

26—A Sheep’s View of David—The Good Shepherd

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the most well-known and beloved passages of Scripture in the Bible. Interestingly, it is written by a shepherd, David, and depicts the Lord as a shepherd.

The passage is simple. There are not a multitude of characters to remember. The principles are not overly complicated. The doctrines are not controversial. The characters are David and the Lord. The principles are those which cause us to respect any decent shepherd. The central doctrine simply is that of the ultimate goodness of God



“Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth”

1 Samuel 17:34-35 (NKJV)



fact, it may have been David’s work ethic in caring for the sheep which led God to conclude he was capable of acting as a guardian for His special people, Israel. In this lesson, we want to think about how wonderful it would have been to be a sheep in David’s pasture. Yet, as David points out in Psalm 23, how wonderful it is to have a loving Shepherd in God’s pasture as we live our lives to serve Him.

displayed in various figures. The guiding principle of the passage is laid out in verse 1, “*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*” David, the shepherd king, is willing to admit there is a higher power there to shepherd Him! Life is not man shepherding self (Jeremiah 10:23).

As New Testament Christians we know only Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is truly capable of shepherding the sheep (John 10:7-14). Jesus, as our Owner, knows our needs more than anyone else! As sheep in His pasture, we are comforted in knowing we have a Good Shepherd who truly knows us by name and cares for us sacrificially.

In the Old Testament, the picture of the shepherd was a common one to Israel. David, having been a shepherd, would have known the work well and can write his psalm about it with beautiful imagery. In

Discussion Questions:

1. Think back to David’s roles as a shepherd before he became king. What were some of the duties he had in caring for the sheep in his father’s pasture (see 1 Samuel 16:11; 17:15; 17:34-36)? If you were a sheep, why might you have liked to have had David as a shepherd?

2. In Psalm 23, David views himself as a sheep being shepherded by God. In the following verses, how do we see God providing the following services to David?

- Peace (v. 2)—
- Provision (v. 3)—
- Protection (v. 4)—
- Preparation (v. 5)—
- Preservation (v. 6)—

3. While God is the ultimate picture of all a Shepherd should be, He has often called various individuals to shepherd His people (whether the nation of Israel or the church) over time. Read Ezekiel 34:1-16. How would it have felt to have been a sheep with the shepherds of Israel Ezekiel addresses in 34:1-6. What would be the consequences of their failures (34:7-10)?

4. Who does God call to be shepherds in the New Testament and what are their roles (see Luke 15:1-5; Acts 20:17, 28-30; 1 Peter 5:1-4)? What comparisons can you make between physical shepherds and our spiritual shepherds?

5. Now, imagine yourself, as a sheep in the pasture of the church. What kinds of things would you want to see and experience from your shepherds to know they truly care for you?

Key Lessons:

- David's boyhood work as a shepherd led to a greater role as king in Israel. "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).
- When shepherds do an honorable work, the sheep are satisfied (Psalm 23:1).
- When shepherds fail, we always have a Good Shepherd who will not (John 10:11,14).

Additional Notes: _____
