



Psalm 23 “The Lord Is My Shepherd”

Intro:

In my opinion, verse 1 serves as the thesis statement of this passage. It is the central truth that drives everything that follows. If the Lord is our Shepherd, then we lack nothing. We have all we need, and we will always have all we need. The way we will study this passage is by observing how this psalm seems to outline the life of a believer—being led by His Good Shepherd through every stage of life, until He brings him to his final destination: dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

V.1

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

1. **My Shepherd Calls Me**

David does not say, the Lord is *everyone's* Shepherd. He says the Lord is MY Shepherd. The Lord is not everyone's Shepherd, He is the Shepherd of those who have repented of their sins and recognized that they are spiritually dead and only Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to pay for their sins. So the first thing that happens, or that we experience as believers, **is that we are called by God**, called by the Good Shepherd to be part of His Sheepfold. He makes us His sheep and He becomes our Shepherd. We are granted the gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8) to repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as the only covering for our sins once and for all. And this is when we can confidently begin to say that the Lord is our Shepherd.

- “Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, *but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep*. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*” John 10:25-28 ESV

Now, the fact that God calls Himself our Shepherd and us sheep shows us something about our relationship with God. See sheep are fearful, needy, foolish creatures. They cannot survive on their own. **So a Shepherd would live with His flock and was EVERYTHING to His sheep.** *Their guide, provider, protector, physician ect.* In the same way God is the supplier of all of our needs be they emotional, spiritual, or physical. He is the only one that can truly meet and satisfy all our needs. The question is do we believe that? Do we truly believe that if God hasn't provided it we don't need it and rest in that? Or do we frantically try to provide for ourselves? At the same time, the fact that God calls Himself our Shepherd tells us something about His character. A shepherd was not a position of status. It was often given to the youngest or least significant in the family. Yet God chooses to describe Himself this way. This reveals His humility, His love, and His personal care.

- “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. **I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**” John 10:10-11 ESV

V.2-3

“**He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**”

2. **My Shepherd Restores and Leads Me**

Next we see that through the rest and nourishment of the green pastures and still waters, David proclaims, “He restores my soul.” In light of the cross, this restoration points us to the work of God in bringing us from spiritual death to life. The green pastures can be understood as the Gospel (or the Word as a whole), which feed and sustain us (John 6:35; 1 Peter 1:23), and the still waters as the life-giving work of the Spirit (John 4:10-14). Through the Gospel and the work of the Spirit, our souls are restored. We are no longer spiritually dead, but alive in Christ, and we now have true and lasting peace with God. “And it is when souls are restored that our Shepherd now leads us in paths of righteousness. He shapes our lives through the process of sanctification. Our beliefs, desires, and actions begin to be renewed and transformed as we walk daily with Him through His Word, prayer, and fellowship with His people. It is important to remember that only our Shepherd can lead us in true righteousness. Without His Spirit within us and His Word guiding us, it is impossible to walk in a way that pleases God. And we must not miss the purpose: “for His name's sake.” He leads us in righteousness not so that we can glorify ourselves or look down on

others, but so that others would see our good works and give glory to our Shepherd (Matthew 5:16), who is the one leading us and producing that work in us (Ephesians 2:10).

V.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.”

3. My Shepherd With Me Through The Valley

Sheep are constantly being led from one place of provision to another, and many times that journey takes them through valleys. These valleys can be dark, narrow, and dangerous, often places where predators hide and attack when the sheep are most vulnerable. In a general sense, this “valley of the shadow of death” represents the trials, temptations, and sufferings we face in this life. But it can also point more directly to death itself, which is a reality we all live under. Yet David calls it a shadow. A shadow is not the substance. It is cast by something real, but it has no power in itself. For the believer, death is only a shadow because Christ has already faced its full reality on our behalf. He bore sin and conquered death at the cross. So even though we walk under its shadow and at times must walk through it, we do not remain in it, and we do not fear it. Why? *“For You are with me.”* The presence of the Shepherd removes fear. His rod and His staff represent both protection and correction. He guards us from danger and corrects us when we begin to wander. In every valley—whether trials, temptations, or even death itself—we take comfort knowing that we are not alone. Our Shepherd is with us, leading us through.

V.5-6

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

4. My Shepherd Cares for Me Abundantly Even in the Presence of My Enemies

Not only do we live under the shadow of death, but we also live in the presence of enemies—the world (1 John 2:15–16), the flesh (Galatians 5:16–17), and the devil (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 2:1–3). Yet notice that David does not say God removes these enemies. Instead, he says, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” God provides for us in the middle of opposition. This is not a quick meal, but a feast. This paints a picture of a believer who, even in the middle of opposition, is able to experience the abundant peace, joy, and the goodness of God. We are not called to fix our eyes on our enemies, but to sit at the table and enjoy the provision of our Shepherd. He has given us everything we need—salvation, His Word, ability to prayer, fellowship, and the daily provisions of life. And David goes even further: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” We do not need to chase God’s goodness and mercy—they follow us as we follow the Good Shepherd.

5. My Shepherd Will Lead Me Home

As we walk through this life following our Shepherd and experience sitting at His table and enjoying His presence and goodness in the midst of the shadow of death and our enemies, the question becomes how long can I stay at your table? And the answer is forever. How beautiful it is that in this world we get to enjoy sitting at His table but that is just a taste of what the house of the Lord is. Where we will dwell with Him forever free from the shadow of death and free from the influence of a sinful world free from the attacks of the devil and free from the desires of our sinful flesh (Revelation 19:7-9)!

Conclusion and Main Idea:

- **“For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, Psalm 95:7-8a ESV**

Our Shepherd does not offer us a life free from the shadow of death or from conflict with enemies, but He does promise that through it all He will be with us, care for us, and lead us home, where we will dwell with Him forever.

