

Psalm 23 *Confidence in Times of Crisis*

6-3-20

The Shepherd and His Sheep

I. **Announce:**

A. **Slide1** Food Drive - June 8th. 9-11am.

B. **Prayer:** God help us to *sing this song into our souls.*

II. **Slide2a Intro:**

A. **Title:** *Confidence in Times of Crisis.* **Text:** Psalm 23. **Time:** 3-part series (June 3,10,17). **Thought:** **Where** do we run in the times of crisis? **To Whom** do we run in the times of crisis?

1. Right now many of us feel like **lost or frightened sheep**, with everything changing so quickly. Not only are we dealing with a pandemic **but...** *racism, protests, looting, fires, Tropical Storm Cristobal hitting Mexico & possibly US, job insecurities, etc.*
2. Right now more than ever we need **God** as our **Shepherd/Guide/Host**.
3. The Lord truly is our **good** shepherd. **Why is He good?** We are going to find out why. **It's a psalm of confidence in Yahweh.** A Hymn of **trust**. It's a summary of the Christian life. It's how to have a Happy life, happy death, & happy eternity.
4. Psalm 23 helps if you are **struggling with anxiety, depression, fear, lack of finances, lack of hope for the future, health problems, security & eternity.**

B. **This is one of the most popular and sweetest chapters in the OT.** What's tragic is so many people know Psalm 23, **but** do not know *The Shepherd of Psalm 23.*

1. **Yes** it's most often used and heard at **memorials** or **gravesides**.
2. **But** its message applies to **all the days of my life**, including right now. **And the regrets of yesterday & the worries of tomorrow.**

C. **Slide2b** This Psalm is set like the center diamond in a 3 stone ring:

1. Ps.22 - The **Good Shepherd** **dying** for the sheep.
- Ps.23 - The **Great Shepherd** **caring** for the sheep.
- Ps.24 - The **Chief Shepherd** **coming** for the sheep.

D. **Slide3** I will do the 1st 2 verses: *The **Shepherd** and His Sheep*. AL will do *The **Guide** and His Traveler*. Jason will do *The **Host** and His Guests*.

1. *My Outline: Relationship. Supply. Rest. Refreshment.*

E. **Read** whole Psalm.

III. **Slide4a RELATIONSHIP (1a)** *The Lord is my shepherd* [LXX: the Lord shepherds me]

A. The Lord is **my shepherd** - **my**, not just *a* shepherd. **Relationship**.

1. And if each of us tonight can say that *he is my shepherd*, that reminds us that he knows us **individually** (intimately, each personally).

B. Note, for the believer it's all in the *present tense*. We are even now under the **pastoral care** of Yahweh.

C. The Lord is my **shepherd**. Remember it's a *Psalm of David* - David knew sheep & about shepherding. So it's a very natural & fitting figure for him to use.

1. Can you imagine Him saying, *Lord is my **dog-catcher**? The Lord is my **pest control man**? The Lord is my **cattle rancher**? **Lion tamer**?*

2. The **shepherd imagery** is one that portrays one whom we may put our **confidence** in. **One we can trust His guidance and care for our lives.**

a) Remember sheep can't take care of themselves at all. They were completely dependent on their shepherd. *Ever hear of wild sheep? No they are all domesticated.*

3. **Slide4b** Ps.80:1 *Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph's descendants like a flock.* (not Jesus here, but the Father. That's why so impressive in the NT Jesus is the *Good, Great & Chef Shepherd*) **He takes on the title of God the Father? Showing His deity.** [so we can now see both Father/Jesus]

D. **Jehovah** is with (1) under (2) beside (2) after (6) before (5) and ahead of (6) all His **trusting children**.

1. All of our precious and tender mercies are traced back to **one source**, the **Good Shepherd** Himself. **Jesus is all we need.**
- E. Imagine if a **Shepherd** can be a **sheep** for a week. He would really know how to care for his sheep - **Ohh that's what Jesus did!**
1. Rev.7:17 **For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water.**
- F. **Contemplation:** Is He **your** shepherd tonight? What's your **position** to Him? (next to His side? nearby? running away? Out on a cliff?) **Besides a Shepherd** what figure would you use to describe your relationship with Him? (Judge/defendant? Lion Tamer/Lion?) **Do you consider yourself in want/lacking?** (now compared to the rest of the world?)

IV. Slide5 **SUPPLY (1b)** *I shall not want* [LXX: nothing will be lacking for me]

- A. **I have all I need** (NLT). **I lack nothing** (NIV).
- B. **They shall not want for** food or drink (vs.2), strength or guidance (3), comfort (4) satisfaction (5) or life (6).
1. **We shall not lack for temporal needs, not spiritual needs, nor for my emotional needs.**
 - a) A **shepherd** had to care for **his sheep's mental/emotional state**...otherwise *they would not eat.*
- C. **Sometimes we think...I shall not want** because: I have money in the bank? **nope.** I know people? **nope.** I have education/degrees? **nope.** I have job security? **nope.** **Only one reason, I shall not want because...The Lord is my Shepherd!**
- D. **I shall not lack for:** Rest & Refreshment (2). Restoration & Righteousness (3). Protection in trouble (4). Provision in the Wilderness (5). And a home to go to at the end of the day (6).
1. Like the **poor cottage woman** who broke her only piece of **bread** w/a cool glass of **water** & said, **What, all this and Jesus too?**

E. **Contemplation:** Do you consider yourself in want/lacking? (now, compared to the rest of the world?) Do you believe that Jesus can care for your *temporal & spiritual & emotional needs*? Do you think He actually does?

V. **Slide6a REST (2a)** *He makes me lie down in green pastures* [LXX: in a place of tender grass, there he causes me to dwell]

A. **He makes me rest...** because we often won't on our own.

1. **Slide6b** Ezek.34:15 *I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God.*
2. If you are a sheep prone to **business**...He makes you to *lie down*.
If you are a sheep prone to **laziness**...He makes you to **get up**.

B. **We are like lost sheep not able to guide our own lives.** So, *He feeds us & leads us.*

1. This emphasizes ideas of **nourishment** and **abundance**.
2. Sheep must have grass & water to live, & it is up to once again **the shepherd** to provide those elements for them.

C. **Slide7** Ray Vander Lann explains, *not a belly deep of alfalfa*, no, picture **desert land**.

1. In biblical times sheep never grazed in farmland. Israel is desert.
2. It's a little tuft of grass here and there. **1% rainfall?** Moisture from the Mediterranean sea blowing in, hitting rocks, spring tufts of grass.
 - a) God never desired to plop you down in green pastures, where you never have to get up again. Just reach over and grab a handful anytime you're hungry. **No!**
(1) **Has your walk/life with God been like that? No.**
 - b) **Slide8** A rabbi said, *worry is dealing with tomorrow's problem on today's pasture.*
 - c) In the desert you learn *the shepherd* will get you what you need for **right now**, and in **10 minutes** from now. You **trust the shepherd**...just enough.

D. **Contemplation:** Do you feel what God has given you “green” enough? (or do you feel its *brown* pasture land?) Have you been disgruntled that you thought your life would be “greener”? If **worry** was defined by *dealing with tomorrow's problem on*

today's pasture, how might you reframe your mind/mindset regarding tomorrow?

VI. Slide9a **REFRESHMENT (2b)** *He leads me beside still waters* [LXX: at a river of rest he nourishes me]

A. **He leads me**...He never *drives* me. (diff of E & W. Bulgaria experience, *Etropole*)

1. Slide9b Ps.78:52 **he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock**. (context from Egypt)

B. **Still waters** - (Heb.) *menuchah*, emphasizes **rest** and **security**.

1. If sheep try to drink from *rushing waters* they'd be swept away.

2. **Placid waters** - calm & peaceful.

C. **Contemplation**: Do you ever feel that God has placed you by *roaring rapids* instead of **placid water**? Do you ever feel he **drives** you instead of **leads** you? When He said *follow Me*, does that tip us off to His leadership style?

D. What do you desire most tonight from your Shepherd? Deeper **Relationship**?

Or, More of temporal, spiritual, emotional **Supply** from Him?

Or, Help in learning how to **Rest**? Or, Him to lead you to a **Refreshing stream to drink from**?