

Perfect Peace

Psalm 23

Big Idea: Life is full of difficulty and uncertainty, but perfect peace is available to those whose walk is closely in step with the good Shepherd.

I. The Shepherd's Identity (1)

A. The Lord= Jehovah (YHWH)

1. Why not Elohim?
2. Why not Adonai?
3. Why not El Shadai?
4. The significance of the name **Jehovah** is that it is the name of the “Covenant-keeping” God. Because He is a Sovereign Shepherd, He keeps all His promises.

Joshua 21:45 “Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.”

Isaiah 46:11 The Lords says, “Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it*, *surely* I will do it.”

B. “MY”= Personal

1. In John 10 when Jesus calls Himself the “good shepherd” He speaks in terms of an intimate relationship with His sheep. He calls us “My sheep.”
2. He is the shepherd who personally chooses His sheep and calls them to Himself by name.
3. Likewise, the sheep love and trust their shepherd. They hear His voice and follow him. This is a very personal relationship. It isn't just about “THE” shepherd, by “MY Shepherd.”

C. “Shepherd” = Provider/Protector

1. We learned in our study of John 10 that “Shepherd” connotes the idea of Lord, Master, Leader.
2. The reality is, everyone has a “master.” No one is truly autonomous. We all are ruled by something or someone.
 - a. Some are ruled by a desire for money; others by fame, power, pleasure, or peace. But none of these make good “masters,” none are worthy shepherds.
 - b. If you are letting one of these false shepherds lead you, you’re in serious trouble. Why? Because, they are all liars. Idols always lie about what they can and will provide you, but that is simply their strategy for making us their slaves.
 - c. Money, authority, pleasure, and peace are good things, but they make lousy shepherds.
 - d. The Lord, however, is the perfect Shepherd. He is worthy to be trusted and followed. As your shepherd, He will always provide for you exactly what you need.

II. The Shepherd’s Provision (1-3)

A. “**I shall not want**” (i.e. Lack).

1. What does it mean to “want”?
 - a. It doesn’t mean *to desire*.
 - b. It means I shall not “lack.”
2. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. (“I will not hunger”)
 - a. **Matthew 4:4** But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (response to temptation in the wilderness).
 - b. **John 6:35** Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger,”
 - c. Jesus is speaking about **soul hunger**. What does your soul long for? Does your soul hunger for God? Are you trying to satisfy your soul with things that cannot satisfy?
 - 1) Jer. 2:13 Broken cisterns

- 2) The fundamental problem with mankind is that we tend toward seeking satisfaction of our deepest desires in something other than God. It might be food, or sports, sex, work, accomplishment... But these are just empty “spiritual carbohydrates.” They can never satisfy.
- d. Your shepherd is committed to feeding you with what you really need and what really satisfies. What is that? It’s the word of God. The word of God is the revelation of God’s Person, Promises, and Power toward us who believe.
 - e. **What does God promise? What do you need?** Purpose, peace, comfort, refuge, strength, wisdom, help...? If you are one of God’s sheep, all of His promises for you are “yes” and “amen” (2 Cor. 1:20). They are yours in abundance when you follow the good Shepherd.
 - f. Because the Lord is your shepherd, you will never lack. He makes you lie down in green pastures... then,

2. He leads me beside still/quiet waters. (I will not thirst.)

- a. Sheep need quiet waters. They need to drink in safety.
- b. **John 4:14** “...whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- c. **John 7:37-38**, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"
- d. **Psalms 36:7-8** “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. ⁸ *They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.*”

- e. You will never hunger and you will never thirst. In other words, your soul can never hunger or thirst in a manner that I cannot satisfy. So “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Taste, and drink, and keep tasting and keep drinking.”

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters....”

3. He restores (strengthens) my soul.

- a. It is important to note that David uses this same term in Psalm 19 when speaking of the Word of God. He writes (19:7) “The law of the Lord is perfect, ***restoring the soul.***”
- b. The word for “soul” here is *nephesh* and can be translated by a number of English words such as “**life,**” “**person,**” “**self,**” and “**heart.**” It speaks of the **inner person, your spirit or soul.**
- c. The psalmist is saying that the word of God has the power to convert, revive, and refresh your soul. When internalized, meditated upon and obeyed it has the power to banish anxiety, destroy depression, put fear to flight and replace inner turmoil with the peace, and joy, that comes by faith.
- d. You see, you don’t need Prozac. You need the power of Christ. You don’t need anti-anxiety drugs, you need the a Shepherd who is completely dependable, who rules the world and everything in it, and who loves you enough to give you everything you need for life and godliness. The good shepherd is the only One who has the power to **restore your soul.**
- e. ***Matthew 11:28-30*** Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST

FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

4. He guides me in the paths of righteousness (right paths).
 - a. **John 8:12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
 - b. The good shepherd is not only sovereign He is also omniscient. He knows everything! He knows where He is leading you, and everywhere He leads you is the right path.
 - c. How do you counsel a person who is suffering? How do you encourage someone who has just lost their job, their home, their health, their son, or mother, or wife?
 - d. In my own life this statement "He guides me in the paths of righteousness" has been my greatest comfort in the midst of suffering.
5. **Do you want peace in your heart in the midst of suffering? Speak truth to your soul! Tell your soul, "This is the right path."**

NOTE:" For His name sake." It is His reputation at stake.

Ezekiel: "Then you will know that I am the Lord." His name is on the line. In Isaiah he keeps saying, For the sake of my name, my glory, for my own sake. I will save you for my own sake "so that my name will not be defamed among the nations." **He will be faithful even when we are faithless.**

We've seen the Shepherd's identity, provision...

III. The Shepherd's Protection (3-5)

1. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (i.e. darkest shadows). **It is going to happen.**

2. *The Christian Life is not like building a house in a land of no storms; it is like building a house no storm can destroy.*
3. “I will fear no evil [WHY?] for You are with me!”
 - a. There are an awful lot of psychological issues people struggle with today, and many (if not most) of them can be traced back to FEAR.
 - b. **Isaiah 41:10** ‘Do not fear, for **I am with you**; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’
 - c. **Psalm 56:3–4** “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. ⁴ In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can *mere* man do to me?”
 - d. **1 John 4:4** “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because *greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*”
4. “Your rod and Your staff comfort me.”

David Lion/Bear (1 Samuel 17:33-36)

David & Goliath (1 Samuel 17:42-47)

The enemies teeth may be sharp but my shepherd carries a big stick.

The Shepherd’s identity, provision, Protection...

IV. The Shepherd’s Palace

1. “You prepare a table before me.” (A Banquet)
2. “You have anointed my head with oil.” (**Luke 7:44-46**)
3. “My cup runneth over”

John 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

4. "Surely goodness and mercy (i.e. love) shall follow me all the days of my life." **"Fruit of the Spirit" Galatians 5**
5. "And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Eternity is Secure

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

How Do I Find Perfect Peace in this life?

1. Study and meditate on the nature and character of the Lord, Your Shepherd (His infinite attributes).
2. Identify and meditate on the promises of God that correspond to your present trial
3. Identify the idols you tend to run to for comfort and refuge and repent of your idolatry. They are "broken cisterns" and Christ is the "spring of living water."
4. Stop listening to your heart but speak truth to it instead. If you are following the good shepherd than "this is the "right path.".
5. Rest in Christ who loves you, has forgiven you of all your sin, and is preparing a place for you in His heavenly home.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

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