

## THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

***Psalm 23:1*** *[[A Psalm of David.]] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

To declare that the Lord is “my shepherd” is to state that one has tried all other shepherds but decided that only Jesus will do. We all have tried other shepherds – be they leaders, philosophies and ideologies, other religions, defenses, etc., - but we have decidedly found that the Lord Jesus is our shepherd. If you have tried everything else, and found that Jesus alone is your shepherd, than let us say this together, “The Lord is my shepherd”. Next, David states, “I shall not want”. David is certain that he will never lack anything because the Lord is his shepherd. There was something David knew about his shepherd which made him say confidently “I shall not want”. God was his source of satisfaction - not the promises of politicians, the might of the country’s army or the health of the national economy. David’s faith and trust for his provision and safety was his shepherd – the Lord.

Blessed were the sheep of David; they knew they had the best shepherd in the world. If I were a sheep, I would want David to be my shepherd. David played sweet, heavenly music unto the Lord, which certainly calmed and entertained his sheep. He is also famous for jeopardizing his own life to save his sheep.

***John 10:11*** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

***John 10:12*** *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*

***John 10:13*** *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

***John 10:14*** *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

What is wonderful about the Lord Jesus is that he not only lays down his life for the sheep but is able to raise up his own life that he may live forever for the sheep. All the lions, bears and other predators knew not to mess with David’s sheep. Try other shepherds but not David. The Devil knows he cannot mess with the sheep of the Lord Jesus – the Lord will respond mightily. The sweetest sound in the world for sheep were the sound of the shepherd. Since they were born, the shepherd was present, fed and cared for the lambs. The Lord Jesus was there from the time we were born of the water and the spirit. We are intimately familiar with his voice. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

***Psalm 23:2*** *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

***Psalm 23:3*** *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

In stating that God “maketh me” and “leadth me”, David shows his willingness to submit to the Lord and accept his commands and leadership. We cannot know the blessings of the “Lord is my shepherd” if we do not submit to the Lord. The metaphor and symbol of shepherd and sheep resonates powerfully with the nation of Israel under God. Abel, Jacob, Moses, David, are all names associated with this imagery of shepherding. Now contrast this with the Egyptians under Pharaoh. “That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” (Genesis 46:34). Shepherding is connected with submission; the Egyptians were not known for their submission. In fact, it was their stubbornness and hardheartedness which brought about their destruction. May the good Lord teach us the privilege and grace of submission to his benign leadership!

***Luke 2:8*** *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

***Luke 2:9*** *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

***Luke 2:10*** *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

It is not surprising that the first occupation to hear about the birth of the Lord Jesus was shepherds. In this time of the year, when the message of Christmas has been watered down by materialism and fairy tales, we need to re-center the importance of the shepherds. We are reminded of Moses who also was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro when God appeared to him in the burning bush. “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb” (Exodus 3:1). The shepherds were also “keeping watch over the flock by night”. God rewards the shepherds who watch over souls at night. Some of the greatest events of the Bible revolved around shepherds. The Lord indeed is our shepherd! Before he died on the Cross, he watched over our souls in the Garden of Gethsemane – he prayed for us fervently. When the Lord returns soon may we be found doing these three things: being shepherded by the Lord, shepherding other souls and shepherding our own souls!

***Luke 2:8*** And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

The last thing I wish to highlight is the fact that this was the time of the year when new lambs were born. The shepherds would prepare these lambs for the Temple sacrifice. It is not a coincidence that the Lord Jesus was born at this time of the year. Now scholars agree that this was somewhere between April and November, not December, but that is beside the point. The important point is that the new lambs being prepared for the Temple sacrifice beautifully coincide with the birth of our Lord who also was the Lamb of God who would be slain for our sins. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus is the Lamb of God and, at the same time, the God of the Lamb. Since Jesus is the one true God, he alone was his own shepherd and his own lamb. “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:18). What individual can lay down his life and raise himself up again? Only Jesus because he is both the Father and the Son at the same time.

***John 14:7*** If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

***John 14:9*** Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

***John 14:10*** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

In conclusion, this sermon declares that Jesus is the great shepherd, providing for all our needs and guiding us in life. The analogy of a shepherd and sheep is used to emphasize the idea of trusting and submitting to the leadership of Jesus. The message also highlights the care and protection that Jesus, as the good shepherd, provides for his followers. Additionally, it connects the birth of Jesus to the shepherds who watched over their flocks at night, drawing parallels between Jesus as the Lamb of God and the lambs prepared for Temple sacrifice. Finally, this message emphasizes the unique nature of Jesus as both the Father and the Son. With this fresh understanding let us say in unison – the Lord is my shepherd!