

“The Lord is My Shepherd – Part 2”
Psalm 23
(Preached at Trinity, April 11, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week we began to look at the 23rd Psalm, one of the shortest psalms but one that overflows in sweetness as God’s rich provision is set before us in all its glory. Spurgeon called it,
“The pearl of psalms whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye”
2. This psalm has served as a comforting balm to multitudes of God’s people as they’ve gone through the dark shadows of affliction in this life. I’ve often read it at gravesides where its provided comfort to the bereaved.
3. As we saw, this psalm is divided into two simple parts:
 1. The goodness of our Shepherd – **Verse 1**
 2. The greatness of His provision – **Verses 2-6**
4. Last week we looked at the first three verses.
 - A. It opens with the goodness of Our Shepherd – **Verse 1**
Psalm 23:1 – “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
 1. Our Good and Great Shepherd provides for us richly. He loves us with an everlasting love.
 2. In His care we have no needs – no wants.
 - B. The remainder of the Psalm describes the greatness of God’s provision.
 1. The Good Shepherd feeds the sheep –
Verse 2 – “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”
 - a. A good shepherd is continually leading his sheep to fresh pastures. The Good Shepherd leads us to green pastures – the richest of food
 - b. The Good Shepherd provides us peace and rest
Verse 2 – “he leadeth me beside the still waters”
 2. The Good Shepherd restores
Verse 3 – “He restoreth my soul”
The word here is שׁוּבָה shuwba which means “to turn back”
This is precisely what our Good Shepherd has done. He has turned us from our path of destruction and misery. Like a Good Shepherd He sought us and brought us to Himself.
Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 3. The Good Shepherd leads His sheep
Verse 3 – “he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”
We would quickly go astray to our destruction if left to our self.
He leads us unto right paths
5. Tonight I want to look at the second half of the Psalm

- I. The Good Shepherd comforts His sheep in times of danger
Verse 4 – “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”
1. This verse has often provided comfort to those who are dying. This is true but this verse also speaks to God’s protection through all sorts of danger
 2. The Good Shepherd protects his sheep in the greatest of danger
 - a. Valleys were dangerous places with little protection from attack from enemies holding higher ground where they can shoot arrows from their bows.
 - b. “The shadow of death” describes the greatest of peril where death looms over us. Death’s dark shadow could pass over us at any moment.
 - c. The point of the psalmist is God’s protection as we face every enemy.
 3. Satan may try to crush us but nothing shall remove us from our Shepherd
Luke 22:31-32 – “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”
 4. The simple fact is this: if God is working to save us, nothing shall thwart His work
Philippians 1:6 – “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:”
 If every creature in the material and immaterial universe joined forces to defeat God, God would instantly immerge the Victor.
 5. “For thou art with me” – This is the greatest of comfort
 - a. Our Good Shepherd is always with us
 - b. He carries us in His bosom
 - c. The elect are intimately related to the Son – we are united with Him
 6. Notice he says, “I will fear no evil.” He doesn’t say there *is* no evil but that he will *fear no evil*. God doesn’t shield us from every trial. This life is full of tribulation. But God does carry us through and prevents us from falling. In God’s protection we can fear no evil.
 7. The last enemy is death. Though we walk through death’s shadow we can cry out with Paul,
NAS **1 Corinthians 15:55-57** – “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 8. Notice David says, “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”
 The shepherd’s rod and staff were used to both govern and protect the sheep. David found comfort in God’s rule over him. The sheep find comfort in God’s correction. Goats but against God’s rule.

- F. In **Verses 5-6** David describes again the Good Shepherd's rich provision for His sheep
- Psalms 23:5-6** – “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 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.”
1. Normally when at war the soldier eats hastily. But here we find a table set with all the ornaments of a feast. The soldier sits down comfortably to enjoy the feast.
 - a. This is the picture of the believer. While we are at war, we also enjoy the rich provision of Christ in perfect peace.
 - b. There is peace and comfort in the presence of the Shepherd.
 2. “thou anointest my head with oil”
 - a. In the eastern culture the host would often anoint the head of a distinguished guest. We can't forget the image of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus with the costly perfume. Jesus pours oil upon our head.
 - b. Oil in the Bible also provides an image of joy and prosperity
 3. To be a lamb of this Great Shepherd is the greatest blessing. Not only is our cup full - Our cup runs over! Overflowing blessings. Rich abundance! **1 Corinthians 2:9** – “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”
 4. Jesus has set His infinite love upon His people – This was demonstrated at the cross
 - a. The word for “mercy” is that familiar word רַחֲמִים
His love will follow us all the days of our life
 - b. Consider all the resources of the infinite almighty God being used for the benefit of His chosen people
 - c. Consider that we are His prized possessions!
 - d. Consider His infinite love for you
Ephesians 3:17-19 – “that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”
 5. We will dwell with Him forever as His beloved bride.
John 14:2-3 – “In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”
 - a. Our great blessing. The sweetest of our thoughts – to see our Savior face to face

Conclusion

1. The question is, are you one of the sheep – Can you say with David, “The Lord is my Shepherd?” - Are you dependent upon Him?
Is He YOUR Shepherd? The sheep follow their shepherd.
2. Sheep are meek and follow the voice of the Shepherd
John 10:27 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
3. Sheep are absolutely dependent upon the Shepherd
Sheep love the Shepherd
Sheep love the Shepherd’s food
Psalms 119:103 – “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”
The Words of our Lord concerning His own obedience
John 4:34 – “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
4. Compare this with goats – they are stubborn and independent. They have horns perfect for butting.
They’ll eat anything – no discernment
They are independent – have no need for a shepherd
5. As our Lord’s sheep we must find our full contentment in Him.
6. May we as our Lord’s sheep follow him humbly all the days of our life, and forever.
The 23rd Psalm reads like a pilgrimage. Our end is eternity in God’s house.
“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.”
Our Good Shepherd has gone to prepare a place for us. May we follow Him with all our strength.