

NETCAST SERMON NOTES

Series: Summer in the Psalms

Date: August 2nd, 2026

Title: In Need of a Shepherd

Speaker: Henry Lonstein

Key Scripture: Psalm 23 (with John 10:11)

The Big Idea: Before Psalm 23 can become comforting, it must become confronting. We cannot experience the rest and direction of the Good Shepherd until we stop trying to shepherd ourselves, surrender our need for control, and trust the One who became the Lamb to bring us safely home.

1. We Need a Shepherd

The beauty of Jesus is only fully understood when we realize how desperately our brokenness requires saving. To embrace Psalm 23:1, we must submit to two fundamental truths: the Lord is our Shepherd, and we are the sheep.

The Danger of Self-Shepherding: Most Christians love the idea of God as their Shepherd, but few are actually convinced of their daily need to be shepherded. Our insistence on control and needing the "full map" before we obey reveals a deep lack of dependence on God. A Dependence Issue, Not a Discipline Issue: A dry prayer life is not primarily a time-management problem; it is a pride problem. Prayerlessness quietly declares, "I can handle this on my own," while prayer humbly admits, "I need a Shepherd; I cannot do this without You."

2. The Shepherd Cares for You

God does not ask us to lead ourselves, nor does He expect us to fix ourselves before coming to Him. He knows what we need long before we realize we need it.

Prepared Provision and Safe Guidance: Sheep do not find green pastures on their own; the Shepherd prepares them beforehand. Furthermore, He leads us to still, safe waters rather than rushing rivers, understanding our vulnerabilities better than we do. Restoration for the Helpless: A "cast sheep" lies upside down on its back, completely helpless and unable to right itself. God does not wait for His wandering, fallen sheep to pull themselves up; the Shepherd comes looking for us to restore our souls.

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3. The Shepherd Came to Save Us

The ultimate comfort of Psalm 23 is that the Shepherd did not ask us to trust Him without first proving His complete trustworthiness.

From Shepherd to Lamb: Throughout Scripture, God's people required a spotless lamb for sacrifice. In Jesus, the Creator became creation, the King became a servant, and the Shepherd became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Walking the Valley Alone: Jesus entered the ultimate valley of the shadow of death—enduring betrayal, suffering, and divine abandonment on the cross—so that we would never have to walk through our darkest valleys alone. He bore the dark so that He could bring us safely home.

Call to Action / Reflection Question: Where in your life are you still trying to hold the rod and staff, and what would it look like this week to trade your need for control for total surrender to the Good Shepherd?