul

Application: Remember that God is a unified whole; the Shepherd King who calls you by name

Biblical Insight: David begins his twenty-third Psalm with a short phrase that contains a world of meaning. Five simple words declare that there is one true God, that this God is present and active, that He can be personally known, and that He is a God who sacrificially cares for and protects His people. All of life's questions, concerns, and comforts are bound up in these words. They are a perfect, complete explanation of a rightly ordered life, a balm to a wounded soul, an encouragement to those who fear, and a light to those in darkness.

The Lord is my shepherd...

David could have stopped there and it would have been enough. This all-encompassing phrase holds the whole world in its hands. When David blends the familiar images of Lord and shepherd, he redefines and expands our understanding of each role. The Lord God goes by many names. He is Yahweh and Jehovah; the Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the End. Our great Adonai is Immanuel, Friend of Sinners, the great I Am. He is the Lord of lords and He is our Good Shepherd.

Application: In what ways have you divided God into many facets rather than remembering He is a unified whole? Have you relegated the God of all creation to the corner of history occupied by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Have you tried softening the Good Shepherd to the likeness of a gentle friend? If so, be renewed by David's inspired Words and his all-sufficient reminder that the Kingly Shepherd of Israel is the same Shepherd King who calls you by name.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are our King and our Shepherd. You rule over our lives and guide our steps in ways that are perfect, right, and loving. Help me to honor You as King and look to You as Shepherd. In Jesus' name, amen.



Day 2

Biblical Focus: Psalm 23:1, *The Lord is my shepherd...*

Biblical Insight: There is only one Lord

Application: Remember, remember, remember

Biblical Insight: *The Lord is my shepherd...* Notice the small but mighty word David uses before Lord. The word “*The*” is a bold declaration that there is one, singular Lord. In a world of pithy, idolatrous gods vying for our allegiance and devotion, there is one Lord ruling over all. This Lord is *the* God of all creation. *The* One who cursed the serpent, regulating Satan’s bounds and limiting his power. He is *the* Lord who saved His covenant people from slavery, and who calls us to remember His provision in the desert when He caused water to flow from a rock and manna to come down from heaven.

Application: There’s a poignant scene in C.S. Lewis’ book, *The Silver Chair*, where the Kingly Lion, Aslan, sends Jill to find the prince who had been kidnapped many years before. He prepares and guides Jill with a set of ordered steps that, if followed, will lead her to the lost prince. Aslan guides His beloved daughter by asking her to “...remember, remember, remember...Say [the steps] to yourself when you wake in the morning and when you lie down at night...”

The Lord shepherds us by asking us to remember. We must remember that God is loving and just. Remember that He is *the* one, true Lord, who is in perfect control. Remember that *the* same Lord who caused David to defeat Goliath and raised Lazarus from the dead is *the* same Lord who personally knows you as His own and promises to lead you through the deserts, valleys, and green pastures. We must remind our forgetful souls to remember *the* Lord.

Prayer: Lord, You are the one true King; there is none like You. We are a fickle and forgetful people. Help me to remember Your tender care and remember Your perfect sovereignty. Lord, cause my remembrance to help me trust in You completely. Amen.



Prayer
Incorporated

Psalm 23 Devotional Series

***The Psalm 23 Devotional Series* will be completed in 2025**