



**Sheepish
Part 2
Learning About Our Shepherd
Learning How to Be His Sheep
Psalms 23:2 & 3**

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Psalm 23:title–6

“A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. **He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name.** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of



death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, And my dwelling will be in the house of the LORD forever.” (NASB 2020)

We are continuing our study of the 23rd Psalm and since we agree with David on what he related in the first verse, we come to the question of just what does that mean for us as we follow the Lord and live for Him day to day.

Since He is indeed our Shepherd and we now know that everything we need comes from Him, what does His loving care actually look like.

Let's pick up with verse 2.

Psalm 23:2

“He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.” (NASB 2020)

Looking back at verse 1, “the unqualified statement, I do not lack (lō’ ‘eḥsār), with no direct object, is a remarkable assertion of trust. Given the sheep-shepherd metaphor, the term may imply something such as “I do not lack any necessity.”” (Jacobson and Tanner 2014, 241)

As we look at verse two, our text tells us “He lets me lie down in green pastures.”

The Hebrew word used here is יָרִבֵּשׁ (yarbesen). “The verb yarbîšēnî (translated here as he provides rest for me) is difficult to render smoothly into English. Many translations try to capture the causative nature of the hiphil with something such as “he makes me lie down” (NRSV). Such a translation is too wooden and depicts God’s power in a highly reductive fashion as one who forces something upon the psalmist. The term rather denotes the active agency of the shepherd in seeking out an environment in which the sheep may thrive (the green pastures).” (Jacobson and Tanner 2014, 241)

How it is translated in the NASB in my opinion goes too far the other direction and makes it sound as if our shepherd lets the sheep call the shots. That is not the case at all.

Phillip Keller tells us what Sheep must have to rest.

As Keller outlines what he learned sheep needed to rest, we will find and then explore, the similarity for us as the Lord’s sheep.

“The strange thing about sheep is that because of their very makeup it is almost impossible for them to be made to lie down unless four requirements are met.

1. Owing to their timidity they refuse to lie down unless they are free of all fear.
2. Because of the social behavior within a flock, sheep will not lie down unless they are free from friction with others of their kind.
3. If tormented by flies or parasites, sheep will not lie down. Only when free of these pests can they relax.
4. Lastly, sheep will not lie down as long as they feel in need of finding food. They must be free from hunger.

It is significant that **to be at rest there must be a definite sense of freedom from fear, tension, aggravations, and hunger.** The unique aspect of the picture is that it is only the shepherd himself who



can provide release from these anxieties. It all depends upon the diligence of the owner whether or not his flock is free of disturbing influences.” (Keller 2019)

Our Shepherd knows we need this as well.

What we discover is our Shepherd, actively involved in finding us the right place to rest. The picture here is a flock that has been on the move since sunrise, and it is time to sit down and rest in a place that also provides the right amount of food as well and meets the needs of the flock.

Here is the thing, as you and I do life, and like David, we look at what our Shepherd has done for us, we should be looking back over a series of green pastures that in between the dry and rough patches in our life, He loving allowed us to spend time in. And here is the sad fact, many of us would never pick some of the places He decides to refresh us in.

As He leads us to a place to rest and refresh our Shepherd makes sure we feel safe and secure. He is the source of our safety. He is indeed the source of our safety and security.

Proverbs 18:10

“The name of the LORD is like a strong tower; the righteous person runs to it and is set safely on high.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Being safe in Him is one thing but having our brothers and sisters around us, secure and safe as well, not causing a ruckus, is something He also takes care of for us. Our Lord set the standard and then Paul spoke about this with some how-to instructions.

John 13:34–35

“I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Our Shepherd has provided us instructions as sheep as to how we are to interact with other sheep. He is so determined we interact with each other in the appropriate manner; He commanded this and then follows up with us through the Holy Spirit.

We love one another, not butt heads with one another. When we butt heads with one another, there could be some adverse outcomes at times. “You have likely heard the expression “butting your head against a wall.” In November 2009, authorities in Viroqua, Wisconsin, found a dead seven-point buck that apparently lost a head-butting contest with a rival buck. The winning deer was made of concrete; it was a statue.” (Wilson and Russell 2015)

Sometimes it may seem to us that head butting is needed, but is it really? Are we banging into a statue or are we busy destroying a portion of the flock that Jesus died for? What happened to grace?

There are times, Biblically, where we do indeed need to challenge and help to correct someone who is in sin, involved in false teaching or needs a swift kick of encouragement to get going.

But lean into our Shepherd before lowering the head and beginning to snort. Paul gives us guidance of where we start from.

Romans 12:10–17

“Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another. Do not lag in zeal, be enthusiastic in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in suffering, persist in prayer.



Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people.**" (NET 2nd ed.)

We are commanded by our Shepherd to love one another. Other followers of Jesus are, per Jesus, brothers and sisters.

How do you agape one another, how do you do that? Paul tells us to be devoted to one another. "Adoption into the family of God brings believers into a Spirit-directed relationship (Romans 8:14–17) where a certain type of affection is appropriate. One way of showing this is indicated in the next clause. CSB ("Outdo one another in showing honor") introduces an unfortunate note of competition into the context. The verb literally means "go first and lead the way" (BDAG) and is best understood to have that meaning here (lit. "taking the lead in honoring one another"). (Peterson 2021, 454)

Literally competing with one another to show honor to one another. In other words, we put Jesus first and as we do so, we are also putting the other members of the flock ahead of ourselves.

Ephesians 4:29

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (ESV)

Our Shepherd wants us safe in Him, experiencing agape love with each other so that we are secure in the flock and with each other. He also wants us to be free of pests. He has warned us how to identify those pests, and in these last days they do indeed seem to be multiplying and showing up everywhere; but we have THE best pest preventative in the world. The Word of God. But He will also deal with the pests too.

2 Peter 2:1–10

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); **then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.** Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones," (ESV)

Maintaining a pest free environment is a job many under shepherds get involved in. Just as the Shepherd want to keep the pests away, as they sneak in, it is our job as under shepherds to identify and send the pests to the other side of the fence. But rest secure in the fact that a day is coming soon when we will be pest free.

So, our Shepherd has provided us safety in Him, we are secure in the agape love we have for each other, and we are as pest free as possible, time to feed on the Word.



All of us need the milk and meat of the word. In fact, as believers, we should be craving it. He has provided this nourishment to us in the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2

"Like newborn babies, **you must crave** pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment," (NLT)

2 Timothy 4:1–4

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." (ESV)

But in what David thought a bit of stony wilderness God saw "green pastures." In what David reckoned to be mere and sheer ills, God saw sources of blessing to the soul—so He made him to lie down in green pastures. (Jones 1922, 53-54)

Again, the picture being drawn for us is we are His flock. As we look on from a distance, what we see is striking.

There is the Shepherd faithfully guarding his flock! and there are his sheep peacefully resting, without any sensation of want to annoy, and quietly reclining without any fear of danger to disturb! The flock is in the height of enjoyment! (Stevenson 1846, 61)

Our Shepherd knows exactly what it is we need before we need it. Jesus talked about this in some of His instructions on prayer.

Matthew 6:7–8

"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for **your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!**" (NLT)

He knows us, better than we know ourselves. He knows what encourages us, what motivates us, and what we need in order to rest comfortably in Him. And before we even pray about it, because He knows us, He has it handled. But remain persistent in prayer.

I say that because of the experience of Daniel. We read in Daniel 10:2 that he had been fasting and praying for three weeks and no answer. Then bang, a vision and Gabriel shows up to chat.

Daniel 10:12–13

"Then he said, "Daniel, don't be afraid. **God has heard your prayers ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in order to gain understanding. I have come in answer to your prayer. The angel prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days.** Then Michael, one of the chief angels, came to help me, because I had been left there alone in Persia." (GNB)

Persistence in prayer is required.

The place He has us rest is not a noisy messy place of competing demands and requirements; it isn't dry and devoid of good pasturage either. Sheep just cannot handle that kind of stress if you want them to rest. He more than abundantly takes care of us and allows us to rest.



We are fed on His word and given His grace. Jesus made it clear as He did battle with Satan.

Matthew 4:4

“But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, **‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’**” (NLT)

When we fight against that simple truth, we are not allowing the Shepherd to do His work of making us rest.

Philippians 4:6–8

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.**” (NLT)

Did you catch the key here from Paul. Here it is again, in short form and in order. Many of us tend to forget step two.

1. Don’t worry about anything.
2. Pray about everything.
3. Enjoy His peace.
4. He will guard our heart and mind. He is our Shepherd.
5. And keep your mind on Him and His Word.

Will the Lord ever run out of places for us to rest, to lie down in? The term pasture is in the plural. He knows us so well that He has a exhaustive list of pastures we would find rest in. Our Shepherd is infinitely wise.

He has appointed various means of grace for the nourishment and prosperity of their souls. To these he leads his flock, and there he causes them to lie down in the abundance of his blessing. (Stevenson 1846, 67)

How do we rest? We rest in His promises. We rest in His word. I like how Charles Spurgeon addresses this.

“Sweet and full are the doctrines of the gospel; fit food for souls, as tender grass is natural nutriment for sheep. When by faith we are enabled to find rest in the promises, we are like the sheep that lie down in the midst of the pasture; we find at the same moment both provender and peace, rest and refreshment, serenity and satisfaction. But observe: “He maketh me to lie down.” It is the Lord who graciously enables us to perceive the preciousness of his truth, and to feed upon it. How grateful ought we to be for the power to appropriate the promises!” (Spurgeon n.d., 354)

He knows us and He knows that for some of us, we need to be directed and guided into His promises. That may mean testing and trials. Ugh. But then there is that green pasture of now fully knowing and apprehending the promises we have just learned.

Psalms 23:2

“He lets me lie down in green pastures; **He leads me beside quiet waters.**” (NASB 2020)



Sheep not only eat, but they also get thirsty from time to time. No check that, 70% of their body is water, they can go for longer periods of time than most without water, but when they get thirsty, they want water and want it now. From a pure clean source.

They want to drink. This is really no different than anyone anywhere in the world today. Most are happy to get their thirst quenched by inferior sources of water.

When sheep are thirsty, they become restless and set out in search of water. If not led to the good water supplies of clean, pure water, they will often end up drinking from the polluted potholes where they pick up such internal parasites as nematodes, liver flukes, or other disease germs. (Keller 2019)

Searching for whatever, seeking for whatever, is actually part of being human.

As the result of the fall, we were separated from the source of life. We have been looking to reconnect with that source ever since and tend to, in our own strength, look in the wrong places.

Solomon, David's son, took this from the right source of water to discover and then tell us the true meaning behind what David was saying. Solomon spent a lot of time considering things like this, and we see the result in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3:9–15

"What do people really get for all their hard work? I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. **He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end.** So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God. And I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it. **God's purpose is that people should fear him. What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again.**" (NLT)

Because we are made in the image of God and were originally intended to live with Him for all eternity, Genesis 3 changed all of that. But we are still imprinted with eternity, and this make us look for water in places we have no business looking.

Solomon saw that and he tells us that folks turn to things that may satisfy for awhile, but the problem still exists. We are imprinted with eternity because we were made in God's image. "The human being has aiōn, "eternity," in his heart—his Creator has made him a thinking being, and he wants to pass beyond his fragmentary knowledge and discern the fuller meaning of the whole pattern—but the Creator will not let the creature be his equal. As surely as God has put aiōn in the human heart (a consciousness that there is more than the immediate kairos of this or that [vv. 2–8] in which the creature finds itself), he has also put a veil upon the human heart, so that the finite human mind is unable to reach beyond the kairos into the aiōn to see as God does." (Longman 1998, 121)

Once we come to Christ, the veil is gone and we begin to see as God does, but not just yet. Thus, the need to be Shepherd.

Consider the task of our Shepherd, our Lord and Savior as He leads us today. We are surrounded by lots of shiny things that look good, but in the end, they are shiny and offer nothing of substance. We see this all around us as there are many who have stopped looking to the Lord, or never sought Him in the first place and now they just want to feel good about themselves. Welcome to the world of word of faith and the prosperity gospel. This is not the source of water Jesus spoke of there in the Temple when He spoke of living water in John 7. He said to come to Him.



John 7:37–38

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, **“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**” (ESV)

That is the solution David is talking about, that is the solution Solomon is pointing to, it is the only way we can ever get a handle on the missing piece from our hearts, that part Solomon referred to as eternity. When filled with Jesus Christ, the searching comes to an end. We have what we need. Shades of verse 1.

What are people substituting reality with?

2 Timothy 4:3–4

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” (ESV)

I am reminded of the dog Doug in the film, Up. He has been given a device to let him speak the way we do, but he is still a dog. Hint, it is a cartoon. Doug is busy talking about what needs to happen when suddenly, he sees a SQUIRREL! And now he is distracted.

Satan does that too. He distracts with shiny things, squirrels.

What Paul told Timothy is that here in the last days, the distractions from true living water will be the distractions of having your ego stroked ala prosperity gospel. For example, Joel Osteen says to repeat the following, these are the first three of 39 positive affirmations he makes in his book, “The Power of I am,” which I am not recommending anyone read.

“I am blessed. I am prosperous. I am successful.” I am a wretch. Oops, Paul added in that last one there.

Romans 7:24–8:1

“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (ESV)

The way to combat itchy ear syndrome is the Word of God. The Lord is our Shepherd and He does not feed us junk food, nor will He let us suck up sewer water either.

He has us literally at the waters of rest. He leads us there.

The word translated lead is יָנַחַל (ynahal). This word can mean to take or guide somewhere...to sustain, to supply with necessities and support. (Lexham Press 2017)

He takes us and sustains us with “waters of rest!” Beautiful and expressive is this term. It admirably depicts the peaceful, blessed, heavenly, state of the believer, whose spirit is refreshed by the Divine Spirit—he is as a sheep which is led beside waters of rest! The good Shepherd can alone conduct his flock beside these “still” and “quiet” and “rest”-giving waters. He himself “leads” them, that they may know where to find that pure supply, which is so necessary to satisfy their spiritual desires. He leads them “beside” the still waters, that they may never thirst for any lengthened period, but be ever near to enjoy a timely and continual refreshment. And never does he bring them into circumstances where it is impossible for them to obtain the enlivening and satisfying influences of the Holy Spirit of promise!” (Stevenson 1846, 78-79)



He does not lead us to anything but the true source of life. The living water of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16–18

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (ESV)

He doesn't just bring us to the water of the Spirit. He ensures that we have Him forever.

And, as Jesus related earlier in John 7, that we would have this living water literally gushing forth from us as a torrent.

He has brought us to a place of rest, to a pasture with waters of rest.

If you find that you are still searching, still looking, then perhaps it is because you didn't come into the sheep fold via the gate. Jesus tells us that He is that door (John 10:7-11). If you instead were listening to someone encouraging you in a rah rah talk to make positive affirmations, stop for a moment and consider, who is your Shepherd. Are you in His pasture and enjoying living water?

Here in verse 2, we see that yes, He meets our physical needs, but we see the Spiritual component there as well. As we come to verse 3, it is all about our spiritual needs.

Psalms 23:3

“He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name.” (NASB 2020)

How does He do that? If you have been following along with us, we have recognized He is our Shepherd and He meets our needs to include rest, nourishment as well as adequate water from the right source.

The impact of our Shepherd doing all of this for us is simple, He restores my soul, why, because I stray sometimes.

The picture of restoration is one of Jesus leaving the 99 to look for the one who wandered off. It is also the picture of sheep who have been traveling through the day and are now arriving at their destination for the evening. For a time of restoration and rest. All of us need this.

Literally here in the beginning of verse 3, the Hebrew tells us “He causes my soul to return.” “The meaning is to restore vitality, vigor, strength; to renew, invigorate. This statement seems to express the result of Yahweh's care, as described in verse 2.” (Bratcher and Rebyburn 1991, 232)

Restore (shub) is one of the most frequently used words in the Old Testament. It means to return or to turn back. In a number of instances it conveys the idea of it bringing back or carrying back. Many times it refers to repenting and returning to the LORD. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2013, 185)

Is this renewal, yes, but it is much more. It is a return. It is the one being brought back to the 99. Jesus talked about this in Luke 15.

Luke 15:4–7

“Which one of you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, would not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go look for the one that is lost until he finds it? Then when he has found it, he places it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Returning home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, telling them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.’ **I tell you, in the same way there**



will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.” (NET 2nd ed.)

When we stray, and we know that David did, all of us do, as we go wandering off, just like a sheep, He goes looking for us. He does this solely because we belong to Him. Think about that.

The God of the universe in the person of Jesus Christ cares about each of us so much that when we stray, He personally goes looking for us. It is the Holy Spirit who draws us back, He does live inside of us after all and has been doing His work at the same time to draw us back. Meanwhile we were chasing after that shiny thing that distracted us.

We wound up off balance as a result and are now lying there on our backs with our legs in the air wondering if anyone cares. Now we are in serious danger, we are a cast sheep and only the Shepherd can save us.

Jesus always knew where we wandered off to, now that we are no longer running, He comes and puts us back on our feet. As He does so we recognize what it is we did, and we repent exercising 1 John 1:9. Meanwhile our shepherd ensures we have our feet underneath us again and off we go rejoining the flock.

One of the problems I am seeing these days with some followers of Jesus, is that after chasing after something shiny, they do realize it. The gas lighting no longer works, the stories and personal charm of the one who has been lying to them no longer works, and they leave a very incoherent poorly led flock. Basically, they are realizing they are now part of a flock hanging out near Laodicea with an under shepherd who has checked out.

But the problem is this, because of how they have been lied to, they no longer trust any under Shepherd and separate themselves even further from the flock.

We have some marvelous tools today to communicate the gospel, but it is tough to be a herd animal only online. Groups of sheep on computers may make it easy to communicate and learn, but it also makes it easier to be led even further astray as well and then there is the issue of sheep without a pasture, without a flock, without an under shepherd who cares for them. We live in a time of deception, and this makes you a serious target.

The writer of Hebrews warned about this and did so in the context of the time we live in.

Hebrews 10:23–25

“Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. **Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing.** Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.” (GNB)

How close are we to the Day of the Lord? I am expecting a trumpet call at any second. Everything that the beast would need in terms of tech, exists right now. It is on top of us, and so is the deception.

The desire of our Shepherd is to guide us “in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His name.” We forget how much He loves us. But we are sheep.

“Sheep are notorious creatures of habit. If left to themselves, they will follow the same trails until they become ruts, graze the same hills until they turn to desert wastes, pollute their own ground until it is corrupt with disease and parasites.” (Keller 2019)



So are we. When want to be comfortable and even if that means going back to the pig pen, at least it is a familiar pig pen. How does the Holy Spirit deal with us? He leads us.

Galatians 5:16–18

“So I say, **let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires.** These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.” (NLT)

As sheep, we must be kept on the move by the Holy Spirit. That is also how shepherds wisely take care of their flocks. You cannot leave them in one place too long or they will literally eat the grass and the roots and nothing will grow there again.

In a word—there must be a predetermined plan of action, a deliberate, planned rotation from one grazing ground to another in line with right and proper principles of sound management. This is precisely the sort of action David had in mind when he spoke of being led in paths of righteousness. (Keller 2019)

Each of us, as we come to Christ and the Holy Spirit comes inside, activates an action plan of the King.

That action plan is designed to make us more like Jesus and less like who we were prior to coming to Christ. This action plan is called sanctification and yes, it is indeed one that is participatory.

We are sheep, prone to wander away, prone to get distracted. We require His guidance to remain on the path we began on.

Isaiah 53:6

“**All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own.** Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.” (NLT)

Left to ourselves, we would not follow, and we would definitely not allow ourselves to be led in paths of righteousness. We know better.

Proverbs 14:12

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (ESV)

Meanwhile Jesus, who is the door (John 10:9), who is the only way (John 14:6) tells us how to follow. It is costly, many followers of Jesus still struggle with it, but it has not changed in over 2000 years.

Mark 8:34–35

“And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, **“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.”** (ESV)

As we wrap up, here is the question for us as we deal with the aspect of His leading us. Do we want Him to do so? Are we busy following Him and allowing Him to change us as we recognize He is the Good Shepherd and all He does is for the sheep. Or have we fooled ourselves and decided to do our own thing.

He did warn us.



Matthew 7:21–23

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (ESV)

He wants to guide us through the Holy Spirit; He loves us and wants the best for us. Just rest in the Shepherd.

Psalms 23:title–3

“A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; **He guides me in the paths of righteousness For the sake of His name.**” (NASB 2020)

Let's pray.

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