

THE REACH OF THE SHEPHERD

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is not primarily about sheep—it is about the Shepherd. David writes as a man who had been both a shepherd and a sheep. The Shepherd's reach touches every area of life.

No place is beyond His reach. No burden is too heavy. No valley is too deep. No sinner is too far away.

"The LORD
is my shepherd;
I shall not want."
Psalm 23:1 (NIV 1984)



I THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR NEEDS

"The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want." (v.1 NIV)



- The LORD... the covenant God of Israel.
- ...is my Shepherd. My Shepherd.
- Christianity is personal.
- He knows His sheep individually.
- Because He is our Shepherd...
- "I shall not want."

Not that we'll have everything we desire, but that we'll never lack what He knows we truly need. Sometimes He provides abundance. Sometimes enough. But He always provides Himself.



APPLICATION:

Are you worried about tomorrow? Trust the Shepherd. If He can feed sparrows and clothe lilies, He can care for His children.

II THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR REST

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
he leadeth me beside quiet waters."
(v.2 NIV)



- Sheep are naturally restless.
- Only when the shepherd removes fear can the sheep rest.
- He makes...
- He leads...
- The Shepherd takes the initiative.

- Sometimes God even slows us down because we would never stop ourselves.



APPLICATION:

Our world offers entertainment but not rest. Only Christ gives rest for the soul.

III THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR WANDERING HEARTS

"He restoreth my soul." (v.3 NIV)



- Sheep wander into danger.
- David wandered into sin with Bathsheba. Yet God restored him.
- "Restore" means to bring back.
- Our Shepherd delights in restoring saints.

He has not abandoned His sheep.



APPLICATION:

If you've wandered, don't run farther away. Run toward the Shepherd.

IV THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR WALK

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake." (v.3 NIV)



- God doesn't simply save us. He leads us. It is following.
- The Shepherd knows the safe paths. The sheep often do not.
- Sometimes His path is difficult. Sometimes it is confusing. But it is always righteous.
- He leads us for His name's sake. God's reputation is connected to the care of His people. He is committed to finishing what He begins.

V THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR VALLEYS

"Yea, though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death..." (v.4 NIV)



- David does not say if. He says though.
- Valleys are inevitable: illness, disappointment, loss, grief, trials.
- In verses 1-3 David talks about God. In verse 4 he talks to God. "The Lord is..." becomes "Thou art with me."
- The darkest valleys produce the closest fellowship.
- The Shepherd doesn't remove every valley. He walks with us through them.
- His reach extends even where death casts its shadow. Because Jesus entered death itself and conquered it.

VI THE SHEPHERD REACHES OUR FEARS

"I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
(v.4 NIV)



- The absence of fear isn't courage. The presence of the Shepherd is courage.
- The rod protected.
- The staff guided.
- One defended.
- One directed. Both comforted.
- Sometimes God's rod corrects us.
- Sometimes His staff gently redirects us.
- Both are acts of love.
- Hebrews reminds us: "The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth."
- Even discipline proves we belong to a Shepherd who loves us.

VII THE SHEPHERD REACHES BEYOND THIS LIFE

"Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the
house of the LORD forever." (v. 6 NIV)



- "Follow" literally means pursuing. Goodness pursues us. Love pursues us. Every day. Every circumstance. Every season.
- And one day... faith becomes sight.
- The Shepherd who has walked beside us will welcome us home.

INVITATION



Perhaps you've never trusted Christ. The Good Shepherd is calling you today. Hear His voice, repent of your sin, and place your faith in Him.



Perhaps you're a believer who has wandered. The Shepherd has not stopped seeking you. Return to Him today.



Or perhaps you're walking through a valley. Take courage—the valley is not your destination. The Shepherd is with you, and His reach has never failed one of His sheep.

CONCLUSION

The reach of the Shepherd is complete.

- ✓ He reaches our needs.
- ✓ He reaches our rest.
- ✓ He reaches our wandering.
- ✓ He reaches our walk.
- ✓ He reaches our valleys.
- ✓ He reaches our fears.
- ✓ He reaches our eternity.



Jesus said,

*"I am the good shepherd;
the good shepherd
giveth his life for the sheep."*

John 10:11 (NIV 1984)

The Shepherd's greatest reach was at Calvary. He reached down to dying sinners through His cross. He reached into the grave through His resurrection. And today He still reaches into hearts through the gospel.