

SHEPHERD

PSALMS 23

Text:

Introduction:

Psalm 23 was written by King David during the period when his own son (Absalom) rebelled against him and toppled him from the throne. David fled Jerusalem and his life was in jeopardy and he was hunted and hounded for a number of months. (2 Samuel 15)

David begins: Verse 1 - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"

David is saying, because the Lord is my shepherd, I do not lack anything. He was satisfied with the Lord even though he was on the run for his life, being pursued by his son Absalom. I wonder could we be satisfied, in similar circumstances?

There are really only two options in life: If the Lord is my Shepherd, then I shall not want (be covetous, be unhappy, and be unsatisfied).

If I am in want, then it is obvious that I am being lead or shepherded by someone else or something else.

If our vocation shepherds us, then there is restlessness, and frustration.

If education is our shepherd, then we are constantly being disillusioned.

If someone else is our shepherd, we are always disappointed, discouraged, and ultimately are left empty.

But if the Lord is my Shepherd – I shall not want.

If the Lord is going to be our shepherd the first thing that we must acknowledge is our description:

1. DESCRIPTION – SHEEP

- A. Sheep are dumb and dirty animals
- B. Sheep are timid and defenseless and helpless
- C. They are always getting lost and hurt
- D. They literally do not know enough to come in out of the rain

Psalms 100:3

³ Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Isaiah 53:6

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

If He is to be my Shepherd, I have to admit that I am a sheep and need a Shepherd.

Once we acknowledge that we need a Shepherd we will discover the truth of what David said – We shall not want.

David now turns what the Shepherd does.

2. DISTRIBUTION – GREEN PASTURES, STILL WATERS

The basic needs of a flock of sheep are grass and water.

Here is a picture of sheep bedded down in grassy meadows, haven eaten their fill and mow totally satisfied, and then being led by still waters.

Sheep are afraid of running water; they will only drink from quiet, still water.

John 6:35

³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

3. DIRECTION – LEAETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The Hebrew word translated "paths" means "a well-defined, well-worn trail.

That indicates again how stupid sheep are, because even when the trail is well laid out, they still need a shepherd. They are still inclined to wander away, no matter how obvious the path may be.

David says that The Lord will lead us in the paths of righteousness, and He does so for His name's sake.

It isn't our name which is at stake, it is his name. His name is Faithful, and he has promised that he will lead us in the right paths.

4. DEFENSE – THY ROD AND THY STAFF COMFORT ME.

Verse 4 is a picture of the Shepherd leading the sheep back home at evening. As they go down through a narrow gorge the long shadows lie across the trail.

The sheep because they are so timid and defenseless, can be frightened by this, but they trust the shepherd and are therefore comforted.

They will fear no evil, because the Shepherd is with them.

David also speaks of the rod and staff.

The rod was a club which was used to drive off wild animals. It was only used on the sheep to part the wool to look at the health of the skin. But it was mainly used to protect the sheep.

The staff was a slender pole with a little crook on the end. It was used to aid the sheep. The crook could be hooked around the leg of a sheep to pull him from harm. Or it could be used as an instrument to direct, and occasionally to discipline the sheep, with taps on the side of the body.

Understanding how the shepherd tends his sheep has helped me so much in understanding the character of God.

David changes the description from the Good Shepherd to the delightful host: Psalms 23:5

5. DELIGHTFULNESS – THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME

When David was driven into the wilderness by Absalom's rebellion he found himself out in the desert, hungry and weary, his army in disarray.

Paul stated it this way:

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

A. God is a Good God

B. God is a Merciful God

Goodness and mercy are attributes of God.

Goodness - meets our needs / Mercy - forgives our faults.

C. God is a Gracious God

Close:

The Lord knows His sheep.

John 10:27

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Is there any wonder why David's desire was to return to the house of the Lord and worship Him forever?

Psalms 23:6

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Are you following the Good Shepherd

6.