

## OUR GREAT SHEPHERD (A Study on Psalm 23)

**Purpose:** to sense the need and value of having the Lord Jesus Christ as your Great Shepherd, not only for your eternal salvation, but also for all of your needs in time and eternity.

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The Biblical use of the shepherd metaphor is used in both the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Testaments.
2. Many times God uses the sheep metaphor with His chosen earthly nation --- the \_\_\_\_\_ . (Ps. 78:52; Ps. 100:3)
3. In the OT Scriptures various \_\_\_\_\_ were called by the title, “shepherds”. (Ps. 78:70)
4. In the New Testament, local church \_\_\_\_\_ are also referred to as ‘shepherds’ of God’s redeemed sheep. (1 Peter 5:1-4)
5. God the Father is referred to as a \_\_\_\_\_ in Ps. 80:1 & Isa.40:10-11.
6. The New Testament presents the Lord Jesus Christ as exercising a 3-fold Shepherd ministry:
  - a. As the \_\_\_\_\_ who was willing to \_\_\_\_\_ for His sheep. (John 10:11; Ps.22)
  - b. As the \_\_\_\_\_ who is willing to now \_\_\_\_\_ for His sheep. (Hebrews 13:20; Ps.23)
  - c. As the \_\_\_\_\_ who will one day \_\_\_\_\_ for His sheep. (1 Peter 5:4; Ps.24)
7. No one begins life with the Lord as their Shepherd (Romans 3:23, 6:23). This is why we need to be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Isaiah 53:6:**

“\_\_\_\_\_ we like \_\_\_\_\_ have gone \_\_\_\_\_, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has \_\_\_\_\_ the iniquity of us \_\_\_\_\_.”

**John 10:9:** Jesus says, “I am the \_\_\_\_\_, If anyone enters \_\_\_\_\_, he will be \_\_\_\_\_, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

**John 14:6:**

“I am the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_; no one comes to the Father, but \_\_\_\_\_.”

**John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever \_\_\_\_\_, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

### I. THE SHEPHERD OF THE PSALM (Psalm 23:1)

A. The PERSON of the Psalm. (23:1a)

1. The *human author* of this psalm is \_\_\_\_\_, who himself was a shepherd.
2. The *divine subject* of this psalm is the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. This Hebrew word translated, LORD, is \_\_\_\_\_, and is repeated more than 4,000 times in the O.T.
  - b. His self-description of, “I am who I am”, chiefly refers to God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and to God’s \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. God’s mark of His ownership of us as believers is the \_\_\_\_\_ who seals us forever. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

B. The PRINCIPLE of the Psalm. (23:1b)

1. Since “the LORD is my Shepherd, \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. The word “want” means to \_\_\_\_\_.

II. THE SPECIFICS OF THE PSALM (23:2-6)

Since the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not lack ...

A. \_\_\_\_\_. “*He makes me to lie down in green pastures*”. (23:2a)

1. Our Great Shepherd offers to us the \_\_\_\_\_ in every trial, every circumstance, every decision, and every heart ache that we experience. (Phil.4:6-7)
2. Along the way, there will be things for us to do as believers by way of activity and service to others, but we must begin each day by \_\_\_\_\_ who has done everything for us. He alone can carry our burdens; He alone must fight our battles; He alone must direct our paths. Thus, our eyes must be first of all on the Lord, and not on self and circumstances. (Matthew 11:28-30)
3. The preventers of rest are such things as:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_, such as ...
    - 1) \_\_\_\_\_. (James 1:5; 2 Chron.20:12)
    - 2) \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil.4:19)
    - 3) \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh.1:9; John 14:27)
    - 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt.6:34; 2 Tim.1:7; Ps.4:8)

b. \_\_\_\_\_ . (John 16:33; John 10:11; Jer.29:11; Phil.4:10-13)

- 1) The root cause of discontentment is \_\_\_\_\_ with an \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) There are two options in life: If the Lord is my shepherd, then I shall \_\_\_\_\_; but if I am in want, then it is obvious that the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_ practically my shepherd or I am \_\_\_\_\_ relying on Him to provide. Who or what is shepherding us?

c. \_\_\_\_\_ in the flock.

- 1) Friction may be caused by \_\_\_\_\_, instead of keeping our eyes on the Great Shepherd. (James 3:14-18)
- 2) Friction may be caused by \_\_\_\_\_ due to pride. (2 Cor.10:12; James 4:6)

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B. \_\_\_\_\_. "He leads me beside the still waters". (23:2b)

1. Christ, our Good Shepherd, made it clear that thirsty souls of men and women can only be \_\_\_\_\_ when their thirst for spiritual life is fully quenched by drawing upon Himself by faith. (Matt.5:6; John 4:13-14)
2. Instead of coming to the Lord and His word to satisfy their thirst, Christians can pursue other sorts of \_\_\_\_\_. (Ecc.1:2)
3. When hungry and weary we find refreshment by coming to the \_\_\_\_\_. We draw upon Him and our inner man is satisfied. (Jer.15:16)
4. Our minds need to be renewed daily, because naturally we think and feel from \_\_\_\_\_ viewpoint. God wants to replace this with His \_\_\_\_\_ viewpoint. (Rom.12:2)

- What are some practical ways to renew your mind with God's Word?

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C. \_\_\_\_\_. "He restores my soul." (23:2c)

1. Believers can be in need of \_\_\_\_\_, just like \_\_\_\_\_ sheep. (Ps.42:11)
2. To restore is to "cause to turn back" or to \_\_\_\_\_ ... to fellowship with Christ.
3. This restoration involves \_\_\_\_\_ when needed. (1 John 1:9)

4. While believers can never lose their eternal salvation as God has given us \_\_\_\_\_ life, yet they can lose the \_\_\_\_\_ of their salvation when they break fellowship with the Lord. (Ps.51:12)
5. Sheep can become cast when...
  - a) They have too much \_\_\_\_\_; similar to when believers get weighed down with the self-will and need God's \_\_\_\_\_ in their lives. (Heb.12:10-11)
  - b) They get too \_\_\_\_\_; similar to when believers get weighed down with the \_\_\_\_\_ of this world, and the Word gets choked out in their lives. (Mark 4: 18-19)

Since the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not lack ...

D. \_\_\_\_\_ . (23:3a) ... *“He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.”*

1. God wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you through the maze of life’s decisions and challenges.
2. Where does my Shepherd lead me? “In paths of \_\_\_\_\_”
3. We need this divine guidance because, “There is a way which seems \_\_\_\_\_ unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of \_\_\_\_\_.” (Prov.14:12)
4. In contrast, the Good Shepherd says, “I am come that they might have \_\_\_\_\_, and that they might have it \_\_\_\_\_.” (John 10:10)
5. We have a great need to be led and the Lord is very willing to lead us \_\_\_\_\_ we are willing to be led. (Ps.16:11)
6. As you meditate on the \_\_\_\_\_, His Spirit uses its truth to guide you along the path of His will. Instead of pride and self-will, we must start with meekness or \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps.25:9)
7. A wonderful promise of divine guidance is Proverbs 3:5-6: “\_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your \_\_\_\_\_ understanding; In all your ways \_\_\_\_\_ Him, and He will \_\_\_\_\_ your paths.”
8. As God leads us in the paths of righteousness, He never leads us to \_\_\_\_\_ His biblical truths. (Prov. 2:6-13)
9. Why does He lead us in the “paths of righteousness”? It is “for His \_\_\_\_\_ sake” as His \_\_\_\_\_ is at stake. (Ps.31:3)

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E. \_\_\_\_\_ . *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the*

*shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” (Ps.23:4a)*

1. The provision for danger is the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It’s important to note that the “valley of the shadow of death” is as much God’s \_\_\_\_\_ for us as the “green pastures” which lie beside “quiet waters”. Yet the valleys can result in fear if we \_\_\_\_\_ of our Great Shepherd.
3. Ps. 62:7-8 - “In God is \_\_\_\_\_ salvation and \_\_\_\_\_ glory; the rock of \_\_\_\_\_ strength, and \_\_\_\_\_ refuge is in God. Trust in Him at \_\_\_\_\_ times, you people; \_\_\_\_\_ your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”
4. The Lord gives us many reasons why we are not to fear life, death, and changes:
  - 1) He is with me wherever I go – Joshua 1:9
  - 2) He knows me and values me – Matthew 10:29-31
  - 3) He upholds me – Isaiah 41:10
  - 4) He is my shield and reward – Genesis 15:1
  - 5) He keeps me from falling – Proverbs 3:25,26
  - 6) He is my light, salvation, and strength – Psalm 27:1
  - 7) He is my helper – Hebrews 13:6
  - 8) He is my refuge and fortress – Ps. 91:2,5
5. Ps. 55:22: “\_\_\_\_\_ on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.”
6. I Peter 5:7:“\_\_\_\_\_ all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

Since the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not lack ...

F. \_\_\_\_\_ . “Your rod and your staff; they comfort me.” (23:4b)

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ was what the shepherd relied on to \_\_\_\_\_ both himself and his flock in danger.
2. The rod was also the instrument the shepherd used to \_\_\_\_\_ and correct any wayward sheep that insisted on wandering away.
3. Another use for the rod was to examine and \_\_\_\_\_ the sheep. There was a comfort and consolation in seeing the rod in the shepherd’s hands.
4. The rod reminds us of the \_\_\_\_\_ as it can enable us when tempted, it can correct us when we go astray, and comfort us in times of sorrow and suffering. (Ps.94:19)
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ is essentially a symbol of the concern the shepherd has for his sheep; it is for their comfort.
6. In a similar way, the \_\_\_\_\_ was given to us to be our Comforter. (John 14:16-17)

Since the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not lack ...

G. \_\_\_\_\_ . “You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine

*enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.” (23:5)*

1. The table is the shepherd’s preparation of the high tablelands where the sheep graze in summer. A good shepherd will prepare these before the sheep arrive, removing physical hazards, poisonous plants, and driving predators away, and assessing grazing and bedding fields; this takes a lot of hard work.
2. This is a reminder of the \_\_\_\_\_ we can have with our Shepherd, as we can calmly sit down in green pastures and watch Him do the impossible as He prepares a table before us in the supply of our every need.
3. Where does the Lord, my Shepherd prepare this table before me? It is “in the presence of mine \_\_\_\_\_.” (see Psalm 27 as well)
4. There are four possible approaches to handling the painful problems and battles of life.
  - a. We can look \_\_\_\_\_ at our feelings.
  - b. We can look \_\_\_\_\_ for a safe refuge
  - c. We can look \_\_\_\_\_ at the circumstances.
  - d. We can look \_\_\_\_\_ and trust Him.
5. The believer has \_\_\_ enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. Dependence upon the Lord doesn’t remove our enemies, but it allows us to fellowship with the Lord in the midst of them. (Ps.27:13-14)
6. Just as there needed to be a continuous and renewed application of oil [“you anoint my head with oil”] to forestall the ‘flies’ on the sheep, so we need a continuous \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s Holy Spirit through the \_\_\_\_\_ to counteract the ever-present aggravations and annoyances of life and the flesh.

Since the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not lack for...

H. \_\_\_\_\_. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (23:6)

1. When David says this, the Psalmist is reflecting on a full round of the year’s activities for the flock.
2. As an old man, David looked back over his long life and came to the same conclusion. Despite his sins and failures, he had been followed by God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which is the Old Testament equivalent of Romans 8:28.
3. As David looked ahead, he knew he would spend eternity in the Father’s presence – the Father’s \_\_\_\_\_ - forever. (Ps.48:14; Rev.7:17)
4. Always remember that your present situation is not your final destination.

5. **Not only did David, and other believers in the Lord in the OT, have the assurance of eternal security, Jesus Christ promises to His sheep [believers in NT] that ...**

**“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them ETERNAL LIFE, and they shall NEVER PERISH, neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:27-28)**