

Psalm 23

My Shepherd

Image Church // The Good Shepherd Week 1

MPS: I have all that I need through Christ.

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family, I hope you are doing well! I'm pretty excited that this weekend we were able to launch an additional online service time- we now have a 9:00 virtual gathering available each week.

And our hope in this is to create more opportunities for engagement and interaction as a church!

I want to welcome all of you that are joining us from one of our **watch parties** that are being hosted across the city!

- Watch Parties are groups of up to 12 people that get together in homes to watch our virtual gathering together...
 - These host homes are application based
 - We equip them with kits to be welcoming and to stay safe and clean...
 - We cap each host home at 12 people including kids and mark those groups as closed.
 - Some of our host homes have Image Kids available creating a safe and fun environment for you kids...

If you are interested in finding the watch party that closest to you, go to imageATL.com/watchparty. We have an interactive map to help!

If you are interested in hosting a **watch party** know that you can determine the number of people you feel comfortable having in your home- up to 12... If you only feel comfortable with 6 right now that's ok, you can still host! Go to imageATL.com/watchparty to fill out an application!

Alright, well this morning we're kicking off a new series called **The Good Shepherd** where we're going to be walking through **Psalm 23!**

Now for many of you this is a familiar passage, but here's the thing with familiar passages, often times our familiarity with a passage causes us to overlook the depth and intricacies that are present in it...

There are so many gold nuggets in **Psalm 23**... It's a Psalm that reminds us of who God is, and who we are and how much we need God and what's offered to us through Him.

*So, go ahead and grab your Bibles and turn to **Psalm 23**...*

As you're turning there, if you ever want to know what Christians in the first century sang, **it was the book of Psalms**- The Psalms are about real experiences with God in the real world that were sung as a reminder of who God is and a declaration of who God is... That's a powerful reality when you think about it...

Music is that it is formational... It aligns people together under the truths that they are singing about...

- This is why singing together is important... This is one of the big reasons why we sing when we gather- it's why we take it seriously, and why we try and do it with excellence- because in it as we sing, we're aligning ourselves with the truths of God...

Ok, so let's dive in... Here's what I am going to do, I am going to read through all of **Psalm 23**, we're going to do that each week because I want it to become ingrained in you...

And then we're going to dig into **verse 1** this morning...

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.

2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He renews my life;

he leads me along the right paths

for his name's sake.

4 Even when I go through the darkest valley,

I fear no danger,

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 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord

as long as I live.

Alright, so let's look at **verse 1**:

1 The Lord is my shepherd;

I have what I need.

Ok so let's look at the first part of this verse, we read this, and it sounds so nice as we hear the often-used metaphor of **God as the shepherd**- but there is a second part of this as well...

If the Lord is the Shepherd, then that makes us the sheep... So let's talk about these two metaphors for a minuet so that we can begin to fully understand the picture here and the depths of this incredible passage...

Let's look at the **sheep** first

- Sheep are interesting animals that lack the ability to lead themselves...
- **They have no sense of direction...**
- In Turkey- 1500 sheep ran off a 15-foot cliff, 400 died the other 1400 lived only because the first 400 broke their fall...
- **Sheep are prone to wander...**

- There is another story where 83 sheep ate themselves to death- overeating caused their stomachs to explode...
- They are prone to infections...
- **They are defenseless - baa them to death!**

So, there you have it folks- that's you and me- Glad you're watching today be encouraged...

But I love this though, because when I look at my own life, when I think about how we are as humans, this is so true...

- *We desperately need to be led*- we lack the ability to lead ourselves morally and spiritually...
- *We have no sense of direction*; we are prone to wonder away from God to toward the things of this world... We are enticed by things like comfort, convince, careers, money, power...
- *And we gorge ourselves on those things*- things that we think will make us happy in the end it only leads to hurt...
- *We are defenseless*, we're vulnerable, we're insecure, we're susceptible to all kinds of hurt and pain...

Now let's talk about the **shepherd**...

- The shepherd leads the sheep, giving them direction always looking ahead of the sheep- always knowing where he is leading them...
- The shepherd protects the sheep from the attack of other animals even if it means risking his own life...
- The shepherd cares for the health and wellbeing of the sheep... Making sure they don't eat plants that will hurt them, and making sure they don't overeat... He helps nurture lambs
- The Shepherd's job is the protection and guidance of the sheep

What we see in this is that it's the shepherd that provides for all of the needs of the sheep...

See, apart from the shepherd it is impossible for the sheep to have their needs met because the sheep are incapable of acquiring that which the only the shepherd can provide...

This is the beautiful picture that we get all throughout Scripture of what God does for us... That He is the good shepherd that provides, protects, preserves and cares for His sheep...

Here's the disconnect for us though... ***I think for some of you, you don't realize that you're a sheep in need of a shepherd...***

And the evidence of the fact that you don't think you need a shepherd is your lack commitment to the shepherd...

- For so many you're trying to make it all on your own...
- One of the biggest things that has come out of this Pandemic for so many is that the thing that's been hit the hardest is the Spiritual lives of so many...
- In the discombobulation of it all it was one of the first things to go...
 - o Time in the Word, Prayer, commitment to the church community, discipleship of the home, serving, along with other spiritual disciplines, gone...

Inevitably, what this reveals is that we're missing our great need for a Shepherd...

I know things are different, and I know that rhythms have changed, but if anything, that should elevate our need for God, not eliminate it...

A wondering sheep is a sheep that's in danger... And for many of you, you're going through things in your life right now and you're trying to walk through them, or work through them alone- apart from the God, the Good Shepherd...

Some of you today need to embrace the simple truth that ***The Lord is your Shepherd-*** and you need to allow your life to reflect that truth by turning toward Him, by following Him, but trusting Him, by holding fast to Him...

I want to hold up for you this morning some things that the bible shows us that are offered to you when you embrace the shepherd... I want to show you what you can experience...

For some of you I hope this is like a fresh wind in your heart this morning... ***A reminder of who God is...***

• Love

- o **John 10:11-** I am the Good Shepherd who lays his life down for the sheep
- o **Romans 5:8 8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...
GOPSEL- This is where it all starts...

• Identity

- o **2 Cor. 5:17 17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

• Security

- o **John 10:27-30 27** My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one."

• Hope

- o **Revelation 21:5 5** Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new.

• Joy

- o **1 Peter 1:8-9 8** Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, **9** because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

• Purpose

- o **Hebrews 13:20-21 20** Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, **21** equip you with everything

good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Family we have a Good Shepherd... Some of you need to see that and embrace that... You need to grab hold of these truths that have been extended to us through Christ...

Now, let's look at the second part of this:

**1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.**

Now I want you to hear me on this... When we read this, we think... The Lord is my shepherd and I will get everything I want...

- ***Sometimes what you need isn't what you want...***

What you need is more of Jesus, what we want is more stuff...

And if what we need is more of Jesus, then that means sometimes God will put you in a place to where you see that...

Here's the reality... we want to believe the first part of this passage- the Lord is my shepherd... And it gives us warm bubbliies... But we don't want to believe the second part of this passage...

We don't want to believe that God is enough...

Appeal here- some of you are searching or trying to add to your life in hopes of finding what you *need*... You have everything you need in Christ...

Very practically this means that you can live an open-handed life... Because you don't need anything else, and there is nothing greater...

And when this sets in it will drive you to dive deeper- it will drive you to reprioritize, it will reorient you...

Conclusion [VAMP]

I want you be encouraged this morning that for those of you that are in Christ you have a Good Shepherd...

- Press in..

I know it is different but I want you to say this with me... and as you say it feel the freedom, allow the chains of this world to fall...

**1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.**

Pray...