

The LORD Is My Shepherd

Psalms 23:1-6 | (ESV)

The LORD is My Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

He Will Provide: My Physical Needs

² He makes me lie down
in green pastures.
He leads me beside still
waters.

He Will Provide: My Spiritual Needs

³ He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of
righteousness for his
name's sake.

He Will Provide: Defense In Every Trial

⁴ Even 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.

He Will Provide: Deliverance From Every Enemy

⁵ You prepare a table
before me in the presence
of my enemies; you
anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

He Will Provide: Unconditional, Unfailing, & Everlasting Love

⁶ Surely goodness and
mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the
house of the Lord forever.

Notes

V1 DAVID RECOGNIZES THE LORD AS HIS "SHEPHERD" WHO MEETS HIS EVERY NEED, GUIDES & DEFENDS HIS LIFE, & IS HIS EVER-PRESENT HELP.

- Dear ones, this is how we too must look to God. It is no sign of weakness to depend upon the Lord, but rather a sign of true humility & true wisdom. Nor should we think that our constant neediness is a burden to God. No!
- Such is the greatness of our Shepherd's strength that *he cannot be exhausted*, & such is the depth of his tender love that *he is always ready to care for those whose trust is in him*. He delights in tending to his flock. (1 Pet. 5:7)
- This Shepherd is *all-wise, all-powerful, & everywhere-present*. He is the *eternal & unchangeable* God who is *"merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..."* (Ex. 34:6)
- It is only w/ this "LORD" as *your* shepherd that you can say with David: *"I will never lack what is needful to me."**

V2 CONTAINS A PROMISE OF GOD'S CONTINUAL PROVISION FOR THE NEEDS OF OUR EARTHLY BODIES: NOURISHMENT & SECURITY

- Green pastures & gentle waters represent how the shepherd meets the essential physical needs of his sheep.
- The sheep *"lie down"* b/c, under their shepherd's care, they are *well supplied* & have *a deep sense of security*.
- The psalm explicitly declares that these things are not obtained as a result of the sheep's own *determination, wisdom, wealth, or toil*. They are *exclusively provided by the Shepherd's* own perfect wisdom & daily leadership.
- Dear ones, we need not be anxious or fearful when we belong to the Lord Most High. For *"the whole earth is the Lord's & all the fullness thereof..."* (Ps. 24:1) & our Shepherd has promised daily bread to the children of his love.

V3 CONTAINS A PROMISE OF GOD'S CONTINUAL PROVISION FOR THE NEEDS OF OUR SOULS: BOTH FORGIVENESS OF SIN & GUIDANCE FOR HOLY LIVING

- The word *"restore"* means *"to return"*. In the context of sheep, this means that a sheep has first *wandered away* from the shepherd. There are lots of ways this might happen. (i.e. Temptation, Rebellion, Apathy, Ignorance, Deception, Etc.)*
- Whatever the case, v3 depicts a sheep who has gone astray—that is, *a person who has sinned against God*.
- In 10,000 different ways, this is exactly who each of us are. We are all sinners who have turned away from God.
- Yet, look at the heart of this merciful Shepherd! He is a *Restorer of the guilty, a Forgiver of the rebellious*. (Lk. 19:10)
- Ours is a Shepherd who *searches for his sheep* when they foolishly rebel against him & stray from his side.
- Ours is a Shepherd who not only finds the lost sheep, but once found, *restores them into the fold of his love*.
- **And yet, he does still more.** Our God *not only forgives our sins* but also *changes our hearts & guides us in "righteous paths."* He teaches us, by his Word & Spirit, how to walk before his face in true holiness & happiness.

V4 CONTAINS A PROMISE OF GOD'S CONTINUAL DEFENSE AMIDST ALL THE VARIED CHALLENGES WE WILL FACE AS PILGRIMS IN THIS FALLEN WORLD.

- *"Valley of the shadow of death"* is a metaphor for *the trials & temptations we must continually face in this life*.
- Things like: *Sin, sickness, sorrow, suffering, betrayal, failure, hurt, loss, abuse, divorce, rejection, & much more*.
- **Q: HOW CAN A PERSON HONESTLY STARE ALL THE POSSIBLE EVILS OF THIS FALLEN WORLD IN THE FACE & SAY, "I WILL NOT FEAR THEM"?**
- David's lack of fear is not based on the absence of problems. It is based on the *Presence & Protection* of God.

1. DAVID CLINGS TO THE PROMISE OF THE SHEPHERD'S PRESENCE: "FOR YOU ARE WITH ME..."

- By faith David knows that wherever he goes & whatever he faces in this life, he will never face it alone.

2. DAVID CLINGS TO THE PROMISE OF THE SHEPHERD'S PROTECTION: "YOUR CUDGEL & YOUR CROOK, THEY COMFORT ME..."

- By faith, David knows that his Shepherd will never fail to defend him from whatever enemies he may face.
- With the *cudgel*, our Shepherd *defends us from our enemies*, & with the *crook* he *defends us from ourselves*.*

V5 CONTAINS A PROMISE OF GOD'S ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE FROM OUR EVERY ENEMY: SIN, THE WORLD, PERSECUTORS, SATAN, DEATH, ETC.

- **This verse is meant to teach us this truth:** Every enemy of God & of his people will ultimately be conquered & rendered totally powerless as we, his beloved Church, enjoy the full measure of his lavish grace for all eternity.*

V6 CONTAINS A PROMISE OF GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL, UNFAILING, & EVERLASTING LOVE FOR EVERY BELOVED SHEEP IN HIS PRECIOUS FLOCK (THE CHURCH)

- These words do NOT merely promise that God will be good & merciful to his people—as wonderful as this is.
- These verses promise that the goodness & mercy of God will *"relentlessly pursue"* his people. (Chasing after them)
- **For how long will such holy, comprehensive, & radically undeserved love be ours to enjoy? Forever.** (Isa. 54:10)
- For all eternity this Good Shepherd will love, defend, and keep the precious sheep of his love. (Jn. 10:27-30)

Proposition:

Dear ones, can you tell me one good reason that you should not repent & place your faith in this Good Shepherd?