

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

PSALM 23:1-6

LESSON: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD —April 2, 2017

INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 23 shows the Lord as the Great Shepherd, who cares for His sheep and equips them for ministry. David is the writer of this psalm. From a very young age, David was the shepherd of his father's sheep. He was the youngest of Jesse's sons. He had a heart for the sheep because he would keep, feed, take care, and protect. It also gave him a chance to know and trust God. Just as he took care of the sheep, the Lord took care of him in the same way. God noted that David was a man after His own heart. In the New Testament the Lord is known as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), and the Believers are His sheep.

The 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my Shepherd —	Jehovah-Raah, the Lord is my Shepherd Ps.23:1	Relationship
I shall not want—	Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide Gen.22:14	Supply
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures —		Rest
He leadeth me beside the still waters —	Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord our Peace Judg.6:24	Refreshment
He restoreth my soul —	Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord who heals Exo.15:26	Healing
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness —	Jehovah-Tisdkenu, the Lord our Righteousness Jer.33:16	Guidance
For his name's sake —		Purpose
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death		Testing
I will fear no evil: —		Protection
For thou art with me; —	Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there Ezek.48:35	Faithfulness
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me —		Discipline
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies	Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord our Banner Exo.17:15	Hope
Thou anointest my head with oil; —	Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, the Lord who sanctifies Lev.20:8	Consecration
My cup runneth over —		Abundance
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:		Blessing
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord —		Security
For ever —		Eternity

I. THE SHEPHERD SATISFIES – Psalm 23:1-2

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd;—A lot of times we want to place our Savior in a box instead of allowing Him to also be our Shepherd. The Lord Jesus Christ is frequently found in scripture to reveal Himself or His relation to the people as a Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11; 49:9-10; Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:6-19). And it is evident that this verse speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've establish that He is Shepherd, but is He your shepherd? The unconverted are pictured as goats. So, the converted (believers) are sheep. David says that the Lord is my shepherd because he is in covenant relationship with God. God knows him and he knows God as a gentle shepherd. He knows what a shepherd does by constantly talking to God; communing with

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God, trusting God when God gave him the courage and instructions on how to fight, and be victorious over the lion and the bear. As he stayed in the field and took care of the sheep it prepared him and gave him all kinds of insight as he listened to the Great Shepherd!

23:1b ...I shall not want. David has to know that the Lord would be his source as shepherd, and that the Lord would supply his want. He does not want because he has everything he need from the shepherd who meets those needs. In **Psalms 13**, David is saying *"How long, O LORD? Will You forget me for ever? How long will You hide Your face from me?..."* But before he ends the psalm he says *"But I trust in Your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me."* It's like he remembered the goodness of the Lord in spite of the circumstances going on. Even in Psalm 18, he gives thanksgiving unto the Lord for delivering him out of the hand of all his enemies. So, therefore, the role of how the Shepherd's been to him is given with great trust by saying *"I shall not want!"* Isn't that's how we feel when we admonish and praise and give thanksgiving unto the Lord? No one can take the Shepherd's place. He satisfies!

23:2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. We find peace and refreshment when we rest. There were times when David and his men would be tired and weary after a great battle. The Lord God causes us to rest; lie down in green pastures (tranquility) as He leads us beside still waters (refreshment). It would be that place that has an even flow; and calmness. So, when things get too hectic; when the body needs replenishing; when the soul needs a rest, the Lord knows just what it takes to bring us to a peaceful place for rest tranquility, and calmness. We can't minister when we're tired and weary. Psalm 91:16 says *"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."*

II. THE SHEPHERD COMFORTS – Psalm 23:3-4

23:3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. *"Restore"* also mean to replenish; return to the original state or cause life to return. This means physical as well as spiritual restoration. When the body becomes weak, He heals it. And sometimes it only takes *"rest."* When the soul becomes sorrowful, He revives it. When our spirit becomes weak, He reinvigorates it. Leading us in the paths of righteousness means He brings us back to the right path if we've strayed off.

23:4 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. Considering the verse before this one, the shepherd leads the sheep in path of righteousness, but there will come a time that their path may be walking through a valley. And this valley may be the shadow of death. We as sheep can be in imminent danger. But, this portrays a shadow, a glimpse, a hint of giving up to death (sickness, joblessness, homelessness—whatever depletes you) when you're in a valley (a low period in life). The observation is that we're going to go through a

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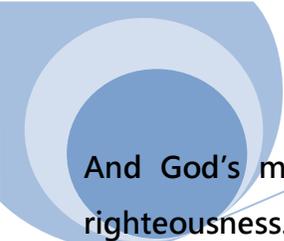
circumstance. The circumstance comes not to stay, but we pass through it. In death we have to go through it to get to life. Death sometimes brings fear, but we are not to fear any evil or shadow of death. Why? - God's rod and staff comforts us. The shepherd would carry his rod and staff to protect and care for the sheep. It seems that they might be one and the same instrument, but used for different purposes. The shepherd uses the rod to defend the sheep when there were wolves (ravenous animals), enemies approaching that would try to harm the sheep. Then the shepherd uses the staff to direct the sheep and gently bring them back into the herd when they wandered off or tried to stray away. There is no need to fear when Jesus our Shepherd knows how to comfort us. He's protected and defended us from enemies that we were unaware of, and at the same time He's brought us back into the fold of the grace of His love.

III. THE SHEPHERD PROTECTS – Psalm 23:5-6

23:5 **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.** When we have come through the valley of the shadow of death, David declares that God prepared a table before him, even in the presence of his enemies. It sounds like victory to me; overcoming victory. The rest and restoration came before the valley. The valley came before the table. This reminded me of the song "At The Table." The first line of the songs says: *Come on in where the table is spread and the feast of the Lord is going on.* So, what will the enemies be doing? They can't do anything. The devil thought he had Jesus when Jesus died on the cross. The devil thought he had Jesus when Jesus was buried in the grave, but he underestimated who Jesus was, for *"God raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places"*, thereby giving Jesus all power (Eph.1:20-22). Our enemies can't rejoice because they can't foresee what the Shepherd will do for us! What can we feast on at His table? His grace, His love, His peace, His joy for He has already given us all these things. Our victory comes from feasting upon the victory already won in our lives. The victory has already been paid for. Now, His anointing placed upon our lives is able to break every yoke. When David was anointed with oil by Samuel, the oil ran from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. David was protected in spite of his enemies. If God was willing to do all this for David, how much more shall He do for those who are filled with His Holy Spirit? Daily the infilling of the Holy Spirit can cause your cup to overflow. Circumstances can't contain you in a box unless you allow them to. Your cup that's being filled with the Holy Spirit's power runneth over everytime you feast on His promises; everytime you speak them over your circumstance, everytime you invade the enemy's territory! The table is spread!

23:6 **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.** We come to the end of this psalm with a confirmation: The Lord is good and He is merciful! With this belief, surely God's goodness and mercy will not only follow us, but His goodness and mercy will pursue us all the days of our lives. God's goodness is following the sheep providing green pastures and still waters.

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And God's mercy is following the sheep retrieving them when they foolishly leave the path of righteousness. As long as the Lord is our Shepherd we can expect this all the days of our lives. Believers will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. That's great assurance.

SUMMARY:

David is the writer of this psalm. The Lord is the Great Shepherd who cares for and protects His sheep. David says that the Lord is his shepherd because he is in covenant relationship with God. God knows him and he knows God as the gentle Shepherd which causes him not to want, because the Lord has everything he needs. The Shepherd supplies his needs (23:1). From time to time the sheep need rest. The shepherd provides green pastures and still waters to refresh the sheep physically. And spiritually the soul is in need of restoration. When the body becomes weak, He heals it. When the soul becomes sorrowful, He revives it. When our spirit becomes weak, He reinvigorates it. The sheep are led in paths of righteousness for Jesus' name sake (23:2-3). When the sheep are in the valley, the assurance is that they will walk through it. Though walking through the valley of death, there is no time to fear because the Shepherd will be with the sheep. It's a time of testing. His rod and staff is always able to comfort them (23:4). David knew that enemies come and go, but the Shepherd gives him hope by letting him know that He is able to prepare a table before him, even in the presence of those enemies. His head He anoints with oil, causing a running over of blessings; blessings of goodness and mercy following him all the days of his life (23:5). This makes David want to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Is this to say that wherever the Lord is, that's where I want to be? He's aware of God's presence in the Temple when he goes to worship, so his desire is to be in the Lord's dwelling place forever! (23:6).