

Session 5

April 8, 2018

OUR SHEPHERD

Psalm 23:1-6

I have always pictured David writing this psalm while reminiscing. Carried back in time, he is not Israel's greatest king, but rather a shepherd boy, stretched out on the grass looking at the sky. He is suddenly struck by the notion that his sheep are well cared for; they have a shepherd watching over them. But what of the shepherd? Who is watching over him? And then it comes...that wonderful revelation: The Lord is my shepherd! And that same revelation is true for us as well. Psalm 100 says we are "His people; the sheep of His pasture."

He is the Lord of provision (v. 1). David declared, "The Lord is my shepherd!" And because the Lord is my shepherd, "I have everything that I need." The "I shall not want" of the KJV means "There is nothing that I lack." As the Good Shepherd (see John 10), the Lord provides all that is necessary for His flock not only to survive...but to thrive!

He is the Lord of rest (v. 2). Like the sheep in David's charge, the Lord's flock isn't worried. God's sheep are surrounded by lush green grass that provides not only the food we need, but a cool and comfortable place to rest. What country boy or girl can resist stretching out in the cool grass and watching the clouds drift by? Hebrews 4 reminds us that ultimately, Christ is our place of rest.

He is the Lord of guidance (vv. 2-3). These verses remind us that God leads His people. The still waters are tranquil and inviting. The paths of righteousness keep us moving in the right direction. His leading should never be dreaded with fear and doubt but embraced with confidence. Our Shepherd doesn't just watch over us...He leads us.

He is the Lord of comfort (v. 4). Though the darkness of night and trouble will come, we need not fear. We have the Good Shepherd's presence to keep us. And should we be stalked by the enemy who seeks to devour us (see 1 Peter 5:8), the Lord has whatever is necessary to ward him off and snatch us to safety. In Psalm 27, David reminds himself, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

He is the Lord of abundance (v. 5). The Good Shepherd came to give life, and to give it in abundance (John 10:10). We poor sheep rejoice in the lush pastures and still waters. It is enough. But the Lord does so much more! There is prepared for us a feast of His goodness...right in the midst of our enemies! How abundant is His care? David says it well, "My cup is not only filled; it overflows!"

He is the Lord for this life (v. 6). That goodness and mercy should follow us through this life should come as no surprise. But is it because we are deserving of it? Or is it because such things are characteristics of the Good Shepherd that spill over on us, His precious sheep? Grace applies not only to our salvation, but to our walk with Him as well. For this reason, Peter could say, "May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord," because "His divine power has given us everything required for life" (2 Peter 1:2-3).

He is the Lord for eternity (v. 6). Dr. Adrian Rogers used to say, "If there was no hope of heaven, I would still want to be a Christian and enjoy the abundant life our Lord offers here." Amen to that! But the glorious truth is that there *is* a heaven. And unlike the sheep of David's pasture, the sheep of the Lord's pasture will enjoy all the benefits He has to offer, both now and forever.