

**Sermon Preached by R K Wheatley
For the Pilgrim Home, Tunbridge Wells
29th January 2021
(online)**

Readings: Psalm 23 and John 10 v 1-11

Text - “He leadeth me”

This morning I wish to speak to you on the three words that appear in Psalm 23 verse 2 and verse 3, “He leadeth me”. The type that we have here in Psalm 23 and also by the words of our Lord, of the type of Christ as a shepherd is a most beautiful type.

David was able to see it as experiencing it and be able to say the Lord is my Shepherd, and to testify of that which the Shepherd did for him. All the time the crown is put upon Christ’s head or the shepherd’s head; the sheep looking to the shepherd and saying, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”, “He leadeth me”, “He restoreth my soul”. It is all what the Lord is doing for them and if we think of the type of a shepherd, it is what the shepherd is doing for the

sheep. Where they graze, where they go, what field they are in, the shepherd decides that. The care of them when they are sick, and when they are fallen into the ditch, the recovery of them. Everything is done by the shepherd. And this then is a beautiful type of the Lord in John 10, He takes it up and He teaches this. He lays this before us so that we have no doubt of how He deals with His people as sheep. He says, “My sheep hear my voice...and they follow me”. He says in verse 4 of chapter 10, “When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them”, and each soul that is quickened into life, each soul that is brought to the new birth, they know that as Christ has brought them into this world, and as He’s brought them to the second birth, the spiritual birth, as well as the first birth, that He will go before them. And may that be an encouragement and a help to you this morning. It may be that you can look over your lives and see where the Lord has led you many, many, times through your lives, and He still will, right down to the end. He will not forsake His sheep, His people. Still this truth will be realised in their lives, “He leadeth me”, and I hope that we’ll be able to see that more and more.

And so I want to, with the Lord's help, just look at a couple of points, firstly where He leads and, secondly, how He leads; and my desire is it might be just some thoughts that can give you meditation throughout the day and be able to see more clearly the leading of the Lord and to look for that. May we never think that the Lord is distant from His people, that He doesn't look after them, He doesn't care for them, He just leaves them to go their own way – may we not think that. May we not think of the Lord as a bad shepherd but the Good Shepherd.

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Firstly where He leads. The verse reads; “He leadeth me beside the still waters”. Now we're told in the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 8, that there shall be waters that proceed from Jerusalem, there will be half towards the former sea and half towards the hinder sea, and what is meant is that it shall be to the Jews and to the Gentiles, it is the gospel, it's **the living waters of the gospel**. The gospel was first to be preached to the Jews and then it was to go the Gentiles. And the Lord later on in John chapter 10 (He's speaking again of His sheep) says,

“Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring”, and those other sheep are the Gentiles that he’s speaking of here in John 10, the Jews his own people and then there’s the Gentiles. And they shall be one fold and there shall be one shepherd and Paul brings it out very beautifully when he speaks to the Ephesians, he speaks to them as being “one in Christ”, those that were once far off as the Gentiles were “brought nigh by the precious blood of Christ”. So, in this way, “He leadeth me beside the still waters”, to be brought to be led beside the still waters of the gospel. What a contrast to the law. When we think of Israel coming to Mount Sinai and the mountain quaked and the fire and the trembling, the great fear that they had there and Paul takes this up in Hebrews 12, “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burneth with fire...But ye are come unto Mount Sion”. And the contrast is of the blessings of the gospel, the sweets of the gospel.

Now some of you, you know this and you have known it, you’ve been led into those sweet blessed truths of the everlasting gospel, the covenant ordered in all things and sure in the

Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood atoning for your sin, by His will and purpose to quicken you into life and to bring you to feed upon the precious truths of the Word. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”, and so we have realised and known something of the blessings that Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”

So, can we join with David in this and say “He leadeth me”? Or do we have to say, He has led me but does not still lead me? I hope, dear friends, we still know the sweets and blessings of the gospel and are still able to say He leadeth me into fresh paths, parts of the word opened up, Christ seen, the blessings of the gospel, He’s still doing that. He’s still making Himself precious, He’s still showing himself to me through the lattice of the Word and through the preaching of the Word. I hope we can this morning come in with David and say, “He leadeth me”.

Well, another path that he leads is in verse 3, “He leadeth me **in the paths of righteousness**

for his name's sake". The apostle when writing to the Romans, he so desired his own people might be saved. But he said they were ignorant of God's righteousness, they were going about to establish their own. It's a beautiful type on two sides really.

On one side, when the Lord quickens His people, He leads them in paths of righteousness, instead of wickedness, instead of their wicked lives, He leads them in holy lives, in upright lives. But that is not their hope for heaven. That is not the righteousness that they will stand before God in, as "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags". (Isaiah 64:6) But blessed be God when the Lord calls by grace, He makes a real vital change in the sinners' heart and life.

On the other side the blessed thing is to be lead into those paths of righteousness to see the Lord Jesus Christ as our righteousness. We have in the prophecy of Jeremiah, "This is the name whereby he shall be called, (*that is the Lord Jesus Christ*), THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"; (Jeremiah 23:6) and, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called (*that is the Church of God*) the LORD our

righteousness". (Jeremiah 33:16) Now that's a beautiful thing to be led into. All my black sins, your black sins, our poor sin-stained life, and I don't know about you, I haven't lived as long as many of you dear friends, but I can go back 40-50 years and there are sins I committed then, they still pain my eyes, I think how can I stand before God with this black sin-stained life. And then the Lord shows me His righteousness, His perfect life, His obedience.

"In Christ's obedience clothe,
And wash me in His blood;
So shall I lift my head with joy
Among the sons of God".

And that's a sweet comfort as we near our journey's end, as we go through life, to know that the Lord has given us a covering that is spotless, that is pure. To be led into that and to see that. "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake".

Sometimes, dear friends, the Lord leads us **in dark paths** and maybe some of you are in such a path at the moment, and you think why? Is the Lord forsaking me? Is He not my shepherd anymore? The sorrow, the darkness, the

perplexity, the loneliness, the trial at this present time. But the Psalmist, he says, in verse 4, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death”, and in a way, we are at the moment aren’t we? We’ve had many friends that have been brought nigh unto death, some have passed away, and we walk in the shadow of that. The thought, shall we be smitten with the virus, shall we be taken? We’ve had loved ones, you’ve had fellow pilgrims with you in the home that have been taken. You walk as it were in the valley of the shadow of death. But He says “I will fear no evil; for thou art with me”. May that thought comfort, strengthen you this morning, if you are in such a dark valley, that the Lord still is with His people in those valleys. He leads even in paths like that, He still is in control. There will be some good, there will be the helps, there will be the comforts, and there will be the fellowship with Him in His sufferings.

But then He leads, as well, **in our thoughts**. Sometimes we’re very troubled with our thoughts but other times we’re sweetly led to meditate, to think upon the things of God. And we bless the Lord that He’s led our thoughts and affections in a right way. David says that he prevented the

dawning of the morning that he might think upon the word of God. So may the Lord lead us in our thoughts.

May He also lead us as to **what to say**. Sometimes we might have situations before us, and we think how can we answer, what can we say? Paul before Agrippa; he was given the opportunity to tell his call by grace, so willingly he did so. And if we're in that situation, may we be ready to give an answer, to "every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is within [us]" and "with meekness and fear". But may we be taught what to say; and sometimes what not to say, how to hold our peace and to be quiet. But may we be led and feel that the Lord has directed our words, our thoughts.

But sometimes, it's **what to do in providence**, where to go. You may look back over your lives and to many times where you've asked the Lord, Lord what shall I do? Where shall I go? What decision do I make? Where should I move? "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye". (Psalm 32:8) The Lord leads His people. I hope those of you there in the home are able to look

back to some of the leadings of the Lord to bring you where you are, and through the various steps of your life, that He is your shepherd, and each leading is a sweet token and evidence that you are one of His sheep.

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I want to look then secondly, at how He leads.

So our first point was where He leads, and the second point is how He leads.

The Lord leads **by His knowledge**. His knowledge all about us and all round about us and His power. Many times with us we are so ignorant, there's many things we don't know. And even if we know it, we don't have the ability or power to change things. But the Lord has both, He has wisdom and He has power. And He secretly moves us and directs others. The heart of the king, we are told, is in the Lord's hand (Proverbs 21:1) "And who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not". (Lamentations 3:37)

There are many times in our lives that we cannot tell why we suddenly felt we must go to that

place, and hear that service or hear that minister, or why we should do this or that.

Why it should be that Jacob should send Joseph to his brothers at that particular time, or Jesse send David to see the battle and it ends up that Goliath is slain, or it ends up that Joseph is cast into the pit and sold, and brought into Egypt? Major events in their lives seem to hang on the whim of Jacob deciding to send Joseph, and Jesse David, how were they led? Led and shepherded by providence.

Sometimes we are called to make a decision, and yet at other times it's **taken completely out of our hands**, as it was with dear Joseph, again and again, out of his hands. And yet we see the Lord led him and the Lord directed him secretly through others' decisions and what others were doing.

Sometimes it is that **the Lord will lead by steps**. With Cornelius, the angel appeared to him; Cornelius go down to Joppa, send men to Joppa, get Peter and Peter will tell you whereby ye shall be saved. The first step the angel appears, the second, Peter is prepared, then Peter comes to them and then Peter preaches the Word; and

then the Lord blesses that word and the Holy Spirit falls on them, and we see these steps to the blessing. The Lord leading in that way from one step to another.

So it is a blessing to see the Lord's hand, to see that He is leading us and like David, to give Him the glory and the honour for what He is doing. To be able to say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters".

So may we go forth today, and this sweetly rest upon your spirit and upon mine, "He leadeth me".

So may the Lord bless this word and help you through it.

Amen