

# Jehovah Roi: The Lord My Shepherd, Pt. 1

הוהי הער

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**Series:** Drawing Near to God through His Name  
Evening Bible Study

**Introduction:** Open your Bibles to **Psalm 23** We continue our series entitled, “Drawing Near to God through His Name” and today we are going to learn that God is Jehovah-Roi: The Lord is My Shepherd. The Title Roi, means the One who Sees Where I AM – but it’s common term that we know is “Shepherd”.

Shepherding is one of the earliest human occupations. Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Moses and David were all shepherds. It was the shepherd’s responsibility to count each animal to assure that none were lost or gone astray. Also, he protected the sheep and when he reposed for the night, he often would go into a cave, covering it with brush at it’s entrance and then lay himself down to sleep at the entrance of the cave. He wanted to be assured that none of the sheep would wander out on it’s own, or that predators would enter the cave. He was willing to give up his life for the sheep. If you know Christ, then you can confidently say, “The Lord is my Shepherd”.

We find this title in Psalm 23.

**Psalm 23** (ESV) — “A PSALM OF DAVID. 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

“According to scientists, sheep have gotten a bad reputation for being...less than brilliant. In fact, it appears that sheep actually are fairly intelligent creatures. They only seem stupid because they are afraid of just about everything.”

Sheep are **defenseless** against predators and fairly good at getting lost. “It’s little wonder that their sense of vulnerability sometimes leads to panic and woolly-brained behavior.”

We are a lot like sheep. It is so comforting to know that the Lord is our Shepherd. He’s the One who looks out for us.

## I. Our Shepherd cares for our **needs** (vs. 1).

### **Content in Him**

“The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want!” (vs. 1). In Yahweh Roi, I have all my needs fulfilled: materially, physically, emotionally and most important, spiritually.

Having this assurance that Yahweh Roi has provided for us so completely, we should then be content.

- Content in every situation;
- content with God’s provision;
- content for all He’s allowed in our lives and circumstances
- We should have no craving or desires for our own choosing or design.

This Shepherd not only owns His sheep, but He knows them. He knows their different characteristics. He knows their parents and grandparents. He knows their sisters, brothers and cousins. The Shepherd delivers the sheep.

Illustration: One of the neatest things in Spain was the sheep herd we had. Every February it seemed, the mama sheep would give birth to baby sheep. You can tell I’m a city boy because I have no idea the proper names for baby sheep. But Andy Bonikowsky would shepherd the sheep. He delivered them. Ultimately he made sure they were safe, protected, fed, and warm.

The shepherd knows all about the cold nights and the hot days when pesky insects embedded themselves in their wool. He understands their joys their sorrows, their gladness and loneliness.

The Shepherd counts the sheep. He looks after them and makes sure they are not lost. Our good Shepherd makes His sheep His number one responsibility.

- He also knows the terrain.
- He has calculated the number of miles the sheep have traveled;
- He knows how many sheep begin on a particular journey.
- He sees beyond the hills to the water holes.
- He discerns the difference between healthy and poisonous grass.
- He knows the scratches and sores of His sheep. He understands their fears and their deepest longings.
- And He cares for them to the point that He lays down His life for them!

Everything we need as Christians is found in Jehovah-Roi. I’m glad if you have a good job, but ultimately what you need is not in your job. I’m glad if you have a strong family structure. But what you need is not in your family. You might be married tonight. Your will never shepherd you perfectly. God is the perfect good shepherd. He loves us, and all we need is in Him.

### **Don't Need to Know the Terrain**

It is not necessary for us to know the terrain; the sheep were not expected to know the map of Judea. They did not have to know where they would be grazing tomorrow. Their responsibility was to stay close to the shepherd. Can you say, "The Lord is my shepherd?" Then you can continue, "I shall not want."

Are you content in Him tonight? Are you finding your sufficiency in Christ alone?

## **II. Our Shepherd cares for our food (vs. 2a).**

Are you satisfied in Him tonight?

### **Green Pastures**

"He makes me lie down in green pastures" (vs. 2a). The green pastures are for the sheep to feed on. For us, His sheep, **we find those green pastures in His Word**. We read and 'chew' His Word. God's Word is vital for the spiritual life, health and well-being of His sheep.

All of God's children have a hunger for sheep food. As a pastor this brings me great comfort. Anyone who does not desire the good Word of God cannot be a true sheep of Christ. Babies love milk. Sheep love grass. Christians love the sincere milk of the Word!

### **Difficult for Sheep to Lie Down**

Philip Keller says it is difficult to get sheep to lie down unless they are free of all fear. They can be so easily disturbed that even a stray rabbit bounding from behind a bush can cause a flock to stampede. When one sheep jumps, the others follow without even investigating the commotion.

Sheep have virtually no defense strategy. All they can do is run when danger comes. And because they are not fast runners, a stray dog can kill hundreds of sheep in a single night. They are in greater danger moment by moment than they even realize.

Nothing so quiets a sheep as the presence of the shepherd. As long as they hear his voice they can eat to their hearts content and then lie down and rest. The shepherd communicates peace by the tone of his commands and the surety of his past record.

### **Free from Hunger**

To be contented, the sheep must be free from hunger. There are reasons why David wrote, "He makes me lie down in green pastures" (vs. 2a). These pastures are the product of hard work. The shepherd clears the rough, rocky soil. He tears out bushes, roots and stumps. He plows the soil, seeds it, and irrigates. If the sheep are to enjoy green pastures amid the brown, barren hills, the shepherd has much work to do. When grass is scarce, the sheep are always on the move, searching for another clump here or there. Such sheep never thrive; they are discontented and are of no use to their

owners. A good shepherd will provide deep grass so that the flock can fill up quickly, then retire to rest and ruminate.

You don't have to tell sheep to love grass. You don't have to tell a baby to love milk. God has given us all we need in the sufficient Word of God. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. We believe the Word of God is authoritative in every jot and tittle. We believe the Word of God comprised of the 66 books of the Bible is plenary—that God has put it all together, and it is sufficient for life and godliness.

Sheep feed when they have a nice grassy field to feed on. God gives us the gift of faith. He is the “Author and Finisher of our faith” (**Hebrews 12:2**). This occurs when we are converted, but He also continues the Work of strengthening our faith throughout our Christian life. He works to clear away the rocks of unbelief; He tears out the stumps of bitterness; He takes away the bushes of self-will. Then He sows the seeds of the Word of God. His work is watered by the Holy Spirit. Thus He makes a place for us; we call it contentment.

### III. Our Shepherd cares for our **health** (vs. 2b).

“He leads me beside still waters” (vs. 2b).

Are you spiritually healthy in Him tonight?

Sheep must have clean water if they are to be healthy and survive. Sheep will not lie down peacefully unless they have water. Only the shepherd knows where the best drinking places are. And it is to these watering holes that he leads his flock. Without adequate water, there is weakness and dehydration. When the sheep are thirsty, they set out to find water on their own. They will drink at any polluted pot-hole, where they might pick up internal parasites or disease germs.

In fact, even as the shepherd is leading them to a clear mountain stream, some stubborn sheep will stop to drink from small, dirty muddy pools beside the trail. If they come to a rushing stream the shepherd will use stones to build a quiet area, so that they drink beside “still waters.”

**Application:** Make sure you are making time to get alone with God, so that you might drink beside still, quiet, undistracted waters. You need this daily or you will get sick spiritually.

Are you spiritually healthy in Him tonight?

### IV. Our Shepherd cares for our **healing** (vs. 3).

“He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” (vs. 3).

Do you have any spiritual open wounds in your heart and life tonight?

It is not just the people of the world who at times feel hopeless; Christians do to. There are times when it seems as if God is not working for us, but against us. We are so weak and nothing we do seems to matter.

We are especially vulnerable to lose our faith when we experience the great reversals of life.

- When a doctor tells us that we have an incurable disease.
- When our best friends betray us.
- When we lose a job or have financial crunches
- When we feel defeated in marriage
- When carefully laid plans come unraveled.
- When we are too weak and too depressed to pray, and too faithless to hope.

What is God doing when it appears as if He is doing nothing? David says of the Good Shepherd, “He restores my soul.” That word *restore* means to “bring back to one’s former position.” It is God’s way of bringing us back to where we belong.

Some sheep need to be turned around. Sheep have a habit of getting themselves lost.

- Often a sheep becomes interested in one clump of grass—then another and then another. Soon it is far from the flock and the shepherd.
- Sometimes sheep follow paths that are made by thieves wanting to lure them away.
- Sometimes they follow wind-swept paths that lead nowhere. The sheep need to be brought back to the fold.

Robert Robinson, who once stayed close to the Good Shepherd, began wandering spiritually and morally. In his travels he met a Christian woman who encouraged him with the words of a new hymn she had just learned:

Come Thou fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy praise  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood;

Robinson wept when he heard those words, and had to admit that he had authored those words many years earlier. God used his own song as a means of restoration.

Listen to the next verse.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I’m constrained to be!  
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Have you wandered from God in your heart or in your life? "Whoever God loves He chastens". God loves you too much to let you to continue to wander.

Do you have any spiritual open wounds in your heart and life tonight? Is there a wound of bitterness or fear or desire for the world? Our Good Shepherd can restore your soul. He can heal your sin sick heart. "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (vs. 3).

Are you wandering from Christ in any area of your life tonight? David said in **Psalm 119:67**, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your Word". Four verses later he added, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes" (v 71).

### **Shepherd Breaks the Sheep's Leg**

If a sheep develops a habit of going astray, the shepherd will break its leg, make a splint and then carry the cripple close to his heart. The sheep must wait for the shepherd to carry it across the streams and the rough terrain. After the leg has healed, the lesson has been learned.

**Conclusion:** You've heard people say, "I found the Lord back in 1990." We know what they mean, but actually they were not looking for Christ; Christ came looking for them, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (**John 6:44**). "No one seeks after God" Paul says (**Romans 3:11**), but I can assure you He is calling for you and seeking for you.

Today I can assure you in the words of Sinclair Ferguson that **there is more grace in God's heart than there is sin in our past**. There is enough grace to cover the sin of breaking any one of God's commandments. Today the Good Shepherd is searching for you. He gave His life for you.

If you find Him prompting you to return and rejoin the flock, or to get closer to Him, be obedient. Not only does the Shepherd appreciate it, but it is best for the sheep. Returning to Christ is what is best for all of us.

We'll catch the rest of the Psalm on Wednesday night. You won't want to miss it.