

“THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD”

INTRODUCTION

The subject of our lesson today is entitled, “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.” These words are the first 5 words of the beloved 23rd Psalm of the Old Testament. This psalm has been memorized, put to music, sung in the church, and no doubt used innumerable times in public and in funeral services. We shall study it today.

We shall observe how David, the inspired writer and an experienced shepherd with his sheep, used his role as shepherd to illustrate what HE would DO, if he were the sheep and the Lord was his shepherd. He used the personal pronoun “I”, “me” and “my” some several times what he would be doing, and the personal pronoun “He” to illustrate what the Shepherd would do FOR him. Then, we shall look at David’s address TO the Lord as his shepherd, which in the KJV uses the personal pronouns “Thou” and “Thy” a total of 4 times.

DISCUSSION

I. First of all, let’s consider David’s address TO THE LORD AS HIS SHEPHERD.

A. David speaks of **companionship**, saying the Lord as “Thou art with me.” v. 4

1. No greater companion can anyone ever have than the Lord of heaven and earth.
 - a. Jesus has been both divine and human, and understands our weaknesses, pain and temptation. Heb. 2:18; 4:15
 - b. Jesus is the best friend a human being can have. Psa. 73:25; John 15:13-14
2. The Lord is a faithful partner, and will never abandon His sheep. Heb. 13:5
3. Jesus did not betray Judas, but Judas, a *so-called* friend, betrayed Jesus. Matt. 26:47-50

B. Then David spoke of the things that his Shepherd did to **comfort** him.

1. He used the word “rod”, which is symbolic of the fact that He disciplines and corrects through His word. John 10:27; Psa. 73:24
2. He also used word “staff” which signifies the support, like the help of a crippled man or aged person getting support from his walking cane. Heb. 11:21

C. Next, David speaks of the **communion** in the feast the Shepherd has “prepared” for him. Psa. 23:5A

1. We feast today at the table of spiritual food He has made for us as we partake of or feast on His word. 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14; Acts 20:32
2. We also are able to participate of that sacred feast weekly as we gather around the Lord’s table in communion, remembering His death. Luke 22:30; 1 Cor. 10:16

II. Secondly we shall observe what David said ABOUT the Lord as his Shepherd, in what He did FOR David.

A. 1st, he said the Lord made him “**lie down.**” Ps. 23:2A

1. This symbolizes the rest received as David had his literal sheep to lie down in the green pastures to take a rest each day.
2. We receive rest for our souls in following Jesus as our Shepherd. Matt. 11:18-29
3. We have rest from the burden of sin, and live in expectation of the eternal rest. Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:13

B. 2nd, David said the leads him beside the calming or “**still waters.**” Psa. 23:2B

1. These were NOT the rushing waters of a storm, flood or upheaval, but the “still” or calming waters, where blessings and hope are ever present.
2. This is NOT to say there ARE no disturbing waters from the wind and rains of life, but the Lord leads out of distress into a peaceful relationship with Him.

- C. 3rd, David said the Lord **restores his soul**, or renews him day by means of the still waters and rest in green pastures. Psa. 23:3A; Cf 2 Cor. 4:16
- D. 4th, David said the Lord **leads him in right paths**. Psa. 23:3B
1. The path of “righteousness” is the state in which one reaches when he obeys the gospel of Christ. Rom. 1:16-17
 2. The path of righteousness is also the way of right living, with the Lord helping us.
 - a. The Lord leads by His **word**. Psa. 73:24
 - b. The Lord also leads by His **example**. John 14:6; 8:12; 1 Pet. 2:21

III. Thirdly, David speaks of himself, in what HE was going to do, as he used the personal pronoun “I” four times in the psalm.

- A. 1st, David said **“I shall not want”** (v. 1), meaning that all of his needs would be met by the Lord.
1. All our spiritual needs for spiritual living are provided by the Lord. Matt. 6:33; 2 Pet. 1:3
 2. Through His provisions, we have access to all His spiritual blessings.
- B. 2nd, David said he would **“walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”** (v. 4)
1. The Lord has already been through the valley in His sacrificial death.
 2. He experienced this death in our behalf, and knows how to lead us to get to the other side. Heb. 2:9, 14-15
- C. 3rd, David said he would **“fear no evil”** for His rod and staff would comfort him. (v. 4)
1. He would not fear the evils men would bring upon him. Cf Matt. 10:28; Heb. 13:6
 2. He would not fear death itself, for it would open the door to greater blessings than life ever provided.
- D. 4th, David said he would **“dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”** (v. 6)
1. The house would be the heavenly home or mansion. John 14:1-3
 2. The length of his is being IN that house would be forever—eternally. Psa. 23:6; Tit. 1:2

CONCLUSION

I. Is the Lord YOUR shepherd?

- A. He is the shepherd of all who hear His word. John 10:27
1. They will NOT hear the voices of other so-called shepherds or thieves who come in to steal and to kill. v. 5; cf John 10:10; Matt. 7:15
 2. His sheep today will take ONLY the words of Christ the Shepherd.
- B. We should never question His word or try to change it to justify ourselves to keep the doctrines and precepts of men, no matter how they try to entice us to follow them. Luke 16:15

II. Christ can be your shepherd, beginning now, if you will obey His word.

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