

**Week 2**  
**The Lord is My Shepherd; I Do Not Lack**  
**Psalm 23**

**Psalm 23: 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup> he restores my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. NIV**

**I. The Lord is My Shepherd: I Do Not Lack!** Jehovah Rohi: The Lord, my Shepherd: the One Who takes care of me.

Shepherd is one of the many names God uses to reveal Himself and His love for you. As the Lord opened my heart to what it means for Him to be my Shepherd, I began to study the natural relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. I learned that sheep cannot survive without a shepherd's care. To thrive they need a shepherd to feed, guide, and protect them from enemies that want to kill and destroy them. Helpless and dependent, they rely on continual attention and care. While they remain under their shepherd's care they prosper in green pastures; when they wander off to fend for themselves, they inevitably become lost and endangered.

When a sheep senses lack, it will stray to meet its needs elsewhere, only to find itself needing rescue. God made sheep to have their needs met by a shepherd; likewise, He made us to rely on Him for our needs. Yet, like sheep, our perception of the Shepherd's character and our sense of lack determine whether we will rest in His love and care or wander off trying to fulfill our needs somewhere else.

**You lack nothing in Jesus! You can trust Him and rest in His care for you**

**John 10:9-11: <sup>9</sup>I am the Door; anyone who enters through Me will be saved [and will live forever], and will go in and out [freely], and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have *and* enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]. <sup>11</sup> I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His [own] life for the sheep. AMPC**

Jesus came so that you might live free from lack and enjoy your life and have it in abundance.

**Psalm 34:8,10: <sup>8</sup>"Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him <sup>10</sup> Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing." NLT**

**Mark 8:1-8.** Jesus faced the perception of lack. How did He respond to it?

When you thankfully acknowledge that your Heavenly Father loves and cares about you, you will confidently declare, "You, Lord are my Shepherd, I do not lack!" It is in this intimate, trusting relationship with Jesus that you will flourish under His care.

**II. He makes me lie down and rest in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,**

Green pastures represents abundance. There are two agricultural terms that a shepherd uses to describe green, luxurious pastures, and it's called a milk flow or a honey flow. When God took the children of

Israel out of Egypt, He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. Green pastures represents the promised land- the promise of abundance we have in Jesus! It's the greenest, most luxurious pasture where there is more than enough. Jesus is "El Shaddai," the God that is more than enough. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, makes us lie down and rest in the promise of abundance we have in Him!

### **There are four main reasons that cause a sheep not to be able to lie down and rest.**

1. Circumstances that cause the sheep fear: If there is a storm or a sense of danger from predators, fear and anxiety cause the sheep not to be able to rest.
2. Friction with other sheep: If there is strife or competition between two sheep they won't rest.
3. Flies, knats, pests surrounding their head: The irritation of the pests around their head cause them not to be able to rest.
4. Hunger: If the sheep is hungry it will not lie down and rest

### **These are the same 4 reasons we are unable to rest at times**

1. We are unable to rest when we have our mind on a situation that is causing us to worry.
2. We are unable to rest when we have our mind on the friction (offence, anger, resentment) we have toward another person.
3. One of the names of the devil is "lord of the flies," the flies that swarm our head at times are the lies of the enemy. When we have negative thoughts about ourself, God, or others swarming our head, we won't lie down and rest.
4. When we feel like our basic needs won't be met, we cannot rest.

In nature, a restless sheep only lies down to rest when it sees the Shepherd. If it is anxious, quarrelling with another sheep, bothered by flies, or hungry, calm comes when the Shepherd appears—because the sheep knows he will provide protection, care, oil for its head, and food. The Shepherd meets every need and leads the sheep to rest in the green pastures he has prepared.

The same is true for us. When we turn our minds away from whatever troubles or worries us and fix our attention on Jesus and his great love, a calm settles over our souls. Looking to him for help and strength, we experience his grace working in our hearts, bringing peace and rest. He enables us to rest in the promises we have in him. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith; as **Hebrews 12:2 says, by looking away from distractions and fixing our eyes on Jesus—the Author and Perfecter of our faith—we** receive the ability to truly trust him with our lives.

**Hebrews 4: 3;14-16: <sup>3</sup>Now we who have believed enter that rest, <sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

### **III. He restores my soul!**

There is a term that Shepherd's use to call a sheep who is in distress. It is called a "cast down" sheep. This is a sheep that has turned over on its back and cannot get up again by itself. Lying on its back with its feet in the air, frantically struggling to stand up without success. Only with the shepherd's help can it get back on its feet. The same is true in our relationship with Jesus.

A Natural cast down sheep responds in one of two ways:

1. Bleeps for the Shepherd to come rescue it
2. Struggles in it's own strength until it dies of exhaustion

**Psalm 42:11: <sup>11</sup> Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. NIV**

**<sup>11</sup> Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! NLT**

### **The process of restoring a cast down sheep**

The process of being restored: As soon as a shepherd reaches a cast down sheep, it gives its undivided attention and care. He patiently and tenderly turns it over on its side and put it back on its feet. As the sheep leans against the Shepherd for support, the good shepherd rubs its legs to restore the circulation. This often takes quite a bit of time. Once the sheep begins to walk it often stumbles and staggers and often falls down again. The Shepherd tenderly picks it back up and speaks to the sheep in a comforting tone. Little by little, the sheep regains its strength and the shepherd leads it back to the pasture. He restores the sheep to the flock and to Himself. It rejoins the others, set free from its frustrations and fears, given another chance to live.

**IV. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

**Notice how in verse 4 the passage changes from talking about the good Shepherd, to talking to the good Shepherd. This is a place of deep intimacy between the Sheep and its Shepherd.**

Our Good Shepherd, Jesus, warned us of the difficulties that we'd face in our journey of life, but He also gave us a promise of victory and peace in the midst of any trial, disappointment, and distressing situation.

**John 16:33: I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] AMP**

**Isaiah 41:10 Fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror and be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up and retain you with My [victorious] right hand of rightness and justice. AMP**

- **The Rod represents the power and authority of God's spoken Word**
- **The Staff Represents the help and strength of the Holy Spirit**

**V. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows:** Jesus won our complete victory over our enemy by triumphing over him on the cross.

**Colossians 2:13-16: <sup>13</sup> You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. <sup>14</sup> He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> In this way, he**

**disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. <sup>16</sup> So don't let anyone condemn you."**

Jesus defeated the devil and took away his power to accuse and condemn you for your failures by forgiving all your sins- He cancelled all the charges against you by nailing them to the cross! Jesus has invited you to sit down at His table as His honored guest. You are His honored bride at the marriage banquet He has prepared for you. **Song of Songs 2:4 "He brought me to the banquet room, and his banner over me is love. NCV** When you face any negative discouraging circumstance, you can face them with confidence because the Lord has already provided overwhelming victory for you in Christ. " **Romans 8:37 says, "We are more than conquerors and gain surpassing victory through Him who loved us." AMP**

### **You anoint my head with oil represents the comfort of the Spirit upon our mind**

In summer, warble flies, black flies, heel flies, deer flies, and nose flies swarm around sheep, tormenting them. Shepherds relieve this by rubbing linseed oil over the sheep's nose and head. The change is immediate: agitation, irritability, and restlessness disappear, and the sheep can feed and lie down and rest. It is interesting to note that the name given to Satan: Beelzebub means "the lord of the flies."

Similarly, the "lord of the flies" tempts us with lies. Anxiety, confusion, doubt, anger, frustration, irritation, worry, fear, and despair are signs our minds are under attack. True relief comes when we turn to the Good Shepherd and allow Him to anoint us with the oil of His Spirit. Then our perspective shifts: the mind of Christ begins to shape our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Only the Holy Spirit can give us Christlike responses—calm trust and peace amid difficulty. It is the Spirit's work in our mind, will, and emotions that produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23).

### **My cup overflows represents the manifestation of God's abundance in your life.**

**Ephesians 3:20: Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]**  
**Psalm 65:11: You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.**

**VI. Surely your goodness mercy and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!**

**Surely: (Strong's 389 ak): certainly; truly: Affirmation (Yes):** It means: beyond a shadow of a doubt; definitely; absolutely; most assuredly; unquestionably; irrefutably; unfailingly; without any doubt; with absolute assurance; with certainty; with confidence; in every situation and in all events. (Thesaurus)

**2 Corinthians 1:20: The Yes to all of God's promises is in Christ, and through Christ we say yes to the glory of God. NCV**

**Psalm 31:19: How great is your goodness... you lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world. NLT**

The greatest promise of all is eternity with Jesus! Death has been swallowed up in complete Victory!