

## Life with the Good Shepherd: Rest and Contentment Psalm 23:2

### Introduction:

1. The Bible likens mankind to sheep.
  - **Isaiah 53:6** states, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...*"
  - Paul likens the church to a flock of sheep in **Acts 20:28**.
2. Sheep do not just take care of themselves, but require, more than any other livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.
3. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray from God. All of us have violated God's righteous laws, and we deserve death. But there was a man who came to this earth named Jesus Christ and declared, "*I am the good shepherd; I lay down my life for the sheep.*"
4. Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross so that we could come into His family and belong to Him and be under His guidance and care.
5. David, in Psalm 23, is boasting about the fact that the Lord was his shepherd. If we have trusted Jesus Christ, we can boast the same thing today. In this psalm, David is glorying about what life with the good shepherd is all about.
6. If you don't know Christ today, I encourage you to give your heart and life to the good shepherd. If you **do** know Him today, it is imperative that you yield to Him. Take your hands off the steering wheel of your life, and give Him your total surrender.
7. Why should you give to Christ (the good shepherd) your total surrender?

### First, because the good shepherd provides rest.

1. Sheep are very restless animals by nature. They are very fearful and skittish. They are easily agitated and tend to be jealous and contentious with each other. It is very difficult for sheep to relax and lie down in peace.
2. Does this describe you in any way this morning? Is your heart full of anxiety and stress? Is your life characterized by friction with those around you? Are you fearful and pacing the floor, so to speak?
3. Notice what David says about life with the good shepherd, "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...*" The picture here is one of the flock lying down in total peace, rest, and tranquility. Why? Because they know they are in the care of the good shepherd.
4. Sheep are very timid and easily panicked. A rabbit bounding from behind a bush can stampede a whole flock. Not only this, sheep can be given to tension, rivalry, and cruel competition with each other.
5. Isn't this true in our lives? Aren't we like sheep? Most of our problems that bring agitation and anxiety stem from two sources:
  - Our own inward fears and insecurities.
  - Friction in our external relationships with others.
6. Did you know Christ desires to give your troubled heart rest today? (**John 14:27**) I can either have **my** troubled heart or I can have Christ's peace.
  - "Troubled" means "to stir or agitate."

- You have heard the expression, "He is stirring the pot." In other words, he is creating turmoil. Many people live in a state of constant turmoil.
7. Listen to the words of Jesus in **Matthew 11:28-29**. The question is, "Will you come to the good shepherd and surrender to Him?" He desires to give you:
    - Peace **with** God. **Romans 5:1**
    - The peace **of** God. **Philippians 4:6-7**
  8. I know from experience that when I am in control and calling the shots, fear, anxiety, stress, friction, etc. mark my heart and life. But when I rest in the hands of Christ, He fills my heart with an inexplicable peace and rest. I experience the peace **of** God.
  9. One of the marks of a mature sheep in Christ's flock is that of a quiet inner peace, regardless of the circumstances that may surround you. As you feed on the green pastures of God's Word and grow in your relationship with Christ, you learn that in all things you can trust the good shepherd. He makes you to lie down in peace.

### **Second, the good shepherd provides contentment.**

1. Sheep require water. In fact, their health, vitality, strength, and vigor depend on ample supplies of water. When sheep are thirsty they become restless and set out in search of water to satisfy their thirst.
2. If they aren't led to the good, clean water supplies, they end up drinking from polluted potholes where they pick up internal parasites, diseases, and germs.
3. But the shepherd is the one who knows where clean life-giving water can be found. As they trust the shepherd, he leads them to these places of life and refreshment.
4. You have a physical body that needs water to survive, but you also have a soul and spirit within you that is thirsty and needs spiritual water. Unfortunately, Satan has a lot of mudholes that he convinces people to drink from to try quench that thirst.
  - The most obvious is the mudhole of sin. But there is also the mud hole of education, the mudhole of money - his favorite is the mudhole of religion.
5. Many people are drinking from these mudholes hoping to find inner contentment, but they never satisfy. There may bring a temporary pleasure, but just like with sheep, dirty water brings nothing but more problems.
6. Did you know that there is a place where you find spiritual water that is clean, refreshing, and will bring you true contentment? **John 4:9-14**
7. Christ is the good shepherd and He made it clear that the thirsty souls of men and women can only be fully satisfied when their thirst for spiritual life is fully quenched by drawing on Himself. "To drink" in the Bible simply means "to take in, accept, and believe."
8. When David said that the Lord (his shepherd) leads him beside the still waters, he is saying that the Lord is the One who knows where the still, quiet, deep, clean, pure water is to be found. Then Jesus came along and said, "**I am** the good shepherd and I am the living water all in one. Life-giving water is found in me."
  - You can look for contentment in money, material possessions, physical pursuits, sinful activities, fame, power, etc., but the living water that satisfies is only found in one place - in Christ.

9. When you drink in Christ - in other words, when you accept Him and believe on Him - His Spirit comes to live within you, and you have an endless supply of life-giving water to draw from the rest of your life. **John 7:38; Galatians 2:20**
  - **Illustration:** stubborn sheep drinking from mudholes
10. Will you turn to Christ today? Will you place your faith and trust in Him? Allow Christ to satisfy the thirst in your spirit for true living water.