

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want [I won't worry about anything]. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

1. Introduction

- a. We can quote Psalm 23, but we need to claim it. It is our relationship to God
- b. Simple but sophisticated Psalm

2. Proper¹ Perspective of the Psalm (where does it fit in God's plan?)

- a. Immediately after Psalm 22, which points to Jesus

- i. Messianic psalm – prophecy of coming Messiah – Jesus
- ii. Peace only comes with pardon from sin

- b. Shepherd's separation

- i. Sin separates us from God
- ii. Sin separated Jesus from His Father (Matt 27:46, Mark 15:34)

Psalm 22:1 ... *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring [the cries made during great physical suffering]?*

- c. Shepherd's sacrifice (the predictions of Psalm 22)

- i. Crowds mocked Jesus (Matt 27:41-43, Mark 15:29-30, Luke 23:36-37)

Psalm 22:7-8 *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip [abusive speech], they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

- ii. Jesus' bones pulled out of joint and He had extreme thirst (Matt 27:48, Mark 15:36, John 19:29)

¹ 'Proper' here refers to the attitude of the Psalmist toward God: reverent, humble, trusting, thankful.

Psalm 22:14-15 *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

- iii. Nail pierced hands and feet (Matt 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:33, John 19:17-18)

Psalm 22:16 *For dogs have compassed [surround] me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

- iv. The cross of Jesus is the proper perspective of the Good Shepherd

John 10:11 *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

3. Personal Pronouns of the Psalm

- a. Personal relationship (read Psalm 23 and count the words 'me', 'my', and 'I')

- i. Christianity is a personal relationship with God, not a religion or rituals you practice
- ii. Read Psalm 23 and count the words 'me', 'my', and 'I'; notice the personal relationship
- iii. "He" & "You" is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep

- b. Pleasing relationship

Psalm 16:11 *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

- i. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep and they know Him
John 10:14 *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*
- ii. There is "no want" (no lack)
- iii. There are "still waters²" (peaceful)
- iv. There is "laying down in green pastures" (restful)

- c. Perpetual relationship

- i. Very secure relationship
- ii. It lasts forever because I am with Him forever

John 10:28-29 *And I [Jesus] give unto them [His sheep, believers] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

² Sheep covered in wool are afraid of moving waters because if their wool gets wet it can sweep them away and drown them. Sheep will only drink from still water.

4. Promised Provisions of the Psalm

a. Resources (“My Shepherd”)

- i. The Good Shepherd identified as “the LORD”
- ii. The Good Shepherd protects, feeds, guides, & provides for His sheep
- iii. Pastoral care of the Good Shepherd in food & clothing

Matthew 6:26, 28, 30 *Behold the fowls [birds] of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye [believers] not much better than they? ... And why take ye thought for raiment [clothing]? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ... Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

- iv. Pastoral care is for all my needs: spiritual, physical, & emotional

b. Rest (“green pastures”)

- i. Laying down in green pastures is picture of rest

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him [Jesus]; for he careth for you.*

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto me [Jesus], all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- ii. Be anxious for nothing, giving your worries to God

Philippians 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

c. Refreshment (“still waters”)

- i. The Good Shepherd leads His sheep to safe places
- ii. Sheep need still water to take a drink when thirsty

d. Restoration (“restores my soul”)

- i. The Good Shepherd revives & strengthen my soul
- ii. The Good Shepherd offers forgiveness & salvation

e. Resolution (“paths of righteousness for His name’s sake”)

- i. The Good Shepherd leads His sheep on a journey
- ii. He takes His sheep into the paths of righteousness
- iii. “For His name’s sake,” we represent God to the world as His children

f. Resilience (“Thou art with me”)

- i. Calm walk no matter the circumstances in life
- ii. Even when walking into the valley of shadow of death

- iii. Death cannot harm me
 - iv. I will not be afraid of evil
- g. Readiness (“Thy rod & Thy staff”)
- Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*
- i. Comforting to know the Good Shepherd’s care
 - ii. God’s rod (as a King, see Psalm 2:6-12)
 - Used to separate sheep from each other
 - Used to defend sheep
 - Reaches into, under, & among rocks for dangers
 - iii. God’s staff (as a Shepherd)
 - Long pole with curved end
 - Used to count sheep “passing under the rod at sheepfold”
 - Used for separating wool to check skin condition
 - Pulls sheep out of brush & brambles
- h. Resolve (“table in presence of mine enemies”)
- i. Even when chaos & conflict, time to stop for a moment
 - ii. God knows the outcome before you know any problem

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*
- i. Renewal (“anoint my head with oil”)
- i. God gave us the Holy Spirit
 - The Comforter
 - Counselor to guide us
 - He renews us & sanctifies us
 - ii. Oil symbol of Holy Spirit
- j. Reserves (“my cup runneth over”)
- i. God’s providence is overflowing

God’s warning to those who look to the world (government) to provide: Haggai 1:5-6 *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.** Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

- ii. When God gives, His hand is never empty of His resources
- iii. God gives much more than what we need
- k. Reinforcement (“goodness and mercy”)
 - i. God’s twin blessings of goodness & mercy
 Lamentations 3:22-23 *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*
 - ii. They follow “...all the days of my life.”
 Psalm 107:9 *For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*
- l. Reward (“...dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”)
 - i. Living in God’s house after I die
 John 14:2 *In my [Jesus'] Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you.***
 - ii. Forever (for length of days)
 Psalm 37:18 *The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever.*
 - iii. I now live in a house He’s provided for me, but I’m moving “upstairs” when I die
 Philippians 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*