

## Psalm 23

6-1-00

*“The Crook”- This Sheep will not Lack!”*

### 1. Intro:

- 1.1. Perhaps one of the most popular & sweetest chapters in the O.T.
  - 1.1.1. It is not “worn out”!
  - 1.1.2. Yet how tragic to know Psalm 23...but not know the Shepherd!
  - 1.1.3. It is often read at **funerals**, yet its message applies to the **days of our lives right now!**
- 1.2. This Psalm is set like the center diamond in a 3 stone ring.
  - 1.2.1. **Ps.22** - Good Shepherd **dying for** the sheep;
  - Ps. 23** - The Great Shepherd **caring for** the sheep;
  - Ps. 24** - The Chief Shepherd **coming for** the sheep.
- 1.3. Phillips gives as an outline: **The Secret of a Happy Life!(1-3); The Secret of a Happy Death!(4,5); The Secret of a Happy Eternity!(6).**
- 1.4. **Read** the amplified bible.
- 1.5. Did David write this song on his harp, while laying back in the grass, out in a meadow, with sheep bleating all around him, as a little shepherd boy?

### 2. This Sheep will not Lack! (1-6)

- 2.1. (1) **“The LORD is my shepherd”**
  - 2.1.1. Note **“my”** not “a”! – Personal!
  - 2.1.2. Note for the believer...it’s all in **present tense!** – We are even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.
  - 2.1.3. A **shepherd** watches over sheep...in contrast to a stray or wild animal.
    - 2.1.3.1. Imagine it saying, “the Lord is my dogcatcher!” or, “the lord is my Pest control man”.
- 2.2. **“I shall not want”**
  - 2.2.1. I may not possess all that I wish for, but **‘I shall not want’!**
  - 2.2.2. **The wicked always wants, the righteous...never!**
  - 2.2.3. (NIV) **“I shall not be in want.”** – or, “I shall not lack!”

- 2.2.4. All our precious & tender mercies are traced back to **one source**...the Good Shepherd Himself!
- 2.2.4.1. Jesus Christ is to His sheep all that they ever need!
- 2.2.4.2. As the little child said when **misquoting** this psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd—what more shall I want?"
- 2.2.5. I shall not lack for **temporal** needs, not **spiritual** needs,...nor for my **emotional** needs!
- 2.2.5.1. A shepherd had to care for his sheep's mental/emotional state also...otherwise they would not eat!
- 2.2.6. I shall not want because...I **have money in the bank?** (nope); I shall not want because...**w/my wit & background I can get a job anywhere?** (nope); I shall not want because...**The Lord is my Shepherd!**
- 2.2.7. **I shall not "want" 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).
- 2.3. (2) "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters."
- 2.3.1. We are like lost sheep not able to guide our own lives.
- 2.3.2. So, He **feeds** us & **leads** us!
- 2.3.2.1. Sheep must have **grass** & **water** to live, & it is up to the shepherd to provide those elements for them.
- 2.3.3. If you are a sheep prone to **business**...He makes you to **lie down!**
- 2.3.4. If you are a sheep prone to **laziness**...He makes you to **get up!**
- 2.3.5. The word is like the **green grass** – many know about the Green pastures but cannot lie down in them.
- 2.3.5.1. They stand as analyst, leaning on the fence post of life, ever learning about the grass, (how it grows, its chemical makeup, the different types of grasses) but never getting to lie down in it!
- 2.3.6. "He **leads** me..." - He never **drives** me!
- 2.4. (3a) "He restores my soul"

- 2.4.1. “When the soul **grows sorrowful he revives it**; when it **is sinful he sanctifies it**; when it **is weak he strengthens it**.”<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4.2. **He does it!**
- 2.5. **(3b) He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.”**
- 2.5.1. When we need to know **which way to go**, He not only “**shows**” us the right path, but He “**leads**” us in it.
- 2.5.1.1. Follow the shepherd...He goes before you showing the narrow path!
- 2.5.1.2. Live one day at a time!
- 2.5.2. The Christian ought to delight in “Obedience of love” as we watch our Master’s example!
- 2.5.2.1. We should not only pant for being “saved from **sin**”, but also “saved from **sinning!**” (sanctification)
- 2.5.2.2. We **honor** our **Good Shepherd** when we are a **Holy people!**
- 2.6. **(4a) “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me;”**
- 2.6.1. **Note:** the change from “**He**”[1-3]( 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. Singular) to “**You**”[4,5] (2<sup>nd</sup> pers. singular) – Becomes more personal.
- 2.6.2. Many a dying souls have heard this verse quoted over them!
- 2.6.3. Even w/deaths shadow looming over us the believer can still “**walk**”.
- 2.6.3.1. We don’t have to **pick up the pace** of nervousness, nor **slow to a crawl** in fear!
- 2.6.3.2. Walk means: “the steady advance of a soul which knows its road, knows its end, resolves to follow the path, feels quite safe, & is therefore perfectly **calm & composed.**” (Spurg)
- 2.6.4. Note it is not walking “**in**” the Valley but “**through**” it!
- 2.6.4.1. We walk through the dark tunnel of death into the light of immortality.
- 2.6.4.2. We do not “**die**” but “**sleep**” to wake in glory!
- 2.6.4.3. “**Death is not the house but the porch, not the goal but the passage to it**”
- 2.6.5. It is not “the valley of death” but “the valley of the **shadow** of death”
- 2.6.5.1. Because death in its substance has been removed, & only the **shadow** of it remains!

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, Ps.23, Treasury of David, pg.400

- 2.6.5.2. **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, to his 6 yr old daughter after his wife's death – Found it difficult to explain to his daughter about death. They were standing on a street corner & a truck rounded the corner very fast frightening his little girl. He asked her, "Would you have rather be run over by the truck, or by the shadow of the truck?" – *Your mother was only ran over by the shadow, Jesus by the truck of death!*
- 2.6.5.3. **Vance Havner** said *look to the sun & the shadows of life will always be behind you!*
- 2.6.5.4. And remember you can't have a shadow w/o light somewhere behind it!
- 2.6.6. "The shadow of a **dog** cannot bite; The shadow of a **sword** cannot kill; The shadow of a **death** cannot destroy us!"<sup>2</sup>
- 2.6.6.1. So do not be afraid, "I will fear no evil!"
- 2.6.7. "For you are with me" - **Socrates** used to say, "Philosophers can be happy without music;" and Christians can be happier than philosophers when all outward causes of rejoicing are withdrawn.
- 2.6.7.1. We do not need "outside circumstance" to be in our favor, we have "God in our favor", "God with us the hope of Glory!"
- 2.6.7.2. **Illustration** - All passengers on a ship may be scared of the storm, except the little child asleep in its mother's lap. - It is enough that mother is there! It is enough for us to know Jesus is there!
- 2.7. (4b) "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."
- 2.7.1. His **rod** takes care of His **enemies**;  
His **staff** takes care of His **sheep**!
- 2.7.2. **Rod** = discipline; **staff** = guidance.
- 2.8. (5a) "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"
- 2.8.1. The good man has enemies! - If we did not, we would not be like our Lord.
- 2.8.1.1. Obviously it begs the question, what made them an enemy?  
Righteousness, not flesh!
- 2.8.2. When a soldier is in the presence of his enemies the most he grabs is a hasty meal.
- 2.8.2.1. But here a table is set speaking of peace, nothing is hurried, there is no confusion, even with the enemy at the door.

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<sup>2</sup> Spurgeon, Ps.23, Treasury of David, pg.401

- 2.9. (5b) “You anoint my head with oil”
- 2.9.1. Enjoy a fresh anointing every day from Him!
- 2.9.2. In 1989 archaeologists, digging near the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, unearthed a two thousand-year-old flask filled with oil. It may have been oil that was used to anoint the kings of Israel! The oil was made from a plant now extinct and by a process now unknown. There will never be any more oil like that. But if you had that flask and were anointed with that oil, **it would mean little.**
- 2.9.3. **1 Jn.2:27** “But the **anointing** which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same **anointing** teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”
- 2.10. (5c) “My cup runs over.”
- 2.10.1. Have kids? – For it to run over it has to be full!  
2.10.1.1. “my brimming cup runs over” (amplified)
- 2.10.2. It is not only having enough, but more than enough!  
2.10.2.1. Like the poor cottage woman who broke her only piece of bread w/a cool glass of water, “What, all this, & Jesus Christ too?”
- 2.11. (6a) “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life”
- 2.11.1. 1<sup>st</sup> He seals this promise with a “surely”...a verily!
- 2.11.2. One day you’ll look back & see it was all **goodness** & **Mercy**...even the valley experiences!  
2.11.2.1. Spurgeon called them “Twin Guardian angels always at my back & my beck.”
- 2.11.3. **H.A.Ironside** use to say, “that **goodness** & **mercy** are the **2 shepdogs** that help keep the sheep where they belong.”
- 2.11.4. “**all the days**” - “The average person is being crucified between 2 thieves – The **regrets** of **yesterday** & the **worries** of **tomorrow!**”<sup>3</sup>  
2.11.4.1. “**All the days**” – The **black** days as well as the **bright** days, the days of **fasting** as well as the days of **feasting!**  
2.11.4.2. **Goodness** supplies our needs – **Mercy** blots out our sins!
- 2.11.5. **Life is full of changes:** Tender grass, to restful waters, to right paths, to dark valleys, to fears, to comforts, to exaltations, to plenty, to eternity.  
2.11.5.1. These are “day by day” changes (vs.6)

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<sup>3</sup> WWW

- 2.12. (6b) “And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever”
- 2.12.1. This sounds like an assurance of his salvation!
- 2.12.2. Forget the pious “I just want to be I heaven”, “I won’t probably make it anywhere near our Lord” attitude...I’m gonna be in the house right up on the **Saviors Sofa!**...Amen!
- 2.12.2.1. And I’m not getting off (**explain** - King of the coach with kids)
- 2.13. **End:** Why is it so often Christians look as if God isn’t a shepherd, but a wolf? That has led them into dark wildernesses & left them alone?
- 2.13.1. He is our Loving, Caring, and Protecting, Good Shepherd!
- 2.14. **Communion:**
- 2.14.1.
- 2.15. **End point:**
- 2.15.1. **Each of the OT names for God is seen in this psalm:**  
*Jehovah-Jireh*, “The Lord will provide” (Gen. 22:13-14);  
*Jehovah-Rapha*, “The Lord will heal or restore” (Ex. 15:26);  
*Jehovah-Shalom*, “The Lord our peace” (Jdg. 6:24);  
*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, “The Lord our righteousness,” (Jer. 23:6);  
*Jehovah-Shammah*, “The Lord is there,” (Ezek. 48:35);  
*Jehovah-Nissi*, “The Lord our banner” (Ex. 17:8-15);  
*Jehovah-Raah*, “The Lord my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1).
- 2.15.2. In other words, Jesus Christ is to His sheep all that they ever need.
- 2.15.3. “The Lord is my shepherd—what more shall I want?”