



Sermon Series: All Signs Point to Jesus

To be used with Session 5: The Sign of His Presence

Sermon Title: The Lord As Shepherd

Scripture: Psalm 23

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “The Sign of His Presence,” this sermon builds upon today’s Bible study through the study of Psalm 23 and seeking to better understand the character of the Lord as Shepherd.

Introduction: Several years ago, Lynn Anderson wrote a book entitled, *They Smell Like Sheep*. The theme of the book is built around a question. How do you know if someone is a good shepherd? The answer is, if the shepherd smells like sheep, then he is a good shepherd. Shepherds are close to their sheep and the sheep follow them. Shepherds protect the sheep and seek to lead the sheep to green pastures. Many of us will recognize today’s text. Let’s look at it through in the context of verse 1 that the Lord is our shepherd.

1. As shepherd, the Lord leads us (v. 2-3).

To have a proper understanding of this psalm, we need to first look at verse 1. David said the Lord was his shepherd. He did not say that his wealth, fame, family heritage, or anything else was his shepherd. Instead, he clearly articulated the Lord was his shepherd. Because of this truth, there were certain things that David could rest on.

As shepherd, the Lord leads His sheep beside quiet waters and along the right path. We have all heard that sheep can be unnecessarily apprehensive on occasion. If you approach them too quickly, they can scatter and become difficult to corral. If we are being honest, we too can become apprehensive. We fret over a test in school or at a doctor’s office. We receive an email from the boss asking us for an appointment and then can’t sleep at night.

Enter, the Lord, who is the shepherd. He leads His sheep beside quiet waters so that the sheep can receive the necessary nourishment. He leads the sheep down the right path, so that they do not get lost. We too need nourishment, and He invites us to feast upon every word that comes from Him. We too can get lost, yet He told us that we are blessed when we hunger and thirst for His righteousness. The Lord, who is the good shepherd, will also come looking for us when we wander from the flock.

2. As shepherd, the Lord comforts us (v. 4).

Life can be difficult. Those who know, love, and follow Jesus are not immune from this fact. God never promised us a life without struggle. This text reveals that those who have the Lord as their shepherd will even go through the darkest valleys of life. Each of us have

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experienced some form of this dark valley. It may have been the passing of a loved one. The grief of a wayward child. The unmet expectations of a spouse. Our dark valleys are as unique as each one of us.

The encouragement, however, is twofold. First, we go *through* the valley as opposed to living in it. Going through something shows progress. We do not know how quickly the progress is, but we can rest assured that progress is being had. Secondly, we can be encouraged in that the shepherd is with us and comforting us. One of the biggest fears that we have is the fear of being alone. We hated this as a child, and this is why many of us had a night light. We still do not like being alone, especially when we are walking through our darkest valley. Even though we may feel alone, the truth of God's Word assures us that we are not because our shepherd is with us. He is comforting us. When Jesus was here on earth He told His followers, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). Our darkest valleys can produce scary times. Our shepherd, however, is there to comfort us each step of the way.

3. As shepherd, the Lord provides for us (v. 5-6).

If you have ever spent time in the South, you know that one of the things we do for one another during a time of struggle is bring a meal. If a loved one passes away, a casserole dish is sure to help. If we are let go from a job, a good plate of Texas-style BBQ is sure to help. While we need not assume that our shepherd is Southern, we do see that He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies. Food and nourishment are necessities. When we are struggling through this life, we can see that the shepherd is able and willing to meet our needs. We may feel like our enemies are soon to overtake us. Yet the shepherd is assured to win out over our enemies.

We can also rest assured that He will provide for us throughout eternity as we dwell in His house. A key word to expound upon here is the word *dwell*. If we are a guest in someone's home, we will not be staying long. Being a guest is not a long term status. If, however, we are dwelling somewhere, we know that we will be there for a while. Our shepherd is not offering us a temporary seat on the couch. Instead, He offers us permanent residency in which we can experience His goodness and faithful love all our days.

Conclusion: As we conclude this sermon, we see that our shepherd leads, comforts, and provides. The key to personally embracing these truths resides within verse 1. David confidently stated, "The Lord is my shepherd." He did not say his so-called good works was his shepherd. He did not say the Lord would one day be his shepherd. He did not even say a lord was his shepherd. Instead, he proclaimed, "The Lord is my shepherd." If we want to trust the Lord to lead, comfort, and provide, then we need to make sure that He too is our shepherd.

Author Bio - *Tod Tanner has degrees from Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his family reside in Wartrace, TN and he is serving as the Executive Vice President of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation.*