

Of Shepherds & Sheep

Psalms

- Informative and Instructive
- Inspired and Authoritative
- Creative and Evoking

Today – Psalm 23

- Phillip Keller – ‘A Shepherds Look at the 23rd Psalm’
- David – using familiar images for timeless truths

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The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

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⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

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1. The Shepherd Who Initiates

a) Relationship is Clearly Stated

- the Lord is my Shepherd
- not temporary care, travelling together

b) Action Words towards Me, *makes, leads, restores*

- makes me lie down in green pastures
 - conditions to rest met
 - free from fear, disease, hunger, thirst

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- leads me beside still waters
 - able to drink and be satisfied
 - will drink from unhealthy sources & be harmed
 - Shepherd who knows where & takes us there
- leads me in paths of righteousness
 - safe routes of travel, planned and led forward
 - out of danger & disaster
 - plotted a path reflecting his Character & Care
 - David reflects on how in other places

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- Psalm 25:4-5 “Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.”

- Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

- restores my soul

- sheep in distress unable to right itself

- taking charge in distress, intervening

- repair relationship between us & Him, redeeming

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c) Two Outcomes of this

- I Shall Not Want

- lack what the Shepherd knows I need

- surrender of self – your path, your care

- For His Name's Sake

- known as His

- reflection of the Shepherd

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2. The Shepherd Responding

- in my circumstances and situations.....

a) valley of the shadow of death

- David knows this place
- distressing, life hanging in the balance
- times and places where outcome is uncertain

b) fear no evil – Why?

- you are with me
 - not simply watching, right there with you

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- Rod and Staff bring comfort
 - protection – heart of God in divine protection
 - correction – heart of God to bring back, discipline
- Prepare a Table in presence of enemies
 - not an eradication of any threat or concern
 - nourishment & community in the presence of ...
- Anoint my Head with Oil
 - shepherd – prevention of parasites & infection
 - picture of sanctified, set apart, commissioned

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- My Cup Overflows
 - I will see and be thankful for your care
 - My perspective is renewed, trust restored
 - I am not yearning to be satisfied or provided for in things that are temporal or destructive

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3. The Shepherds Promise

- the statement 'surely', this is what is in store for sheep

a) Legacy for Today

- follow me all the days of my life – earthly journey
- goodness – Shepherd desires good for his sheep
- mercy – not receiving what I do deserve

b) Assurance for Eternity

- dwell in your house forever

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So What

1. We Need to Belong to the Shepherd

- clear this applies to those in that relationship

a) action of God responded to

- lordship issue – who is in charge

- He leads – I follow, He makes – I obey, He restores, I embrace.

- trust His intention for me, turn to Him and follow His leading knowing where He desires me to be

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2. We Need to Recall Our Shepherd

a) He is with us – present in your circumstances

- never leave or forsake
- nothing can separate us

b) Deal with fear, gain comfort from.....

- presence
- protection
- correction

c) Come to the table, see the provision

- be whole in your circumstances

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3. We Need To Remember the Outcome

a) Count on this.....

- surely – renew your perspective

b) Affects my Earthly Journey & Legacy

- goodness & mercy

c) Assures My Eternity