

Psalm 23

Introduction

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23 is the introduction of a group of psalms (23-28) which share many common themes. All of them deal in some way with God's protective shepherding of his people.

This psalm is written by David. Being the youngest son in his family, David got the job of shepherding sheep. Shepherding, as an occupation, was quite low on the social scale of that day. David, like his ultimate successor, knew the great importance of shepherding not only sheep, but most importantly people in their spiritual lives.

David understood what a good shepherd needed to do and he did his job very well. David was also a person of deep faith. These two roles helped him to see how the God of his faith would be the perfect shepherd.

Psalm 23 is intended to give comfort to every believer at all times and under all conditions. The Psalm recalls to believers, the mercy and loving kindness of God. This alone makes for comforting reading.

Regarding this Psalm Luther says: "A psalm of thanks in which a Christian heart praises and thanks God for teaching him and keeping him on the right way, comforting and protecting him in every danger through His holy Word"

We, like the psalmist are spiritual sheep. Our faith in the Good Shepherd leads us through all of life's circumstances. God knows our every spiritual need. There is nothing in our lives that He cannot and will not handle. This should bring us great comfort and move us to continually give thanks. The psalm finishes with us spending eternity in His presence.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You alone are the one Good Shepherd. Thanks be to You for all Your spiritual and bodily benefits. Let the Word of your salvation dwell among us richly. Never let your trusty staff, the Word of Your promise, be taken from us. And when the shadow of death spreads over us, conduct us safely to the heavenly home you have prepared for us.