

Psalm 23:2
“I Shall Not Want for Rest”

Pastor John Miller

Introduction- Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want! (v1)

* **Or: I have everything I need!**

* **And: The first need my Shepherd meets is my need for “rest”**

* **“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters.”**

* **Or literally: Lie down in fresh green pastures and waters of rest.**

* **We are living in a day of extreme weariness, ● “mentally”; ● “emotionally”;**

● “physically”; and most of all, ● “spiritually”.

* **But when the LORD is your Shepherd, you will not want for rest! (The Christ life starts with rest!)**

* **It’s a picture of perfect “rest” and “contentment”. (v2)**

* **This does not mean that God’s people never pass through storms!**

* **But it does mean we have rest and peace for our souls!**

* **Phillip Keller in his book, “A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23”, points out that sheep do not naturally lie down and rest. Because of their very make-up, it’s almost impossible for them to lie down and rest unless four requirements are met.**

* **Only Jesus, The Good Shepherd, can provide them!**

* **Without a Shepherd, we can’t rest!**

* **What are the four things sheep need to find rest?**

I. They Need Freedom from Fear.

A. By nature sheep are timid and fearful!

1. Their only natural defense is to run!

Illustration: Phillip Keller – Story about the Pekinese puppy.

2. Only the presence of the Shepherd can calm their fears!

3. We also like sheep, are fearful!

- a. What are your fears? Keeping you from rest?
 - i. Money
 - ii. Health
 - iii. Job
 - iv. Marriage
 - v. Children
 - vi. Hell
- 4. If the Lord is your Shepherd, you don't need to fear!
 - a. God says, "Fear not, for I am with you."
 - b. So, "I will lay down in peace and sleep for thou God keepst me".

Illustration: The story is told of a little girl whose father was an airline pilot. As they crossed the Atlantic, a storm came up. The flight attendant awakened the little girl and told her to fasten her seat belt because they were in some turbulent weather. The little girl opened her eyes, saw the lightning flashing around the plane, and asked, "Is Daddy at the controls?" "Yes, your father is in the cockpit." The little girl smiled, closed her eyes, and went back to sleep.

II. Freedom from Friction.

- A. Sheep cannot rest as long as there is friction in the flock!
 - 1. Like many other animals, sheep have an order of dominance.
 - a. Chickens – "A pecking order."
 - b. But sheep – "A butting order."
 - i. Sheep have hard heads!
 - Keller – "Often an arrogant, cunning and domineering old ewe will be boss of any flock of sheep!"
 - 2. So us too as humans!
 - a. We "butt heads" and try to control others!
 - 3. But for the Lord's Sheep, the presence of the Shepherd brings an end to selfish strife and sinful ambition and helps us to think of others!
 - a. Jesus our example – Philippians 2.

III. Freedom from Flies.

- A. For sheep to lie down and rest, they must be free from the torment of insects, parasites, and flies.
 - 1. They need the Shepherd to pour oil over their heads!
 - 2. So for us too! Life is full of "small irritations"!
 - a. From people and circumstances!

- Illustration: They “bug me” or “that bugs me”!
- b. The Answer: - The Oil of God’s Spirit!
Ephesians 5:18 – Joyful; thankful; submissive.

IV. Free from Hunger.

A. For sheep to lie down and rest, they need:

1. “Fresh green pastures.” (v2) (Morning)
2. “Still waters” or “waters of rest”. (v2) (Noontime)

B. Sheep must be full to rest!

Phillip Keller – “A hungry, ill-fed sheep is ever on its feet, on the move, searching for another scanty mouthful of foliage to try and satisfy its gnawing hunger!”

1. Hungry sheep will not lie down!
 - a. So with us!

C. Life without Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is empty and no rest for your soul!

D. What are the “green pastures” and the “waters of rest”?

1. It’s the resting by “faith” in the finished work of Jesus Christ!
 - a. Jesus – John 6:35 – “I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”
2. It’s feeding on the Word of God in the Bible.
 - a. Job - “I have esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food.”
 - b. Jesus tempted of Satan – Deuteronomy 8:3 – “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”
3. It’s resting by faith in Gods promises.
 - a. His forgiveness!
 - b. His presence!
 - c. His provision!

Conclusion:

Jesus said: Matthew 11:28-30 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus the Good Shepherd gives us an invitation!

- 1. To come to Him!**
- 2. To take His yoke!**
- 3. To learn of Him!**

The result:

- 1. “I will give you rest.”**
- 2. “You will find rest for your soul.”**