

Psalm 23 Our Amazing Shepherd part 2

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

4 Yea, 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 runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord- Forever.

I mentioned last week that some people don't appreciate Psalm 23 because it can seem too lofty

A) They wonder if the writer was actually living in the real world. – Real problems

B) But I told you last week that this Psalm – written by David –

1) Was written during one of the most Tumultuous times in his life

C) A time of loss, a time of sorrow, a time of Confusion and pain.

D) A time where David found himself wrestling with God and God's plan for his life

1) God's care of his life

E) Psalm 23 is sort of the Culmination of that Wrestling! **David is on the other side**

Psalm 23 is relevant for ALL of us –

A) Because of all the animals that God made

B) The one that he compares humans to the most are sheep.

C) Sheep can be stubborn, they are prone to wander – so they need to be led.

D) Sheep need a Shepherd to survive and to Thrive

Last week we looked at the first two verses

A) **The Lord is my Shepherd** - MY personal Shepherd – He is near

B) The Lord is my Shepherd - I shall not want = I am not lacking in anything essential

C) We talked about how the Sentiment of that saying

1) Is not suggesting that there is nothing in my life I wouldn't change

But rather there is nothing in my life that needs to change in order for me to feel safe, secure/satisfied

A)It is the heart that comes to this place:

B)I am satisfied with where I am at – Because I am satisfied with WHO HE IS

C)Even if nothing changes!

Then we looked at V.2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

A)We talked about how the Hebrew Word – makes is not Forces – He doesn't Force us to lie down

B)Not talking Nap time! – I am not a napper

C)The idea here is this: The Very presence of our Amazing Shepherd in our lives –

1)Put our mind at ease and our hearts at Rest

There was a time: Living in Garden Grove – Hells Angels gang – stand off - Police guns drawn

A)My dad is over there golf club in hand – talking to the cops – He is so Cool

B)I wasn't afraid – My dad wasn't afraid

C)In a Similar way: The reality of our Amazing Shepherds presence in our lives

1)Sets our minds at ease and our hearts at Rest

Then Finally we saw in the later part of V.2 Our Amazing Shepherd is the one who quenches our THIRSTY SOULS.

V2b He leads me beside the still waters- Continual quenching

Well today we come to V.3 -He restores my soul;

A)One of the biggest problems for sheep is they don't have the best balance –

B)So they can easily lose their balance and fall down.

C)And when sheep fall down, they can become CAST

Here is a picture of a Cast Sheep.

A)I know what some of you are thinking – My Dog does that everyday.

B)When your dog does that it means he/she is feeling the most safe and secure

1)Total trust in their environment

C)When your dog lies on it's back like that it is saying I love you so much

1)You make me feel so secure.

For a sheep it is the exact opposite. It is maybe the scariest of things

A)In this position gases build up in the body, cutting off circulation to the legs.

B)And often it is only a matter of a few hours before the sheep dies.

C)And in that position they are also the most helpless and Vulnerable to predators who want to eat them.

So when the Shepherd sees a sheep that is Cast – he knows he needs to get to it right away – Restore it

A)But he doesn't just come and sit it back on it's feet

B)He starts by massaging the legs – to get the circulation going back in them

C)Once he turns the sheep over he stays with it until the sheep is able to stand and walk on it's own

D)My point is the Shepherd uses meticulous and gentle care in restoring the Sheep.

Now here is what is really interesting:

A)There are 2 main conditions to sheep becoming Cast

B)One is when the sheep is walking in soil that is too soft and comfy – they can easily lose their footing

C)The other is when their Wool becomes too thick of they become Fat

I find that to be ironic because that is also true of Christians

A)You know when you are most vulnerable to slipping and falling in your walk?

B)When you are Fat and Happy! – Times when you are comfortable

I find that so interesting – because we live in a culture that promotes comfort

A)We live in a culture that promotes and pursues comfort above everything else.

B)We often mistake the comfortable life for the blessed life –

C)How are you doing? Blessed – Often what we mean is I am comfortable

D)No Drama in my life – everything is going great!

But a Blessed life isn't necessarily a problem free life

A)Great blessing and growth come out of the times when we are not comfortable

B)Sometimes the comfortable times are the most Dangerous times – We drop our guard

C)We give into a little compromise – next thing we end up on our backs – Fallen

Think about David – when did he Fall and commit adultery with Bathsheba – then Murder cover up?

A) We read in 2 Samuel 11 At the time when the Kings were to be out at War

B) David stayed home – Seeking comfort – I fought my battles – I am going to sit this one out

C) The Devil never sits one out!

D) David gets tempted and gives into his lust

E) That never would have happened if David would have just been where he was supposed to be

But here is what the Psalmist wants us to realize

A) If we do stumble and fall – it happens

B) We have a shepherd who isn't going to leave us down and out.

1) too bad so sad. Can't hack it – LOSER!

C) He Comes to Restore our souls

Jesus our Shepherd is the lifter of our heads

A) Our world tends to throw away broken things –
Jesus puts a premium on Broken things

B) He loves to take what is broken – that most would discard and restore and rebuild

C) Make something beautiful out of a life that has been broken.

D) A broken and contrite heart he will not despise
HE LEANS IN!

We see a beautiful picture of this in the Life of the Apostle Peter

A) Remember – Prior to the Cross – Jesus said to Peter – The Devil is after you sift you like wheat

B) Sift like wheat- This process was often a violent process involving the shaking of the grain

1) To separate the lighter chaff from the heavier Kernels

C) Jesus was saying to Peter – Satan wants to shake you and tear you apart

1) But I have prayed for you!

D) High Priest who lives to make intercession for us
Your Amazing Good Shepherd praying for you.

But then Jesus said this to Peter – and when you have returned – meaning - Peter you will have a fall

A) Strengthen your brethren

B) And we know that on the night of Jesus arrest –
1) Peter ends up denying Jesus 3x

C) After that third denial – Rooster crows – Luke's gospel says – Their eyes met.

Our Eyes can say a lot right?

A) My wife looks at me sometimes – I know – I am in trouble – **Worst is when I am preaching**

B) Used to drive our kids crazy – lying — She Looks and they would start crying - how does she know?

C) When we are out – at a gathering – She has a look that says -I am ready to go home

D) She has a look – I am proud of you – blessed by you –

E) Look that says – I love you so much

What was the Look Jesus gave Peter communicating? LOSER? - Disappointment

A) I told you So? –

B) NO - Peter it is going to be ok – I love you – I got you – I will restore you

C) Tomorrow I am dying for your sin – So you can be forgiven – Peter I've got this – I GOT YOU

D) After the Rez – Go tell the Disciples and Peter – especially Peter

E) He is the Restorer

But You, O LORD, *are* a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. Psalm 3:3

A) He is the Good Shepherd who Restores our Soul

B) Fallen? – Cast ? today?

C) Understand the Voice of Conviction vs the Voice of Condemnation

The Voice of Condemnation is exactly how it sounds

A) Condemning – That is the Voice of the Enemy Driving you away

B) The Voice of Conviction is the opposite – Yes Sin – yes a problem – Repent and Return

C) Come to me – Heal you! Restore you!

V.3b He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His Namesake.

A) Shepherds Lead the sheep – out in front – Never drive the sheep - BUTCHER

B) Sheep like people need to be led – because Sheep are horrible creatures of Habit

C) they walk the same paths over and over because they feel Familiar and comfortable

D) The problem with that is that they tread these paths until all the grass is gone,

E)Even worse, they contaminate the soil with layers and layers of their waste

1)So it becomes a breeding ground for parasites and disease.

And so the Shepherd leads them into new paths, Paths that are not as familiar

A)Paths where the sheep have to learn to follow the Shepherd again.

B)Paths = proven pathways – **The Shepherd has tested them – walked them**

C)Our Amazing Shepherd is called the **Author and the finisher of our faith**

He became a man and walked in our Sandals so to speak

A)But the message of Jesus is not – I walked a righteous life as a man

B)So you should be able to do it too!

C)Not helpful – Like a surfer – I surf big waves so you should be able to as well – Not really

1)I am not you

So Jesus doesn't say to us I became a man and lived as righteous life –

A)So if I can do – you should be able to do it also

B)NO – Jesus said I became a man and lived a righteous life

1)So you would be able to do it too - Me living inside of you

C)Me leading you! - Me empowering you!

Follow me and let me lead you into right paths!

A)How does our shepherd lead us into right paths ?

B)Our amazing Shepherd leads us through his Word

Your word *is* a lamp to my feet. And a light to my path.-
Psalm 119:105

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might
not sin against You. Psalm 119:11

PROTECTION

This book will keep you from sin, but sin will keep you from this book. Pastor Chuck Smith

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed
according to Your word.- Psalm 119:9

GUIDEBOOK -

C)We set our mind and hearts to Follow the
shepherd – by Following his Word

Our Amazing Shepherd leads us by HIS Holy Spirit
John 16:13 – “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...”

A)The Spirit leads primarily through truth—never contrary to God’s Word.

B)His guidance will never contradict the Word

Romans 8:14 – “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

C)Being led by the Spirit is a mark of true spiritual identity.

D)People led by the Spirit – not striving

Galatians 5:16 – “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

A)Walking implies ongoing, daily guidance.

B)Not just big picture – daily personal

Romans 8:5–6 – “Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit...”

A)His leading begins in what we set our minds on.

B)To be Carnally minded is death – to be Spiritually minded is life and peace

There was a tourist was traveling through the countryside and came across a shepherd watching over his flock.

As he stood there observing, he noticed a sheepdog sitting quietly beside the shepherd—calm, alert, completely still.

**Trying to make conversation, the tourist said,
“That’s an impressive dog. I bet he’s really smart.”**

The shepherd nodded and said, “Oh, he is. In fact, this dog can gather the entire flock with just a word.”

The tourist said, “No way. I don’t believe that.”

**The shepherd smiled and said, “Watch this.”
He turned to the dog and quietly said, “Gather.”**

Immediately, the dog sprang into action—running across the hills, circling wide, gently but firmly guiding every sheep together into a tight group right in front of the shepherd.

The tourist was amazed. “That’s incredible! That dog understands everything you say!”

The shepherd shook his head and replied,
**“Oh no... he doesn’t understand everything I say—
just the commands he’s been trained to obey.”**

I think sometimes that’s where we miss it spiritually.

A)We live in a time where we have more access to God’s Word than ever before.

B)More Sermons, podcasts, books, studies—we can hear truth all day long.

C)But the question isn't... how much do we understand?

The question is...what are we actually obeying?

A)Because Jesus said in John 10, “My sheep hear My voice... and they follow Me.”

**B)Not just hear it. Not just analyze it.
Not just agree with it.**

C)They follow. They are willing to be lead

And maybe the issue for some of us isn't that God IS NOT speaking

A)Could our problem be that we have trained ourselves to hear without responding

B)Our Amazing Shepherd wants to lead us into paths of righteousness – RIGHT PATHS

C)By His Word and through HIS SPIRIT

KEY PHRASE: For his name sake

A)For HIS NAME SAKE is telling us that The Shepherds reputation

B)was based on how well he led and cared for his sheep.

C)IF THE Sheep who were well taken care of –

1)That Shepherd would have a good reputation and standing in the community

D)If Sheep could talk – they would be like – proudly – that is my guy right there.

1)Others – I wish my guy was like your guy.

So This phrase answers why God leads:

A)Not because we deserve it

B)Not because we always follow well

C)IT IS SO OTHERS CAN LEARN HOW AMAZING HE IS.

**¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:14**

People say: “Those Christians don't have much – lives are not problem free – really know how to live!

A)Something special about them – love having them around – love working with them

B)God gets the Glory!

Notice the last phrase we will consider today: V.4

4 Yea, 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.

Now verse 4 is interesting and at first glance it might seem odd

A)the same shepherd who leads us into green pastures – beside the still waters –

B)Who leads us into rest – and restoration and righteousness **FOR HIS NAMESAKE**

C)Also leads us into the Valley of the Shadow of death! - that might seem odd

D)that might seem like a bad thing to us. –Scarry–
1)why is he leading us there?

It was quite common for shepherds to have the sheep grazing in the lowland areas in the winter and spring months –

A)But when summer hit they would take the sheep to higher ground where it was cooler

B)NOW In order to get to the higher elevation
1)the Shepherd would have to lead the sheep through the Valley.

C)**The Problem was the Valleys were Dangerous – Wild animals –**

1)dark passages/ Sudden storms – bring floods

D)But to get to the MT top they had to pass through the Valley – VALLEY COULD NOT BE AVOIDED

The Same thing is true in the Christian life.

A)In order to get to the MT top –

B)In order to grow in our faith – grow in our relationship with Jesus as individuals

1)And even as a Church

C)In order for us to become more like Jesus –

D)Our Amazing Shepherd will lead us through difficult times and seasons

1)He will allow us to go through rough times

Those tough times never take him by surprise.

A)They are part of the process of him molding us and forming us and shaping us

B)He doesn't cut past the Valley times

1)**The Valley's are not meant to break us but to build us up**

I want you to notice something that is so amazing about this part of the Psalm

A)Notice at this point the personal pronoun changes from HE to YOU!

B)Even though I walk through the Valley of the ...death – **I WILL NOT FEAR – WHY ?**

For **You are with me; Your rod and Your staff**, they comfort me.

C) The Lord is more personal in the Valleys!

1) In our darkest hours is when the Lord shows up the most

D) David's confidence— I WILL NOT FEAR –why?
For **You are with me; Your rod and Your staff**, they comfort me.

I am going through this dark time – but My Shepherd is right there

A) In the dark valley, He is NOT before us but beside us, leading the way and calming our fears.

B) Church will you allow that truth to comfort your hearts this morning –

C) I may not know what you are going through – but he does – He is with you. – He is for you
1) Believe that – lean into that

When the difficulties arise in your life – KNOW THIS – Jesus is right beside you –

A) It is in the Valley moments that Jesus REALLY SHOWS UP!

B) It is the Valley seasons that we learn that HIS grace is sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness!

C) That is why you often hear this from Christians who have gone through rough seasons.

D) I wouldn't want to ever go through that again – but at the same time – would not trade it either

E) Because in that season – in the Valley – Jesus became more personal to them.

1) More intimate – AND THEY GREW!

His Rod and His Staff they comfort me!

A) The Rod was a club like stick that the shepherd would use to hit predators and enemies –

B) The Shepherd's staff was a long curved stick
1) he would use to gather the sheep close and the pull them out of harms way.

C) Application for us – no matter where Jesus our shepherd is leading us –
1) we can know that we will not lack Safety

D) Because he is with us – and he has the strength – to protect us
1) and all the necessary tools to take care of us.

Jesus expressed his care for the sheep – in John 10 -
¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep

¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own.

Close with this: Paul wrote in Romans 8

If God is for us, who *can be* against us? How know?

Answer – ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Already given you the ultimate gift-

³³ **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is God* who justifies.** ³⁴ **Who *is* he who condemns?**

Satan is the accuser and the deceiver- He seeks to bring condemnation

It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Romans 8:31-34

³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **NO!!!** Romans 8:35

³⁷ **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him** who loved us.

The Culmination of this: Let this sink in and strengthen your heart today.

³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Romans 8:37-39

Amen!

