

FBC POWELL, 3-12-17 AM NOTES
"The Lord Is My Shepherd"— Part 2
Psalm 23:1-6
6 in Series, "Psalms: Medicine for the Soul"

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me."

John 10:26-28 "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and **they follow Me**; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

I. We Have a Shepherd Who Provides for His Sheep (vv. 1-2a)

Psalm 23:2a (HCSB) says, "He lets me lie down in green pastures..."

II. We Have a Shepherd Who Directs His Sheep (vv. 2b-3)

John 10:14a "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own..."

Philippians 4:6-7 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

III. We Have a Shepherd Who Protects His Sheep (v. 4)

A. He Protects His Sheep in Darkness (v. 4a)

Hebrews 13:5 "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

B. He Protects His Sheep in Danger (v. 4b)

1. The Rod

1 Samuel 17:32-36 "David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' Then Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.' But David said to Saul, 'Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.' And David said, 'The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and may the Lord be with you.'"

"Each shepherd... goes into the bush and selects a young sapling which is dug from the ground. This is carved and whittled down with great care and patience. The enlarged base of the sapling where its trunk joins the roots is shaped into a smooth rounded head of hard wood. The sapling itself is shaped to exactly fit the owner's hand. After he completes it, the shepherd boy spends hours practicing with this club, learning how to throw it with amazing speed and accuracy. It becomes his main weapon of defense for both himself and his sheep."
- Phillip Keller

Hebrews 12:5-8 (NIV) “And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, ‘My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.’ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are **not disciplined**—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.”

2. The Staff

IV. We Have a Shepherd Who Prepares His Sheep (v. 5)

A. The Adequacy of Our Shepherd (v. 5a)

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

B. The Anointing of Our Shepherd (v. 5b)

Psalms 45:7 (ESV) “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

C. The Abundance of the Shepherd (v. 5c)

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

*His love has no limit;
His grace has no measure;
His power has no boundary known unto man.
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.*

- Unknown

V. We Have a Shepherd Who Promises His Sheep (v. 6)

A. A Promise for Here (v. 6a)

Romans 8:28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

B. A Promise for Hereafter (v. 6b)

Job 19:25-26 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God.”

Isaiah 65:17-18 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.”

Revelation 21:1-4 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”

First Baptist Church Powell 03 12 17 AM

Sermon 6: The Lord Is My Shepherd Part Two Psalm 23:1-6

It is interesting to look at the symbols from the animal world that nations choose to communicate something about themselves. The USA has the mighty eagle with its majestic wings spread. The eagle was also the symbol of the Roman Empire. Ancient England chose the kingly lion, and Russia has the powerful bear. All of these symbols from the animal kingdom represent strength and independence. The most common symbol for God's people is a sheep, a lowly sheep. In the last message, I messed up a statistic I quoted about how many times God's people are compared to or called His sheep. The correct statistic is that sheep are mentioned about 400 times in the Bible and almost half of those references are sheep being compared to God's people. This comparison does not stroke our ego. We saw last week that sheep are dumb, defenseless, directionless, and dependent upon a shepherd.

Since this is *Part Two*, allow me to review some things we looked at in the last sermon in case you were not able to be here. There are three basic things we need to get settled before we look at this passage.

First, the focus of this Psalm is not the sheep; it is the LORD who is our shepherd.

Second, in the New Testament we find that Jesus is the Shepherd of Psalm 23. John 10:14: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me."

The third thing we need to get settled before we look deeply into this Psalm is this – not everyone has the Lord as their shepherd. He is not the shepherd of all mankind! He is the shepherd of those who are His sheep. If He is your shepherd, it is because there was a time when your spiritual eyes were opened to see your true condition and the Holy Spirit convicted you of sin and the judgment to come (John 16:8). In response to that conviction, you repented (turned from, forsook) sin and, in an act of total submission, trusted Christ alone based on what He did on the cross on your behalf. While you may not remember the exact time, or all of the details of that time, the Bible is clear that you can know that time did, or did not, happen based on your response to the Lord as shepherd. Jesus said in John 10:26-28: "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." Those who know the Shepherd (the LORD) will, as a pattern of life, follow Him.

We don't become His sheep as a reward for following Him, but those who by grace alone through faith alone are saved (become His sheep) give evidence by a lifestyle of following Him.

Let's do a quick review of last week's message.

I. We Have a Shepherd Who Provides for His Sheep (vv. 1-2a)

When He is your Shepherd, then you can expect His provision. The word translated "want" in verse 1 means to lack or be deficient. It carries the idea of being perfectly contented in the Shepherd's care. The result of Psalm 23:1 is that before I face a painful, stressful circumstance, my Shepherd knows about it and has given to me all I need to deal with the situation. I have no need to stress out, to worry, or to be fearful. The truth of verse 2a is that the Shepherd enables us to rest in (abide in) Him and be at peace even in turbulent circumstances. Psalm 23:2a (HCSB): says, "He lets me lie down in green pastures..." Because of our Shepherd's provision we are sufficient in Him for all that we face.

II. We Have a Shepherd Who Directs His Sheep (vv. 2b-3)

Jesus said in John 10:14a: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own..." Our Shepherd knows our needs. As we abide in Him He stills the turbulent waters in which we find ourselves, and we can "lie down" (rest) in complete trust that, "He's got this!" Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus.” We must develop the discipline of coming quietly before the Lord in a time of turmoil and tribulation and allow His peace to chase away the turmoil.

III. We Have a Shepherd Who Protects His Sheep (v. 4)

A. He Protects His Sheep in Darkness (v. 4a)

For those who can truly say, “The Lord is my shepherd” the fear of death is abolished. Many Christians are like my mother. As she lay close to death in great physical suffering – probably about two weeks before she died – she said to me something like this, “I have no fear of being dead. I know I will be with the Lord. But I do have some fear about dying. There is so much unknown.” This Psalm deals not only with *being dead*, it deals with dying. Here is the answer to my mother’s fear of dying: Psalm 23:4a: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me...” But this promise is much broader than just the fear of dying.

The phrase “the valley of the shadow of death” can be translated, “the valley of deep darkness.” In the HCSB it is translated, “Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for You are with me.” If He is your Shepherd, He has said in Hebrews 13:5: “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” He will never forsake His own in life with all of its problems or in death with all of its unknowns. That brings us to the text for today.

B. He Protects His Sheep in Danger (v. 4b)

Let us focus in on the rod and staff. We will see that the rod is primarily for protection and the staff is primarily for correction. In both, there is comfort for the sheep.

1. The Rod – The shepherd was continually vigilant because there were many predators who strongly desired to have the sheep. David, the human author of this inspired by God Psalm, described this protection required by the shepherd when he was probably still a teenager. In the historical account of David and Goliath, David, who had been shepherding the sheep, comes to bring supplies to his brothers in Saul’s army. He finds that a Philistine giant, named Goliath, has challenged Israel to send someone to fight him. We read in 1 Samuel 17:32-36:

David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” Then Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.” And David said, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.”

Here is what I want you to see in this passage. Without a doubt, the weapon that David used was his rod. With the skilled use of this crude weapon, a teenage boy killed a lion and a bear. Shepherds were very adept at using the rod. In the book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, the author, Phillip Keller describes the use of the rod this way:

Each shepherd... goes into the bush and selects a young sapling which is dug from the ground. This is carved and whittled down with great care and patience. The enlarged base of the sapling where its trunk joins the roots is shaped into a smooth rounded head of hard wood. The sapling itself is shaped to exactly fit the

owner's hand. After he completes it, the shepherd boy spends hours practicing with this club, learning how to throw it with amazing speed and accuracy. It becomes his main weapon of defense for both himself and his sheep.

[Phillip Keller, page 93]

You can see why the shepherd's rod comforted the sheep! I only know of one case where the rod was used on the sheep. When I read about this, I was blessed and so I want to share it with you. When the shepherd had a rebellious lamb who just refused to obey the shepherd's voice, the shepherd had to act in a way that seems rather cruel. Because sheep are not that bright, it is essential that they immediately obey the shepherd's voice. Sheep will sometimes be so focused on the next bite of grass that they will go too close to the edge of a cliff, just step over the side, and fall to their death. When a stubborn lamb continues to disregard the voice of the shepherd, the shepherd will take the rod and break the sheep's leg. Now, the lamb is totally dependent on the shepherd. The shepherd then carries the lamb on his back, feeds the lamb, and speaks tenderly to the lamb until the leg heals. When the lamb is "on its own" it never disregards the shepherd's voice again.

The Lord, our shepherd, often deals this way with us. When a true believer disregards the Word of God, the Lord allows painful circumstances to come. If that person is truly His sheep, the Lord will draw them close through the painful circumstance He has allowed with the intended result that they repent and begin a lifestyle of obeying the Shepherd of our souls. That is the picture we are given in Hebrews 12:5-8 (NIV):

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are *not disciplined*—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

2. The Staff – Whereas the rod is a comfort because it is primarily used to protect the sheep from harm, the staff is a comfort because it is used to guide and direct the sheep and to keep them from danger. The shepherd's staff is normally a long slender stick with a crook at one end. It had a multitude of uses in helping and guiding the sheep. When a sheep was getting too close to danger, the shepherd would pull the sheep back with the staff. He used the staff to draw the sheep close to examine wounds or sores that needed to be treated. Perhaps the most common use of the staff was to nudge the sheep to move out, or go in another direction.

Even if the closest you have ever been to a sheep is to wear a wool sweater, you can see the beautiful and comforting picture. "Your rod and your staff they comfort me."

IV. We Have a Shepherd Who Prepares His Sheep (v. 5)

In verse 5 the psalmist is reaffirming the goodness of the Shepherd. When we really begin to understand verse 5 it draws us to worship and trust Him.

A. The Adequacy of Our Shepherd (v. 5a)

The emphasis here is that the Lord doesn't send an angel; the Lord Himself prepares a table for us. Many Old Testament scholars believe that this is referring to the way that the shepherd prepares the tableland summer pasture for the sheep. The high-country summer ranges were called the *tablelands*. Early in the year, even before the snow was all melted by the spring sunshine, the shepherd would make "survey trips" to the tableland pastures. He would leave a supply of salt and minerals at strategic places for when the sheep got there. He would pull up the poison weeds that had sprung up. He would clean out the springs of

the debris that had fallen in over the winter months. He would make those “stilled” waters for the sheep to drink from. The shepherd spotted where the enemies of the sheep were hiding so he could protect the sheep when they got there. The bottom line is that the shepherd was adequate to provide for the sheep’s every need. When the sheep got to the tablelands, everything that they needed was already there. There was no lack. Even in the midst of the predators (their enemies) there was no fear for the shepherd left nothing undone that needed to be done.

Oh may the Lord open our eyes to see that He’s already got everything that we need covered. Philippians 4:19: “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” He is adequate to supply what we truly need.

B. The Anointing of Our Shepherd (v.5b)

Oil served many purposes for the shepherd. It aided in the healing of the sheep’s wounds. Often the shepherd would mix oil with various minerals to serve as an insect repellent. Insects would torment the sheep. But here in verse 5, David is using that picture of the oil as refreshment. Just as the shepherd anointed the sheep with oil, even so the Lord anoints His sheep (us) with oil.

In Bible times, a wealthy home would have an expensive vessel of perfumed oil by the door. It would be used for special occasions and special people. If a wonderful friend came from far away, or a loved family member came, the host would greet them at the door, dip their hands into that precious ointment and anoint the head of the one he wanted to honor. We see that custom in Luke 7:36-46 when a woman with a sinful past, who had been forgiven by the Lord, lavished on Him this perfumed oil because of her love for Him. But in Psalm 23:5 it is the Lord who anoints His sheep with the oil! Psalm 45:7 (ESV): “you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” Every morning as we come to Him and take His Word in and worship Him, He anoints us with oil as an act of His love for those who follow and love Him. The devil doesn’t want you to know how much you are loved by the Lord, the good shepherd. The enemy wants you to see the Lord as a hard taskmaster that can never be pleased because you can never measure up. The devil is a liar and a thief. He lies to you about the love the Good Shepherd has for you.

C. The Abundance of the Shepherd (v. 5c)

The overflowing cup was a picture of God’s supply that is more than enough. In a land that was dry, water was not available in abundance, but to those who know the shepherd, there is more than enough – an overflowing cup. The Lord doesn’t just give barely enough; our cup runs over. This isn’t referring to material wealth; it is referring to real wealth – a deep and abiding love relationship with the creator of all things. A poet put it this way:

*His love has no limit;
His grace has no measure;
His power has no boundary known unto man.
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.
— Unknown*

V. We Have a Shepherd Who Promises His Sheep (v. 6)

There are actually two promises in this last verse of Psalm 23.

A. A Promise for Here (v. 6a)

The Hebrew word translated “goodness” means that which is excellent or precious. It is moral goodness. The word translated “lovingkindness” in the NASB and “mercy” in the ESV, KJV, and NKJV is a really hard

word to translate with one English word. The basic idea is an act of kindness, love, and mercy shown to someone. For those who follow the Shepherd, the promise here is that everything that happens is filtered through God's goodness, kindness, love, and mercy. The New Testament companion verse to this one is Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Our traveling companions on this earthly journey are goodness and lovingkindness.

B. A Promise for Hereafter (v. 6b)

The Old Testament doesn't have the detail about our eternal abode that the New Testament does. However, it does contain much about where those who were counted righteous by faith will spend eternity. Job (likely the oldest book in the Bible) talked of eternity in Job 19:25-26: "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God." In Isaiah God spoke of new Heavens and a new earth. Isaiah 65:17-18: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness."

We have so much more knowledge of where we will spend eternity. We can read of the New Jerusalem where we see in Revelation 21:1-4: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'"

Only those who have Jesus as their Shepherd, evidenced by following Him, will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Settle this day where you will spend eternity.