

## A SHEPHERD'S LOOK AT PSALM 23

### I shall not want . . .

Story told of an ancient pilgrim that had been commissioned by God to go up and down the world singing a strange melody that, when heard by an individual, caused that individual to forget whatever sorrow he had or was enduring.

How many times have we longed for such a pilgrim to sing such a melody to our ears in our times of grief and sorrow. How many times as we endured the sorrow of loss, or watched a loved one in the anguish of an illness, have we longed for the sweet bliss of forgetfulness? What widow has longed for such a melody to ease her grief? What orphan has longed for those pleasant notes to fall upon a broken heart.

Such a pilgrim indeed did exist – the sweet psalmist of Israel – David. Indeed he was commissioned by the Sovereign God of Heaven to sign such a melody that has the power to cause a man to forget his sorrow – the words to this familiar melody have been preserved for us in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

David, the Shepherd-King of Israel, motivated perhaps by his boyhood memories of keeping his father's sheep – compares himself to a sheep under the care of a shepherd and makes an astounding statement – I Shall Not Want!

#### I. The Role of the Shepherd:

- Shepherd was the owner
  - Shepherd was the manager
  - Shepherd was the provider and protector
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- David presents here a solemn truth – in life, we are all sheep that belong to a shepherd.
  - Some shepherds were good – provided for sheep, green lush pastures
  - Some shepherds were bad – mistreated, starved, and abused their sheep.
  - Illustration – A shepherd's look at Psalm 23 – Phillip Keller – shepherd in Africa – neighbor was bad shepherd who did not have green pastures – his sheep were sickly and abused – they would come to the fence that separated the dry pastures of their master from Keller's lush fields and his heart would go out to them as they looked longingly at the green grass.

#### II. The Identity of the Shepherd:

- David's point – I am a sheep, and I have a shepherd – my shepherd is the Lord!
  - Many people know that the Lord is a shepherd – but is he their shepherd.
  - They are like the sheep of that bad shepherd whose pastures were barren.
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- What qualifications does God have to be my shepherd – master, owner, manager?
  - Look at the vastness of heaven, the complexities of the universe, the miracle of creation and how it all works in perfect design.
  - David's point – the Lord who created all this, who sustains all this, who knows what is best for every single element of creation – He is my Shepherd!

#### III. The Conclusion of the Sheep:

- Because of who my shepherd is – the Lord – I shall not want.
- "Want" – to lack or to need.
- David was confident as a sheep that belonged to God – that God knew exactly what was best for David.

- Sometimes sheep need things that they don't necessarily want or like.
  - They need to be sheared – often a painful experience.
  - Sometimes they need a special diet that does not taste good to rid them of disease.
  - Sometimes they need discipline.
  - Sometimes they need to be kept away from food and water to reduce their body fluids.
  - Sometimes they need to be sent out to graze in lush pastures.
- ❖ Point: A good shepherd knows exactly what his sheep need at a given point in time and will make sure that his sheep get exactly what they need – they will not want.
  - ❖ Application: God knows exactly what I need at any given time!
    - I may need to be sheared.
    - I may need a special diet.
    - I may need discipline.
    - I may need to be sent out to graze in lush pastures.
  - ❖ Whatever I need – God knows, and He will make sure I get it!

#### CONCLUSION:

There are two shepherds in life – God and Satan

You are a sheep, and you are under the care of one shepherd or the other.  
 Maybe you are a sheep that is longing for the care and provision that David talked about.  
 Maybe you have been abused and neglected in the barren pastures of sin.

Come to know the tender provision and the loving care of the Good Shepherd.