

PSALM 23: UNDER THE SHEPHERD'S CARE

(No. 1042 – 1/18/21 – DR Zoom Meeting)

Psalm 23 (Follows Ps. 22, a Messianic prophecy about the suffering Lamb of God laying down His life on the Cross)

❖ v.1 – The Lord is my Shepherd

REVELATION, RELATIONSHIP

- Numerous examples in the Old Testament of God being the *Shepherd* and His people being the *sheep*:
 - **Gen. 48:15:** *Then he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the **God who has been my Shepherd** all my life to this day...”*
 - **Ps. 80:1:** *Hear us, **O Shepherd of Israel**, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth.*
 - **Ps. 100:3:** *Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; **we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.***
- In the New Testament, Jesus is clearly *revealed* as the Good Shepherd and the Church is His flock:
 - **Mat. 2:6:** *But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a Ruler [Jesus] who will be the **Shepherd of My people** Israel.*
 - **John 10:1-16, 27-29:**
*¹“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. ³The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. **He calls his own sheep by name** and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all **his own**, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”*
⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what He was telling them. ⁷Therefore Jesus

said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the Gate for the sheep. ⁸All who ever came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the Gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹**“I am the Good Shepherd.** The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴**I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me—**¹⁵just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father—and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶**I** have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd...

²⁷**My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.** ²⁸**I** give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹**My** Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.

- > Note the intimate relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep (vv.3, 14, 27)
- > For love, the Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep (vv.11, 15); shepherds care for their sheep
- **1 Pet. 5:1-4:** ¹*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:* ²**Be shepherds of God’s flock** that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴**And when the Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.
- **NOTE: Ministry is shepherding God’s sheep;** it is crucial that we understand these shepherd-sheep concepts!

- **Sheep need a shepherd**—without a shepherd, they wander and get lost—they *cannot* survive on their own!
 - **Isa. 53:6:** *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*
 - **Jer. 50:6:** *My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. **They wandered** over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.*
 - **Zech. 10:2:** *The idols speak deceit, **diviners see visions that lie**; they **tell dreams that are false**, they give comfort in vain. **THEREFORE, the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd.***
 - **1 Kings 22:17:** *Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd...”*
 - **Ps. 119:176:** *I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek Your servant, for I have not forgotten Your commands.*
 - **Ezek. 34:6:** *My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. **They were scattered** over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.*
 - **1 Pet. 2:24-25:** ²⁴*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*
 - **Mat. 18:12-14:** ¹²*What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost. [see Luke 15:4-7 also]*
- **Jesus cannot shepherd goats!** *Sheep* listen to Him and willingly follow Him (shepherds notch the ear of their sheep with an “earmark” signifying ownership; see Ex. 21:1-6); goats are stubborn and destined for eternal fire
 - **John 10:27:** *My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.*

- **Mat. 25:31-33, 41:** ³¹*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and **He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** ³³He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left... ⁴¹Then He will say to those on His left [goats], “Depart from Me, **you who are cursed**, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

➤ **Jesus must become “MY Shepherd”**

- He wants to *own us* and He wants us to *own Him*!
- **Song of Songs 6:3 (NKJV):** *I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine.*
- Jesus desires *relationship*, not *rules or religion*—He wants us to love Him and follow Him [see Mat. 19:16-22]

❖ **I shall not be in want**

PROVISION

- Also: “lack or **fail**”
- He supplies **everything** we need—we lack nothing!
 - **2 Pet. 1:3:** *His divine power has given us **everything we need** for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.*
 - **Heb. 13:20-21:** ²⁰*May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, **that great Shepherd of the sheep**, ²¹**equip you with everything good for doing His will**, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - **2 Cor. 9:8:** *And God is able to **make all grace abound** to you, so that **in all things at all times, having all that you need**, you will **abound in every good work**.*
 - **Eph. 1:7-8:** ⁷*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the **riches of God’s grace** ⁸**that He lavished on us** with all wisdom and understanding.*
 - **Rom. 5:17:** *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those*

who **receive God's abundant provision of grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

- The Hebrew word translated “to want” also means “to fail”—with the Shepherd **we will not fail!**

❖ v.2 – He makes me lie down in green pastures

NOURISHMENT, PEACE, CONTENTMENT

- It is impossible to make sheep lie down unless they are free from all fear, friction with others, and torment of flies or parasites; they have to be full and not hungry! **Nothing quiets/reassures the sheep like the presence of the shepherd!**
- **Sheep are helpless and defenseless**—they need the shepherd to protect them from enemies like lions, bears, or wolves. Sheep are timid and easily frightened—a stray rabbit can panic a whole flock into stampeding—when one sheep runs in fright, all the others will follow!
 - **1 Sam. 17:34-37:** ³⁴*But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. **When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock,** ³⁵*I went after it, struck it and **rescued the sheep** from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶*Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷*The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”****
 - **Amos 3:12:** *This is what the LORD says: “As a **shepherd saves from the lion’s mouth** only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved, those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and in Damascus on their couches.”*
- **There are spiritual wolves and lions** that harass and prey on God’s flock
 - **Mat. 9:35-36:** ³⁵*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and*

God needs
shepherds
like
David!

sickness. ³⁶When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were **harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**

- **Mat. 10:16:** *I am sending you out **like sheep among wolves.** Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*
- **Mat. 7:15-16:** ¹⁵***Watch out for false prophets.** They come to you **in sheep's clothing**, but inwardly they are **ferocious wolves.*** ¹⁶*By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?*
- **Acts 20:28-31:** ²⁸*Keep watch over yourselves and all the **flock** of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds of the church of God,** which He bought with His own blood.* ²⁹*I know that after I leave, **savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.*** ³⁰*Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.* ³¹*So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*
- **Sheep need to be led to the right pastures**—shepherds feed the sheep. Nourishment and rest come in “lush, tender, green pastures” when we surrender to the Shepherd in trust and obedience:
 - **John 10:9:** *Whoever enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and **find pasture.***
 - **Jer. 3:15 (NKJV):** *And I will give you **shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you** with knowledge and understanding.*
 - **John 21:15-17:** ¹⁵*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “**Feed My lambs.**”* ¹⁶*Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “**Take care of My sheep.**”* ¹⁷*The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “**Feed My sheep.**”*

➤ **The Shepherd knows best *where* we should be!**

- **Ps. 16:5-6:** ⁵*LORD, You have assigned me my portion and my cup; You have made my lot secure. ⁶The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely, I have a delightful inheritance.*
- Let the Shepherd choose your pasture and give you your “daily bread”: “Not my will but Yours be done.”
- **John 4:31-34:** ³¹*Meanwhile His disciples urged Him, “Rabbi, eat something.” ³²But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” ³³Then His disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought Him food?” ³⁴“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.”*

➤ **Be content** with who you are and what you have; beware, the world system breeds DISCONTENT! 100 years ago, the average American had 70 wants—now it is over 500 (TV ads)!

- Paul learned a **SECRET (Phil. 4:12-13)**:
¹²*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the **secret of being content in any and every situation**, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.*
- **Heb. 13:5-6:** ⁵*Keep your lives free from the love of money and **be content with what you have**, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” ⁶So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*
- **1 Tim. 6:6-10:** ⁶*But **godliness with contentment is great gain**. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will **be content** with that. ⁹People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the **love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
- NOTE: The way to get & stay free from the love of money is to keep giving it away!

- The Shepherd wants us to be free from care, worry, and anxiety
- **Mat. 6:25-34:** ²⁵*Therefore I tell you, **do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.** Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?* ²⁶*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?* ²⁷*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?* ²⁸*And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.* ²⁹*Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.* ³⁰*If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?* ³¹*So **do not worry**, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?”* ³²*For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.* ³³*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* ³⁴*Therefore **do not worry about tomorrow**, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*
 - **Mat. 13:22:** *The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the **worries** [“cares” – KJV] of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.*
 - **Luke 10:38-42:** ³⁸*As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him.* ³⁹*She had a sister called **Mary**, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what He said.* ⁴⁰***But Martha was distracted** by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, “Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”* ⁴¹*“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “**you are worried and upset about many things,*** ⁴²***but only one thing is needed.** Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”*
 - **Phil. 4:6-7:** ***Do not be anxious about anything**, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* ⁷*And the **peace of God**,*

which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- **1 Pet. 5:7:** *Cast all your anxiety* [“cares” – KJV] *on Him because He cares for you.*
- Stop “sweating!”
 - > **Gen. 3:17-19:** ¹⁷To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “**Cursed** is the ground because of you; through **painful toil** you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹**By the sweat of your brow** you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”
 - > **Ezek. 44:18:** *They [priests] are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire.*

❖ He leads me beside quiet waters

REST, REFRESHING, QUIETNESS

- In our hyper, techno-culture, we NEED QUIET!
 - **Isa. 30:15:** *In repentance and **rest** is your salvation, in **quietness** and trust is your strength.*
 - **Isa. 32:17:** *The fruit of righteousness will be **peace**; the effect of righteousness will be **quietness** and confidence forever.*
 - **Zeph. 3:17** – *He will quiet you with His love* [His love will calm all your fears!]
- “Quiet” [Heb. *menûchâh* = “repose, rest, still, quiet”]
 - Used in **Ps. 95:11:** *So, I declared on oath in My anger, “They shall never enter My **rest**.”*
 - We must **enter His rest** (**Heb. 4:1-11**):
¹Therefore, since **the promise of entering His rest still stands**, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard

was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. ³Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in My anger, “They shall never enter My rest.” And yet His work has been finished since the creation of the world.

⁴For somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all His work.” ⁵And again in the passage above He says, “They shall never enter My rest.”

⁶It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. ⁷Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later He spoke through David, as was said before: “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹**There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;** ¹⁰for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests [“ceases”] **from his own work**, just as God did from His. ¹¹Let us, therefore, **make every effort to enter that rest**, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

- **Ps. 46:10-11:** ¹⁰“**Be still** [“cease striving” – NASB], and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” ¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

➤ We need to **drink of the Holy Spirit** and be **refreshed** in God’s Presence

- **Acts 3:19:** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that **times of refreshing** [lit. “recovery of breath, revival”] may come from the Lord.
- **John 7:37-39:** ³⁷On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him **come to Me and drink**. ³⁸Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water** will flow from within him.” ³⁹By this **He meant the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- **1 Cor. 12:13: (NASB):** *For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were **all made to drink of one Spirit.***
- **Rev. 21:6:** *He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to **drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.**”*
- **Rev. 22:17:** *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him **take the free gift of the water of life.***

❖ v.3 – He restores my soul

RESTORATION

- Heb. *shoob* = “to turn, bring, or carry back home; to recover, refresh, rescue”
- Restoration may involve a return to a former state/position
 - **Gen. 40:12-13:** ¹²“*This is what it [the cupbearer’s dream] means,” Joseph said to him. “The three branches are three days. ¹³Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and **restore you to your position**, and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand, **just as you used to do** when you were his cupbearer.*”
- Restoration may also be a recovery of something lost—it usually includes REPENTANCE!
 - **Jer. 15:19:** *Therefore, this is what the LORD says: “If you **repent**, I will **restore** you that you may serve Me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be My spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.*
 - **Hos. 6:1-3:** ¹*Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. ²After two days He will **revive us**; on the third day He will **restore us**, that we may live in His presence. ³Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.*

- David understood the need for repentance and restoration
 - **Ps. 51:10-12:** ¹⁰*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
- He restores **my soul** (personal restoration)
- Areas where we may need personal restoration or recovery:
 - *First love*
 - > **Rev. 2:4-5:** ⁴*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. ⁵Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*
 - > In Christ's restoration/reinstatement of Simon Peter, the real question was, "Simon, **do you truly love Me?**" [see John 21:15-17]
 - *Relationships with God or others*
 - > **Ps. 80:3:** *Restore us, O God; make Your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*
 - > **Mat. 5:23-25:** ²³*Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.*
 - *Faith*
 - > **Luke 22:31-32:** ³¹*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back ["converted, returned"], strengthen your brothers.*

- *Sight/vision*
 - > **Luke 4:18:** *The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and **recovery of sight for the blind**, to release the oppressed...*
 - > **Rev. 3:16-18:** ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, **blind** and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and **salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.**)
- *Joy of salvation* [see Ps. 51:12 above]
- *Physical health*
 - > **Jer. 30:17:** *“But I will **restore you to health** and heal your wounds,” declares the LORD, “because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.”*
- *Spiritual strength*
 - > **1 Pet. 5:10:** *And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself **restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.***
 - > **Ps. 103:2-5:** ²Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits— ³who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵who satisfies your desires with good things so that your **youth is renewed like the eagle’s.**
 - > **Isa. 40:29-31:** ²⁹**He gives strength to the weary** and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹**but those who hope in the LORD will *renew their strength.*** They will soar on wings **like eagles**; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

- *Mind/inner man*
 - > **Rom. 12:2:** *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
 - > **2 Cor. 4:16:** *Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet **inwardly we are being renewed day by day**.*
 - > **Col. 3:9-10:** *⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have **put on the new self**, which is being **renewed in knowledge** in the image of its Creator.*

❖ **He guides me in paths of righteousness
for His name's sake**

GUIDANCE

- As emphasized in the introduction, sheep CANNOT guide themselves—they are always prone to wander, scatter, and get lost! Sheep can't make it on their own:
 - **Jer. 10:23:** *I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is **not for man to direct his steps**.*
 - **Ps. 78:52-54:** *⁵²But He brought His people out like a flock; **He led them like sheep** through the desert. ⁵³**He guided them safely**, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies. ⁵⁴Thus He brought them to the border of His holy land, to the hill country His right hand had taken.*
 - **Ex. 13:21:** *By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud **to guide them on their way** and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.*
 - **Isa. 40:10-11:** *¹⁰See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and His arm rules for Him. See, His reward is with Him, and His recompense accompanies Him. ¹¹**He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.***

- Prayers for guidance often found in Scripture:
 - **Ps. 5:8:** *Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies—make straight Your way before me.*
 - **Ps. 27:11:** *Teach me Your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.*
- Paths [Heb. *ma'gâl* = a circular track (like a racetrack)] of righteousness; God has a way or course that He has already set or “marked out” for us:
 - **Heb. 12:1:** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run** with perseverance **the race marked out for us.***
 - **Mat. 7:13-14:** ¹³*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and **narrow the road** that leads to life, and only a few find it.*
- God has prepared works for each of us in advance!
 - **Eph. 2:10:** *For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good **works, which God prepared in advance** for us to do.*
 - Find your unique path/calling – don’t copy or imitate others
 - [*Penguin paths in Australia*]
- These are paths of **righteousness**—it the right way!
- God will do it **for His name’s sake**
 - God’s name and honor are on the line—He is glorified when we do right, when our lives bring Him glory
 - **Ezek. 36:20-23, 32:** ²⁰*And wherever they went among the nations **they profaned My holy name**, for it was said of them, “These are the LORD’s people, and yet they had to leave His land.” ²¹**I had concern for My holy name**, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. ²²Therefore say to the house of Israel, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is **not for your sake**, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, **but for the sake of My holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³I*

will show the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show Myself holy through you before their eyes... [vv.24-30: promises of the New Covenant!] ³²I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

❖ **v.4 – Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me**

ASSURANCE

- “Yea, though” (KJV) indicates that the question is not *if*, but *when* we will pass through this valley of trouble or death!
 - **Heb. 9:27:** *Just as man is **destined to die** once, and after that to face judgment.*
 - All will die except for those who are alive in Christ at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17)
- For the believer, death is just a **shadow** and it’s like sleeping because Jesus took the sting of death on the Cross
 - **1 Cor. 15:54-57:** ⁵⁴*When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “**Death has been swallowed up in victory.**”* ⁵⁵*“Where, O death, is your victory? **Where, O death, is your sting?**”* ⁵⁶*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - No more fear of death (**Heb. 2:14-15**):
¹⁴*Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that **by His death** He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—* ¹⁵*and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.***
- “Valley of the shadow of death” seems to suggest real life-threatening danger

- God's Presence is the *ONLY* cure for fear!
 - **Josh. 1:9:** *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. **Do not be terrified**; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*
 - **Isa. 41:10:** *So, **do not fear, for I am with you**; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*
 - **Heb. 13:5-6:** *⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "**Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.**" ⁶So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; **I will not be afraid.** What can man do to me?"*
- NOTHING reassures sheep like the PRESENCE OF THE SHEPHERD!
 - **Ex. 33:12-16:** *¹²Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but You have not let me know **whom You will send** with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with Me.' ¹³If You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favor with You. Remember that this nation is Your people." ¹⁴The LORD replied, "**My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.**" ¹⁵Then Moses said to Him, "**If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.**" ¹⁶How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with Your people **unless You go with us**? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*
 - **Ps. 16:11 (NKJV):** *You will show me the path of life; **in Your presence is fullness of joy**; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

❖ **Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me**

COMFORT

- **Lev. 27:32** - the rod was used to **count** the sheep – we are comforted knowing that we are in the “number”, i.e., I am known by God (Luke 10:20)
- Rod used for **protection** from enemies

- Rod used for **discipline**, correction – He only chastens “sons” (Heb. 12:5-6; Rev. 3:19); even though it hurts, God’s correction brings great comfort to us
- Staff used to **gather**, rescue, direct the sheep

❖ **v.5 – You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies**

FAVOR, VICTORY

- We sit down at a table in the midst of conflict (this is different from lying down in green pastures beside still waters!)
 - God feeds and sustains us when we are in battle
 - Even when David was fleeing from Absalom, God brought abundant provisions to sustain him (**2 Sam. 17:27-29**):
²⁷*When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim*
²⁸*brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,* ²⁹*honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows’ milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, “The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert.”*
 - A table signifies intimate fellowship and acceptance (**2 Sam. 9:7-11**): ⁷*“Don’t be afraid,” David said to him [Mephibosheth], “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”* ¹¹ *...So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons.*
- God’s goodness and favor provide a feast right in middle of the battlefield to shame our enemies!
 - **Ps. 86:17:** *Give me a sign of Your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for You, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me.*
 - **Ps. 27:5-6:** ⁵*For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.* ⁶*Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at*

His tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

- There are two opposing mentalities: The enemies will devour us *OR* they will be bread for us!
 - **Num. 13:31-32:** ³¹*But the men [ten spies] who had gone up with him said, "**We can't attack those people**; they are stronger than we are."* ³²*And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored **devours those living in it**. All the people we saw there are of great size.*
 - **Num 14:7-9 (NKJV):** ⁷*And they [Joshua & Caleb, the other two spies] spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD, **nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread** ["we'll have them for lunch!" – MSG]; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them."*

❖ **You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows**

ANOINTING, OVERFLOWING

- Receive a fresh anointing (baptism) of the Holy Spirit
- The Shepherd takes us from not being in want (v.1), to resting in contentment in green pastures (v.2), to a table spread in the presence of our enemies (v.5), to an *overflowing* life— now we are overflowing with a surplus to bless others!
 - **John 7:38-39 (NKJV):** ³⁸*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**"* ³⁹*But this He spoke concerning the Spirit...*
 - **John 10:10 (AMP):** *The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it **in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)**.*
 - **Luke 6:38:** *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and **running over** will be put into your bosom.*

❖ **v.6 – Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life:**

BLESSING

- Surely! What certainty and assurance the Shepherd gives us!
- “Love” [Heb. *chesed* = “mercy, kindness”]
- “Follow” [lit. “run after, pursue, hunt down”]
 - We don’t pursue blessings—we pursue God and the blessings will chase after us!
 - God’s goodness and blessings will “overtake us” when we walk in obedience (Deut. 28:1)

❖ **And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever**

HOPE

- Blessed assurance of life after death for all eternity
- **2 Cor. 5:1:** *Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.*
- **John 14:1-3:** *¹Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.*

❖ **THE SHEPHERD’S CARE SUMMARIZED**

1. Revelation, relationship
2. Provision, nourishment
3. Peace, contentment
4. Rest, refreshing
5. Restoration, guidance
6. Assurance, comfort
7. Favor, victory
8. Anointing, overflowing
9. Blessing, hope