

Your Good Shepherd 2024-06-30

Psalm 23:1

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.*

The Father and child, and the **Shepherd** and sheep are the most **tender** and caring **relationships repeated** in the **Word**.

- “Sheep” is the **favorite term** of **Jesus** when He **refers** to **Christians**, because **we** are **like sheep**.
 - **We are weak**, defenseless, **foolish**, fearful, **stubborn**, wandering, and **dependent**.
 - **No other** livestock **requires more diligent care**, day and night.
- Your Good Shepherd is **relentlessly vigilant**, constantly **attentive**, and patiently **loving** you.

To be in the **flock** of the **loving Good Shepherd**, and truly **know** the **sweetness** of His **care** in **Psalm 23** you must **first pass through** the **gate** of **Psalm 22: the Psalm of the Cross**. John 10:9 &11, Psalm 22:16-18, 23:3, 6

- **Through the cross**, the Good Shepherd **provides** for **all His sheep’s spiritual and physical needs**.
 - **Goodness** meets **needs**, **Mercy** and **Restoration** are forgiveness, sanctification, and strength.

The Good Shepherd **knows each** sheep **intimately**: in Psalm 23, He uses **personal pronouns**. John 10:14-15, Psalm 23:1

- **He knows each** sheep’s **name** and they recognize His voice.
- **He takes personal care**: **Each night** the Shepherd **examines each** sheep for **injuries** or **problems**.
 - **Special care** and attention are given to the **hurting**, sick, and **weak**.
 - The Good Shepherd **knows your** hurts, **fears**, pain, **trials**, failures, and **sin**.

Intimacy with the Good Shepherd **produces confidence** that **He** will **care** for **you**.

- “**not want**”: refers to the **experience** of times of **needing** and **wanting**, but you **won’t** be **lacking anything** (*future* tense) that the **Good Shepherd thinks** is **good** for us **spiritually** and **physically**.
 - The Good Shepherd **supplies ALL** the **needs** of **His sheep**. 2 Peter 1:3, Philippians 4:19, Psalm 23:2, 119:105
 - **The Good Shepherd** will **guide you** to **provision** (green pasture) and **peace** (still water) **by leading you to Himself** through the **Word** and **Holy Spirit**.
 - **He is more than enough** for you **now** and through **all eternity!**

The Good Shepherd’s **guidance** is **necessary** because he **knows** the **territory** or **world** and the **needs** of the **specific flock**.

- **Some sheep refuse to be led**, always wanting to go on their **own way** and **where they please**.
 - **Continually wandering** sheep are **not safe**, and **lead others** into **danger** (cliff).
 - **But the Good Shepherd is patient and forgives** because He **knows sheep** do sheep-things.
- If the sheep are **led** by the shepherd (**not wander** on own) into a **dangerous** place, the sheep **don't fear** because **know they are protected by the Good Shepherd**. Psalm 23:3-4, see Spurgeon quote at the end.
 - **There is not "no evil"** or no **difficult** times, but we are **comfortable** and **secure** because we are confident the **Shepherd is there** and will **lead us through** hard things...even **death**.
 - **He never leads** us into **sin**, but **sometimes** getting to the **good pasture is through dangerous, dark places... Strong faith comes through trials**.

Psalm 23 portrays the **Christian life** as a **pilgrimage with the Good Shepherd** into **eternity with our Good Shepherd**. Psalm 23:4, 6, John 10:27-28

- **Our Good Shepherd constantly provides, protects, guides, and cares for His sheep**. His sheep are **never unattended**.
 - "You are **with me**" is the **joy**, comfort, and absolute **security of being a Christian!**
- Jesus **knows** you **completely**, **loves** you **perfectly** and **wants fellowship** with you.
 - He **desires** for **you** to **experience** abundant **life in and through Him**. John 10:10, 15:5
 - **Abundant life** begins and ends with Jesus Christ...we are **content** because we are **convinced we will never lack anything** the Good Shepherd knows is **good for you.... We get all this and Jesus too!**
- **Trust Jesus Christ** in **green** pastures of **prosperity** or **dark** valleys of **trials**.
 - He is **relentlessly vigilant**, constantly **attentive**, patiently **loving** you and **always** has **your best interests at heart.... trust your Good Shepherd!**

It's not "the valley of death," but "the valley of the shadow of death," for death in its substance has been removed, and only the shadow of it remains. When there is a shadow there must be light somewhere. Let us then rejoice that there is a light beyond. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot stop a man's pathway even for a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy us. Let us not, therefore, be afraid.

Charles Spurgeon