



- Week 24
- Scripture Reading: - Psalm 23

## The SHEPHERD of Psalm 23

Now understand—sheep are not the smartest animals, so they need someone to take care of them, protect them, and even correct them. Sheep need guidance to safe pastures and we too need a Shepherd to guide us to safety and lead us to provision. Sometimes we think we know better than the Shepherd; we're sure that we can take care of ourselves, but we really can't.

In Mark 6:<sup>34</sup>, Jesus compared the people to sheep: "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things." Obviously, shepherd-less sheep is not a good thing; likewise, we need Jesus to be our Shepherd.

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> The Lord [Ownership] is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide and to shield me], I shall not want. [Provision] <sup>2</sup> He lets me lie down in green pastures [Rest, refresh]; He leads me [Leading, lamp, light] beside the still and quiet waters. <sup>3</sup> He refreshes and restores my soul (life); He leads me [Jesus walks before us, we know His voice] in the paths of righteousness [His Kingdom] for His name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the [sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me [God knows us by name]; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort and console me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table [Victory] before me in the presence [No Fear] of my enemies. You have anointed [Equipped with His power] and refreshed my head with oil [Healing, Restoration]; my cup overflows [Blessed to be a blessing]. <sup>6</sup> Surely [Surety] goodness and mercy and unfailing love [God's blessing and Security] shall follow me all the days of my life [Security], and I shall dwell forever [throughout all my days] in the house [Church of God] and in the presence of the Lord [God with us always]. [AMP]

John 10:<sup>9</sup> I am the Door [Leading to life]; anyone who enters through Me will be saved [and will live forever], and will go in and out [freely], and find pasture (spiritual security). <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I

came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].

## 1. God RESTORES us

Verse 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Our Shepherd cares for us and He is able to restore our souls. Our soul is comprised of our mind, will, and emotions. There's not one person on the planet who hasn't experienced some pain, disappointment or grief in their soul. But the good news is this: our Shepherd cares for us, and He is able to restore our souls. He restores and heals our minds and emotions, renewing and strengthening our very lives!

Our Shepherd also leads us in the right way. In John 10:<sup>27</sup>, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." When we submit to His will and His way, we can be sure that He'll guide us along the path that is best for us. And for the sake of His name and His glory, He guides our wills to line up with His.

## 2. God PROTECTS us

Sheep are pretty helpless animals, unable to defend themselves. Without a shepherd to protect and guide them, sheep are easy targets for predators. Additionally, because they are dumb, sheep wander off and get lost, putting themselves in great danger. Shepherds often risked their own lives to rescue their sheep. They carried a rod and staff to protect and correct their sheep; they beat off any beast trying to attack and they prodded sheep who were going the wrong way to steer them back to safety.

It's the same with us: Isaiah 53:<sup>6</sup> "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way". Sometimes we wander off and get into trouble, but we can trust that God cares for us and will protect and guide us if we'll allow Him to. When we go through difficult times, we don't need to be afraid because we know that our Shepherd is with us in the midst of it. We can take comfort that He protects and guides us with His rod and staff, walking with us in the darkest of valleys. Even when faced with death, we don't need to be afraid.

## 3. God BLESSES us

There's no way around this: - God actually honours and blesses us right in front of our enemies! That's right! He shows off by abundantly blessing us before the very ones who want to see us fall! We don't have to worry about what others say or think about us because we know that God has our backs and that serving Him is never for nothing.

He will never fail us, and He'll make sure that justice prevails. After all, Romans 8:<sup>31</sup> "If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" We can be sure that God's goodness and mercy will pursue us every single day when we allow Him to shepherd us. With God's love and goodness overtaking us, we can dwell in His presence every day until we finally spend eternity with Him. God leads us, guides us, protects us, feeds us, and corrects us!

## Jesus Christ, Our Good Shepherd

In John 10:<sup>11</sup>, Jesus declared, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." He was clearly referring to the fact that He was giving His life to save us, His sheep.

Jesus was the Shepherd who became a sheep. Isaiah 53 is full of Messianic scriptures describing what the Messiah would be like. Verse <sup>7</sup>b says, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." God the Father sent His Son Jesus to become the final blood sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.

"John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, John 1:<sup>29</sup> 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" Thank God for the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 who became the perfect, sacrificial Lamb of God, removing our sin, guilt, and shame and making us right with our Heavenly Father!

## Why David is Called "A Man After God's Own Heart"

Acts 13:<sup>22</sup> says, "After removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

Words that describe the heart of David as seen in his own writings:-

*(All verses New International Version)*

1. Humble – Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Psalm 62:<sup>9</sup>
2. Reverent – I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. Psalm 18:<sup>3</sup>
3. Respectful – Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. Psalm 31:<sup>9</sup>
4. Trusting – The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:<sup>1</sup>
5. Loving – I love you, O Lord, my strength. Psalm 18:<sup>1</sup>
6. Devoted – You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. Psalm 4:<sup>7</sup>
7. Recognition – I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. Psalm 9:<sup>1</sup>
8. Faithful – Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:<sup>6</sup>
9. Obedient – Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Psalm 119:<sup>34</sup>
10. Repentant – For the sake of your name, O Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Psalm 25:<sup>11</sup>

David's example is a great roadmap for how we are to live our life. Which of these areas still need our greatest attention for improvement?

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