

## Title: The Shepherd's Reorientation: Surrendering Control to God's Leadership

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Psalm 23 not merely as a passage of comfort, but as a profound call to reorientation of life around God. The pastor challenges the common misunderstanding of this psalm, explaining that when God becomes our shepherd, He doesn't simply improve our circumstances—He completely restores our identity, recalibrates our desires, and returns us to the right path. The core message centers on the complete transfer of functional authority from ourselves to God, abandoning the illusion of control and allowing God to shepherd every aspect of our lives. This reorientation happens internally before it manifests externally, as God slows us down, restores our souls, and prepares us for significance in His kingdom. The sermon emphasizes that true God-shaped momentum comes not from human effort but from surrendering to divine leadership, living for God's glory rather than self-glorification.

### Key Points:

- Psalm 23 is about profound reorientation of life around God, not merely coping with difficult circumstances
- God restores us in three ways: identity, desire, and path
- Saying "The Lord is my shepherd" means complete surrender of control and subordination to God's authority
- At its root, sin is the selfish attempt to define reality, set our own direction, and seek fulfillment apart from God
- Reorientation requires the complete transfer of all functional authority from ourselves to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit
- God prepares us internally before propelling us externally—He makes us lie down before moving us forward
- Disoriented souls cannot follow rightly or lead others rightly
- Means of grace include reading Scripture, prayer, worship, sacraments, and rest
- God guides us in paths of righteousness not for self-improvement but for His name's sake
- The reoriented life is characterized by selection for significance, abundance and provision, acceptance and approval, and eternal presence with God

- Sheep are designed to be led, not driven; we need to stop leading ourselves and follow the Shepherd

#### Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 23 (primary focus)
- Ephesians 2 (God's power available to us)
- 2 Corinthians 5 (new creation in Christ)
- Isaiah 43:1-7 (God's presence through trials)

#### Stories:

- David's experience as a shepherd fighting lions and bears to protect his sheep, which prepared him to fight Goliath
- Personal testimony references from congregation members over 43 years of ministry about God using health problems to make them "lie down" and rest
- The pastor's own father telling him not to embarrass the family name, used as an illustration of living for God's name's sake
- Multiple references to biblical figures who experienced periods of preparation: Samuel, Hannah, David (years shepherding before becoming king), Jesus (30 years in obscurity), and Paul (7-14 years in the wilderness)
- Illustration of sheep starving to death in a field meant to sustain them when they lose sight of the shepherd
- The image from Lord of the Rings: "too little butter spread over too much bread" to describe spiritual exhaustion