

“I Shall Not Want”

Psalm 23

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I. Introduction

- A. The twenty-third Psalm is the most beloved of the 150 psalms and very possibly the best-loved and best-known passage in the entire Bible.
1. *“Through the centuries, it has caught the imagination of children, challenged the thinking of strong young men, and proved powerful in the midyears of struggle, charmed men and women of advancing years with a new confidence and an undying hope in the continued mercies of God. More griefs have been put to rest by its sweet assurances, more sadness has been driven away, more confidence has been instilled, than tongue can tell or pen can record. To know it is to love it. To believe it is to live a life of victory, a life of joy and peace.”* – Kyle Yates
 2. Psalm 23 was written by David, the humble shepherd boy who became King of Israel.
 3. At what point in David’s life did he pen this marvelous psalm?
 - a) We don’t know
 - b) We do know that David, guided by the Holy Spirit, pictured God as his shepherd, and that with the Lord as his shepherd, he had everything he needed.
 - 1) In life
 - 2) In death
 - 3) For eternity
 4. The theme of the psalm is found in the first verse (v.1)
 - a) Who is the Lord?
 - 1) It’s Jehovah Raah
 - 2) It’s Yahweh or Jehovah
 - b) If the Lord is our shepherd, then we are His sheep.
 - 1) This is not very flattering.
 - 2) Sheep are dumb, dependent, and defenseless.
 - 3) We need a shepherd to guide us, provide for us, and protect us.
 - 4) When Jesus is our Shepherd, we have everything we need
 5. In this twenty-third psalm, I want to point out three areas of need the Good Shepherd takes care of.

II. He Takes Care of My Frailties (Psalm 23:2-3)

* There are three blessings the Shepherd supplies us with in our frailties:

- A. Rest (v.2)

1. “He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:14).
 2. Illustration- In the Middle East, there is very little grass, so sheep must keep moving to find green pastures.
 3. Illustration- Sheep won't rest unless they are free from fear and hunger.
 - a) The same with us
 - b) No rest for the wicked.
 - c) Jesus said, “Come unto me all ye...”
 - d) Only Jesus, the Good Shepherd, can provide rest for your soul.
- B. Restoration (v.3a)
1. Literally “brings back my health”
 2. It's a Hebrew idiom for “cleanses” or “heals” and “forgives”
 3. It brings me to repentance or restoration
 4. Illustration- Philip Keller- “a cast sheep”
 5. Illustration- David's own life—his great sin (Psalm 51)
 - a) “Restore unto me the joy of my salvation.”
 6. Do you need your soul restored?
 7. Illustration- Jesus said, “100 sheep” (Luke 15)
- C. Righteous paths (v.3v)
1. “He leadeth me” (v.3)
 2. Sheep have no sense of direction.
 - a) “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6).
 3. Illustration- Shepherds lead their sheep; they don't drive them
 4. Jesus forgives us to restore us so He can lead us.
 5. Where He leads us
 - a) “The paths of righteousness” (v.3)
 - 1) His path is always righteous or holy.
 - 2) Illustration- “Go and sin no more” (John 8)
 6. Why He leads us:
 - a) “For His names sake” (v.3)
 - b) For His glory
 - c) Illustration- “That we should be to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14)
 7. He forgives me, restores me, and leads me.

III. He Takes Care of My Fears (Psalm 23:4-5)

- A. Sheep have no natural defenses. They are timid and fearful. We also have many fears.
1. We fear death (v.4)
 - a) “Valley of the shadow of death” (v.4)
 - b) Jesus gave His life for the sheep (cross)
 - c) Jesus rose to conquer death
 - d) Illustration- He has the keys, so death lost its sting
 2. We fear life

- a) “Valley of deep darkness” (v.4)
 - b) The dark valleys
 - c) Illustration- The dangers of life
 - d) “I will fear no evil” (v.4)
- 3. We can live free from fear. How?
 - a) The Shepherd’s presence
 - 1) “For you are with me” (v.4)
 - 2) Jesus said, “I will never leave you.”
 - 3) His presence calms my fears.
 - 4) I would rather walk with God in the dark than walk alone in the light. I had rather walk with Him by faith than to walk alone by sight.
 - b) The Shepherd’s protection
 - 1) “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (v.4)
 - 2) The rod protects us.
 - 3) The staff directs us.
 - c) The Shepherd’s provision
 - 1) The picture now changes from the Lord our Shepherd to the Lord our host.
 - 2) He is now “Jehovah Jireh”
 - 3) The Lord our Provider
 - 4) “I have been young” (Psalm 37:25)
 - 5) “But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).
- 4. If the Lord is your Shepherd, you have everything you need.
 - a) No need to fear. Why?
 - 1) His presence
 - 2) His protection
 - 3) His provision

IV. He Takes Care of My Future (Psalm 23:6)

A. David now summarizes the psalm.

- 1. The Christian life is like a “pilgrimage.”
- 2. It starts with “The Lord is my Shepherd” (v.1)
- 3. It ends with “In the house of the Lord” (v.6)

B. “In life”

- 1. Two things follow me
 - a) “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (v.6)

1. Even in dark valleys, God is good.
2. Mercy and lovingkindness

C. “In death”

1. “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (v.6)
2. God keeps the best for last.
3. All this and heaven too!
4. Jesus said (John 14)
 - a) With me—the Lord
 - b) Beneath me—Green pastures
 - c) Beside me—Still waters
 - d) Before me—A table
 - e) Around me—My enemies
 - f) After me—Goodness and mercy
 - g) Ahead of me—The house of the Lord forever

V. Conclusion

A. David’s assurance of heaven

1. “I will” (v.6)
2. How?
 - a) The Lord is my Shepherd.
 - b) The most important word in the psalm is “my.”
 - 1) My frailties
 - 2) My fears
 - 3) My future
 - c) I shall not want
 - 1) In life
 - 2) In death

3) In eternity