

I. You Are My Responsibility (1a)

“*The LORD is my shepherd...*” **The state of the sheep is hinged to the character of the Shepherd**

The Good Shepherd: loving, faithful, wise, sacrificial, providing, defending, leading, watching, trustworthy, able, powerful, diligent, committed

II. You Will Be Provided For (1b-2)

“*...I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.”*

We learn not to be fence-hoppers; We become satisfied in where He leads us; content, no inferior cravings

He gives us our Thirst & Hunger; He is both the source and the satisfaction of what we long for

III. You Will Be Raised Up (3a)

PREDATORS SEEK CAST SHEEP

“*He restoreth my soul...*” **Cast sheep who are lifted & restored to balance**

Sheep, more than any other class of livestock, require endless attention and meticulous care

IV. You Will Be Precisely Led (3b)

“*He leadeth me **{MOVEMENT TO NEW PLACE}** in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”*

BOTH AFFECT THE SHEPHERD'S REPUTATION

Sometimes the sheep need new land to satisfy & nourish them

Sometimes the land needs less sheep upon it to replenish and sustain in the future

V. You Will Be Entrusted With Difficulty (4a)

“*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...*”

**Middle eastern shepherds lead sheep through valleys to reach the highlands
Dangers in the valley: rock slides, flash floods, hidden predators**

The Christian is not owned by the valley but, rather, is owned in the valley. The Shepherd is closest to the sheep when danger lurks.

VI. You Will Be Absolutely Secure (4b-5a)

*“I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou **preparest** a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...”*

ROD - the instrument of his power; both for defending the sheep, deterring the sheep & disciplining the sheep

STAFF - the instrument of his care & concern; used to draw sheep to each other and to himself.

TABLE - the plateaus, called ‘mesas’; shepherd goes ahead of time to prepare this land for his flock; uproots poisonous flowers, casts salt and minerals upon the ground, picks out the best spots for his herds.

VII. I Will Greatly Bless You (5b)

“Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

OIL - used as an ointment on the head, the nose, and under the eyes to repel the relentless flies that provoke the sheep to madness

THOU ANOINTEST - be still, let him rub it in; His hands know how to soothe the pests & calm the anxiety. It is a repeated process.

CUP RUNNETH OVER - an expression of gratitude for the relief provided by the Shepherd; weeping endures for a night, joy comes in the morning!

VIII. I Will Never Leave You (6)

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

1. Now convinced of the character of the Shepherd, the sheep does not fret over the future

2. Goodness & mercy go with the sheep; not ease and comfort.

3. Dwell in the house of the Lord forever - the sheep is not looking for another Shepherd or another place. Wherever the sheep is, he is at home because of the abiding presence of his Shepherd.