

Life With the Good Shepherd: True Life Psalm 23

Introduction:

1. This morning, we have opened our Bibles to the most well known psalm in God's Word. You hear it quoted at funerals often and even frequently on television programs.
2. It opens with the words, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*"
3. As we turn to the New Testament, it gives us insight into exactly Who this shepherd is. Jesus came to the earth and proclaimed to Israel, "*I am the good shepherd.*" Jesus is also referred to as "*the great shepherd,*" and "*the chief shepherd.*"
4. But David proclaims, "*He is **my** shepherd!*" It is as if David is literally boasting aloud, "Look at Who my shepherd is - my owner - my manager."
5. Keep in mind that David was a shepherd himself and he knew that the welfare of any particular sheep depended on the type of man who owned it. Some men were gentle, kind, intelligent, brave, and selfless in their devotion to their sheep. Others were very neglectful, cruel, and the sheep would struggle, starve, and suffer endless hardship.
6. Jesus Christ is the One who created the heavens and the earth with great power, yet stepped out of glory and came into our world and died on the cross for our sins.
7. It is with a sense of awe and deep satisfaction that I can say, "The Lord Jesus Christ is my shepherd - my owner - my manager." I belong to Him. I'm one of His sheep!
8. Being the shepherd spoke of control. The sheep's present welfare and future destiny was in the hands of the shepherd. Let me ask you a question: "Who is in control of your life? Who do you belong to?" **Illustration:** abused sheep
9. When Jesus walked the earth He told a group of people, "*Ye are of your father the devil.*" They were under his control. Why would people choose to be under the rule of a tyrant when they could come into Christ's sheepfold and be one of His sheep?
10. When David boasted that the **Lord** was his shepherd, he said, "*I shall not want.*" This simply means to lack. David knew that being one of the Lord's sheep meant total and complete provision. He would have everything he needed.
11. Are you one of Christ's sheep today? Is He your shepherd? In other words, is He in control of your life? If not, you should surrender to Christ today and come into His care and His sheepfold. You say, "Why should I allow Christ control of **my** life?"

First, because Christ gave His life for you.

1. Let's read Christ's words in **John 10:11-15** and notice two owners are in view.
 - The good shepherd - he lays down his life for the welfare of the sheep.
 - The hireling - he pretends to care about the sheep, but leaves them during time of adversity, and the sheep have to fend for themselves and run for their very lives.
2. The picture is clear. Satan is the hireling. Satan pretends to care. He leads the sheep down the path of sin and evil under the guise of having a good time, but when adversity comes and you find yourself caught in the web of sin, he leaves you to your own destruction.

3. Christ, on the other hand, has so much love and concern for you that He came to this earth and laid down His life for you. He took every one of our sins and paid the penalty of death that we owed so that we could escape eternal death and be set free. **Romans 5:6, 8; Galatians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:10**
4. David said, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*" Christ gave His life for you and there is no lack in His provision. Jesus paid it all. He left nothing undone. There isn't one sin that He didn't pay the price for on that cross. **Hebrews 9:26b**
5. When Satan is your owner, he keeps you on the religious treadmill of performance. No matter what you do, it is never enough.
6. But Jesus Christ died for your sins and said, "*It is finished.*" When you come to Him in faith, He washes away every sin with completeness and finality. There is no lack!

Second, because Christ gives His life to you.

1. As the good shepherd, He died for us, but as the great shepherd, He rose from the dead. **Hebrews 13:20**
2. Here is the exciting part - When you come to Jesus in faith, you actually receive Christ's resurrection life the moment you believe on Him. **Romans 8:9-11**
3. Before we come to Jesus, we are said to be alienated from the life of God. Satan is our owner and he tries to convince us that we are really **living** as we enjoy the pleasures of sin. But, in the end, we are left lifeless and as sickly sheep in burnt pastures.
4. But the great shepherd rose from the dead and gives us His very life. He shares with us His very life - all that He is. Once you are saved, God's Word describes you as being "in Christ." Jesus Christ himself is resident in the believer. **Colossians 1:27**
5. Like David, I can say, "I have the shepherd Himself living in me - I shall not want. He didn't give me an angel or a cherub from heaven. He imparted unto me His very life."
6. Why would you want to feed on the burnt up, filthy, rotten fields of Satan when you can come to Jesus and surrender to Him? He is the good shepherd who died for you to rescue you, and the great shepherd who takes His resurrection life and gives it to you freely.
7. If you have the life of Jesus within you, you can navigate successfully through any trial or difficulty in this life.

Third, because Christ will live His life through you.

1. When we receive the life of Christ, we are said to be "complete in Christ." **Colossians 2:9-10**
2. David said, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*" Likewise, we can say, "I have Christ and I am complete in Him. I lack nothing. He has given me everything I need to live victoriously."
3. Christ gave His life **for** you so that He could give His life **to** you in order that He might live His life **through** you. **Galatians 2:20**

4. Have you ever wondered why famous, rich, affluent people in this world remain poor in spirit, shriveled in soul, and unhappy in life? It is because they are held in the iron grip and heartless ownership of the wrong master. They have no real life.
5. But then there are others who may not have much of this world's goods, they struggle to keep their head above water, they have known true hardship, yet they are permeated by a deep, quiet, settled peace that is a beauty to behold.
6. It's because they are under the shepherd's care and they know it. They have entrusted themselves to Christ's control and they have found true life, true contentment.
7. As you surrender to the shepherd, a quiet, calm, peaceful assurance floods your heart and mind. Through every trial that life may throw at you, it is just another opportunity to manifest the life of Jesus. **2 Corinthians 4:8-10**

In Conclusion:

1. Can you honestly say today, "*The Lord is my shepherd?*"
2. Have you placed your faith and trust in Him? Have you received His life? If so, you can truthfully say, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*"
3. He is all I need. Christ is sufficient in every situation. **Philippians 4:12-13**
4. How could Paul say this? Because he knew the good shepherd.