

Today's message: ENDURING FAITH BY TRUSTING OUR SHEPHERD.

Dr. Mbanefo

The simple truth of life is that you cannot trust and follow someone you do not know for the long haul and especially in troubling times.

### **Psalm 23 / John 10**

1. The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.
2. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.
3. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; 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 runs over.
6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### **JOHN 10:11- 16, 27-28**

**11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**12** The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.

**13** The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me

15 Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

**SHEPHERD** - the word shepherd is the name for one who literally cares for sheep and flock of sheep. To care for means to – to provide for and tend to the sheep, to guide and lead the sheep, to guard and protect the sheep/flock of sheep.

The word is also used to indicate a leader of people and nation – like the kings of the Old Testament (2Samuel 5:2), a leader of the congregation of God's people – such as Pastors & Elders (1Peter 5:2, Acts 20:28

**28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [a]of God which He purchased with His own blood.)** and God Himself - who is called The Great Shepherd in Heb 13:20-21, The Chief Shepherd in 1Peter 5:4 and the Good Shepherd in John 10:11 **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep"**

**The Lord is my Shephard means we are related to the Lord and are in His care.**

1). If the Lord is my Shephard, the first question that comes to mind is **WHO IS THE LORD** because we cannot trust someone we do not know for long. (Daniel 11:32)

2). If we are in His care, the second question is **WHAT DOES OUR SHEPERD DO FOR US AND WHY?**

3). The third question which will be my third point will be **HOW DO WE FOLLOW HIM** because He said in John 10:4 that my sheep hear My voice and follow Me. Following Him wholeheartedly and trustingly to the End is endurance and has great rewards. (Hebrews 10:35-38 **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:**

**Knowing who the Lord is, what He has and does for us, enables us follow Him in faith increasingly, eliminating fear and anxiety in our lives.**

### **1). WHO IS THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD?**

Understanding the nature and character of God helps us trust Him, rely on Him and relate with Him on a daily basis. When we know and meditate on the various names different people in different situations and conditions called God in the Bible, we will understand His nature and character more, enabling us to persevere and follow Him to the end.

The LORD = YAHWEH. He is the Self existent One, the Eternal One, the Supreme One who declares a thing and it comes to pass (Hebrews 1:3), His words are filled with power. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, knows the end from the beginning, is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, all powerful yet He is LOVE, for GOD is Love. He owns the whole world and everything in it - the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and the cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him. Jesus Christ – the Messiah, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Nissi, Elohim,

Sharma, Shalom, Rapha, Great Physician, Way maker, Miracle worker, Our Rock and Defender is our Shepherd. He is the Chief Shepherd and Great Shepherd of our souls. He is not like other shepherds in our lives - our parents, teachers, pastors, spiritual leaders, presidents, mentors and guides. All these try to shepherd us to the best of their abilities which are limited – beings humans themselves. There is no one like our LORD. He is the I AM that I AM, the Ever present One, the Faithful One. By understanding His nature and character, we can increasingly trust Him, rely on Him and relate with Him all the days of our lives. Our faith is in the Lord and the more we know and trust Him, the greater our faith which pleases Him just as 2 Peter 3:18 and Colossians 1:9-10 say - **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** Colossians 1:9-10 **For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

YAHWEH IS = present tense, present continuous tense. He is a now GOD (Heb 11:6), our ever-present Help (Psalm 46:1), who will never leave nor forsake His people (Hebrews 13:5 **For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."**). I will be with you till the end of the ages Jesus said as He gave us the Great Commission. Without Him our best efforts will always be inadequate and insufficient and we can do nothing of eternal value, but in Him, we have His Spirit living in us and we have His great and precious promises by which we take part in His divine nature having escaped the corruption in the world (2 Peter 1:3-4). Because Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing, I have all I need, I am fully and amply supplied. You too if you have received the gift of salvation in Christ.

This is a trustworthy declaration – worth holding unto, no matter what comes against us or what life throws at us.

## **2). WHAT DOES THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD DO FOR US AND WHY?**

1). He makes everlasting life, abundant life available to the sheep (John 10:10). ZOE – God kind of life, new life in Christ, behold if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old has passed away and the new has come. A life that fears and honors God, loves God and the things of God, a life that reflects the nature of Christ here on earth, a life that shines the light of God in this dark world.

2). He relates with us. He is intimate with us. He calls us by name (John 10:3). This is a place of relationship – He is our Father making us the children of the Most-High God - Behold what manner of love (1 John 3:1), Psalm 23:1

3). He speaks to us and we hear and know His voice - John 10:4

4). He leads and guides us – along the path of RIGHTEOUSNESS, straight paths, paths of success and victory - Psalm 23:3

5). He protects us - from attackers, wolves, lies of the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, John 10:27-28. **My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.**

6). He lays down His life for the sheep (us) - John 10:11 - because He care and loves the sheep.

7). He cares for us and about us and PROVIDES all we need - 1 Peter 5:7 - Cast your care/anxiety on Him for He cares for us. He gives us rest and refreshment for our souls. In Him, we have a blessed life. We are blessed!

8). He wants other sheep to be welcomed to His sheep pen/fold - (unbelievers) John 10:16

9). He seeks and finds the lost sheep (back slidden/prodigal children)- Luke 15 (Parable of the Lost sheep and prodigal son)

**We have seen who the Lord Yahweh is. He is the Great Shepherd of our souls. As our Shepherd, He provides all we need for life and godliness. All means all. What has He provided for us?**

- A). Redemption and Salvation in Christ - We are reconciled to God, our Creator.
- B). We have the Spirit of God living inside of us
- C). The Bible – the Word of God – life manual – the truth
- D). The body of Christ – connected with the community of believer
- E). Righteousness, Peace and Joy - Romans 14:17 – Zoe life which is eternal and abundant life
- F). Provision for this world – shelter, clothing, food, healing, protection
- G). Access to God at all times through His word and prayer
- H). Freedom from bondage to sin and freedom to be who and do what we were created for. We have purpose which is to love God and enjoy Him forever. Sin and death now have no power over us – we can worship God, live for Him, love and serve people. In Christ, we are free from condemnation and accepted to God
- I). Blessed hope - We are heavenly citizens, and look forward to the blessed hope – the return of our Savior Jesus Christ– that we will be with him forever in Heaven – where there is no pain, no sorrow, no death, no shame.

**Because the Lord – Yahweh is our Shepherd we have ALL WE NEED and LACK NOTHING.**

### **3). HOW DO WE FOLLOW HIM?**

**1). His Word. John 10 is key in understanding our relationship with Christ, the Great Shepherd of our souls. In verses 3, 4, 14, Christ says that His sheep knows Him and His voice, His sheep hear and listen to His voice, and His sheep follow Him.** Having received Christ as Savior, we can confidently confess this of our lives. This becomes a reality in our daily lives as we hear, read, study, meditate on and obey His word individually and in the company of other believers. As we do these,

we must **trust Him whole heartedly** – with all your heart, not being double minded - James 1:7-8

Romans 12:2 exhorts us to renew our minds with the Word of God. His word tells us the truth – the reality of everything. Previously, the world told us how to think, speak and act but as we renew our minds with the word of God, we get to know His nature, character, likes, dislikes, provisions for us and His promises and inheritance which He has given us. We learn about His plans for us now and in the future.

As we renew our mind and hide His word in our hearts and follow Him, we grow more confident in our knowing that He who has begun this good work in us will complete it. This is enduring faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of GOD.

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path (PSALM 119:105. Be a doer of the word and not a hearer/listener only. JAMES 1: 21-25

As we renew our mind and hide His word in our hearts we distinguish right from wrong and save ourselves from many sorrows. Initially baby Christians, we grow and mature in godly wisdom through the constant use of the word of God which 1 Peter 2:1 and Hebrews 5:12-14 call milk and solid food respectively. There is something for everyone. By knowing and obeying His word – we are kept safe when the storms of life hit and as we go through the valley of shadow of death. Our house is not destroyed and we do not get stuck in the dark valley. We only go through to the other side – side of joy, peace, righteousness, new character development, new assignment for the kingdom of GOD. Mark 4 :35-41.

**2). By His Spirit who lives in us.** Who empowers us, guides us into all truth, helps us in our weaknesses. Our part is to stay in step with the Holy Spirit. He reminds of the word of God – of who we are in Christ, of the presence of GOD with us, of the things freely given to us and what He will have us do. So let us grow in our walk with the Holy Spirit. John 14:15-18, vs 26, Acts 1:8, Galatians 5: 25 **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

**3). By seeking and loving His presence in prayer, thanksgiving, praise and worship - Hebrews 11:6.** This brings assurance, comfort, courage, understanding, revelation, light, wisdom, perspective to our situations (valley of the shadow of death / storms in our lives). Our shepherd made the mountains and valleys, and He is LORD of the storms and waves that try to overcome or overwhelm us. He can speak them to be silent and they will listen. Philippians 4:6 - In every situation through prayer and thanksgiving – we make our requests known to God, we thank Him for what He has done for us in the past and thank Him for what He is doing in our current situation, and what He has promised to do. By remembering and thanking Him – we are showing our confidence in Him that He will see us through, make a way for us, work miracles on our behalf, and do again what He has done previously and ultimately present us to Himself without blemish or wrinkle. This confidence is our enduring faith.

**4). By being part of a local church, connected to the brethren and sitting under godly and reliable under-shepherds and teachers - Hebrew 10:25.** Follow me as I follow Christ as Paul stated in the scriptures. These disciples us, equip us for the journey and for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11). As we pay attention to their teaching and obey them, we go through life victorious in Christ - although our outward man is perishing yet our inward man is made stronger and being renewed daily and getting ready for the glory that will be revealed to us (2Corinthians 4:16). The fullness of God is manifested in the church - Ephesians 3:18

**5). Patience - the word enduring implies patience.** Patience is the ability to wait something out without being riled up; the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble or suffering without getting angry or upset - this is a fruit of the Holy spirit - Ephesians 5:22. Let us emulate from the heroes of the faith who through faith and patience obtained and inherited what was promised - **Hebrew 6:12b.** Understanding and following God's will in God's time in God's way leads to godly success, an enduring faith. Remembering His promises / blessings fulfilled already and encouraging one another will help us be patient as we wait for the outcome God promised.



## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus is the trustworthy and good Shepherd. When we make Him our Lord and savior, we place ourselves in His care. We can trust Him to lead, guide, protect and provide for us. He will refresh our souls with His word, anoint our head with oil to set us apart for His purposes. He causes our cup to overflow so we can bless others around us. We can serve people and reach our world with the love of God  
Amen

If you are here today and have not made Jesus the Lord of your life, He is not your shepherd. As we have learned today, He is the Great, Chief and Good Shepherd who wants to save you and is here inviting you to enter His pasture by receiving His gift of salvation so He can shepherd you. He is the trustworthy shepherd.