

FBC Service Sunday March 22, 2026, The Shepherd Who Leads Us Home Psalm 23

Intro: Few passages in all of Scripture are as beloved as Psalm 23. It's read in hospitals, whispered beside hospital beds, spoken at funerals, and memorized by children in Sunday school.

In moments of peace and in moments of grief, believers return again and again to these simple yet powerful words.

King David wrote this psalm not merely as poetry but as testimony. He knew what it meant to be a shepherd. As a young boy he tended sheep in the hills around Bethlehem. He knew their needs, their fears, their wandering tendencies, and their total dependence on the shepherd.

When David later became king of Israel, he still remembered those fields. And under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote these words that have comforted believers for thousands of years:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Psalm 23 is not just about sheep. It's about the care of God for His people. It's about the Shepherd who walks with us in life, walks with us through death, and ultimately leads us home. **Today we want to look at this psalm through several simple truths about our Shepherd.**

1. He Provides All We Need Verse 1

David begins with one of the most comforting statements in the Bible:

In the familiar King James Version he says, *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me lie down in green pastures."*

The New Living Translation writes, *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need."*

Think about the profound nature of that simple statement.

The LORD is the One who created the Universe. He is timeless. He possesses all power, has all knowledge, and is complete, needing nothing.

Yet He has condescended to be the Shepherd of rebellious sheep like you and me. He takes care of us and when He does so, we are well cared for.

He Provides Rest (v.2)

Image: He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams.

Sheep are nervous animals, easily frightened, and prone to wander, thinking grass is greener on the other side of the fence. I have seen them caught with their horns trying to get through a hole in a barbed wire fence.

Shepherds say sheep will not lie down unless several conditions are met. They must be free from fear, free from hunger, and confident that the shepherd is nearby. **Only then will they rest.**

David says the Lord does that for His people. He makes us lie down in green pastures.

Notice the word **makes**. Sometimes we're so busy, so anxious, so burdened by life that we forget how to rest in God. We carry our worries, our fears, our responsibilities, and our grief until we are exhausted

Do you see how much like Sheep we are? Filled with anxiety that keeps us awake.

Feeling overwhelmed by a to-do-list that sometimes seems unmanageable?

My brothers and sisters, hear the words of the Good Shepherd, "Come and rest."

Jesus echoed this same truth in Matthew 11:28:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

True rest is not found in vacations, entertainment, or distractions. **True rest is found in trusting the Shepherd.**

2. He Renews Us Verse 3a

David continues: *"He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."*

The King James says, *"He restores my soul"* others say, "He restores my life" The New Living Translation says "He renews my strength"

Life has a way at times of draining us.

The pressures of work, the struggles of family life, disappointments, illness, and grief can wear down the human spirit.

But David says the Shepherd restores the soul.

The word "**restore**" means to revive, to renew.

God continually renews His people.

He restored Peter after his failure.

He restored the woman caught in sin.

He restored the discouraged disciples.

And He still restores His people today.

For those who are grieving, this truth becomes especially precious. When we lose someone we love dearly, our hearts feel broken and empty.

But then our Shepherd walks beside us, beside still waters, and He gently restores our souls.

I'm sure many here this morning can testify to the truth of this.

He Guides Us Verse 3b

David continues:

“He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

Like a shepherd who leads sheep away from dangerous rocky paths, God guides us in paths of holiness and safety, sparing us from the consequences of straying.

Sheep are famous for getting lost. They wander off easily and quickly lose their way.

David says the Lord leads us in the right paths.

I have seen where sheep took a wrong path and ran over a cliff and others followed.

Sadly, I have seen people do the same thing. They took a wrong path.

Sheep look to their shepherd for guidance and protection.

Life is filled with decisions and crossroads. We often ask questions like:

“Which way should I go?” “What decision should I make?” “What does God want for my life?”

The good news is this: our Shepherd leads us.

Sometimes He leads through His Word.

Sometimes He leads through wise counsel.

Sometimes He leads through circumstances.

Sometimes He leads through the quiet prompting of the Holy Spirit.

But the Shepherd never abandons His sheep.

And notice something beautiful here: David says the Lord leads us *“for His name’s sake.”*

In other words, God’s reputation is tied to the care of His people. The Shepherd is committed to guiding His flock.

"For His Name’s Sake": What a glorious promise this is!

This indicates the Lord acts for His own honour and glory. God's people can hang on to this great promise that Almighty God strives to uphold His reputation as a faithful, loving Shepherd.

4. He Takes Away Our Fear Verse 4

Perhaps the most famous line of this psalm is verse 4:

Image: *“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 staff, they comfort me.”*

Notice David does not say **if** we walk through the valley. He says **when** we walk through it.

We all know life includes valleys. There are seasons of sickness, sorrow, and loss.

There are moments when darkness surrounds us.

There are valleys in life for all of us, but when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we either walk it with Jesus or we walk it alone.

The Shepherd's Protection

Pat Choy did not walk this valley alone. She walked it with Jesus.

David says something remarkable: *"I will fear no evil."* Why?

Because the Shepherd is present.

Notice the change in language. Earlier David spoke about God in the third person: **He leads... He restores... He guides.**

But in the valley David switches to the second person:

"You are with me." Your rod and staff they comfort me.

When life grows darkest, our God grows nearest.

The Shepherd Carries a Rod and a Staff.

The rod was used to protect the sheep from predators.

The staff was used to guide and rescue wandering sheep.

Both represent the Shepherd's care.

In the valley, God protects us and guides us.

And even in the darkest valley, the valley of death, the believer does not walk alone.

5. He Provides for Us Verse 5

David then shifts the picture from a shepherd in the field to a host at a table.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."

This is the language of abundance.

The Shepherd not only sustains His people, He blesses them.

Even in difficult circumstances, God provides what we need.

David says God prepares a table in the presence of enemies.

That means God's provision is not dependent on perfect circumstances.

And then we read, "My cup overflows."

Can we not echo those words in our own lives when we think of how God moved in our lives to save us and forgive our sins as we looked to the Son of God who laid down his life for us on a cross at Calvary?

The believer's life is not merely surviving; it's overflowing with grace.

6. Final Promise Verse 6

The psalm ends with one of the most beautiful promises in Scripture:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

David looks beyond this life.

He says that goodness and mercy follow him every day. The words **"follow me"** actually mean, **pursue me**. God's goodness is chasing after His people.

But the greatest promise comes in the final line: **He leads us Home**

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

For Pat Choy, this world was not the end of her story.

The Shepherd led her through life, through valleys, and ultimately home.

Jesus spoke about that home in John 14 when He said:

"In my Father's house are many rooms... I go to prepare a place for you."

Heaven is not merely a place. It's the place where God's people live forever in His presence.

It is a prepared place for a prepared people.

That simple phrase carries eternal weight. It reminds us that heaven is not an accident, not an afterthought, not a vague hope floating somewhere beyond the clouds. Heaven is a place intentionally designed, lovingly prepared, and perfectly suited for those who belong to the Shepherd.

When David writes, *"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever,"* he's not speaking in wishful thinking.

He's expressing confident assurance. The Shepherd who leads us through green pastures and dark valleys is also preparing our final home. The same hand that guides us now has already gone ahead of us.

And that promise becomes especially precious when we face the reality of death.

When a believer in Jesus dies they are not gone forever. **They are home with the Shepherd.**

For the believer, heaven is not uncertain, it is secure.

We believe Pat Choy is now at home with the Good Shepherd.

A Word of Comfort and Assurance

This beloved Psalm causes us to think of precious loved ones who have gone before us.

For those whose lives have been committed into God's hands, death is not the end, it's a doorway.

The Shepherd who walked beside them in life walked with them through the valley of the shadow of death and brought them safely home.

Scripture tells every believer in Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:8, that to be **absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.**

That means when believers close their eyes in this world, they open them in the presence of Jesus.

Think how glorious this was for Pat in the famous words of Finally Home," written by James Buchanan Coats.

Think of stepping on shore, and finding it Heaven,

Of touching a hand and finding it God's hand!

Of breathing new air, and finding it celestial,

Of waking up in Glory, and finding it Home

For those who have trusted Christ, the Shepherd does not abandon His sheep at death. He carries them home.

And what a home it is.

A place with no pain. No sickness. No sorrow. No tears.

A place where Christ Himself is the light.

The Shepherd's Invitation

Psalm 23 begins with a very personal statement:

*"The Lord is **my** shepherd."*

David did not say **a** shepherd.

He did not say the shepherd of Israel.

He said my shepherd. This psalm belongs to those who know the Shepherd personally.

Jesus identified Himself as that Shepherd in John 10:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

The cross of Jesus proves the love of the Shepherd.

Jesus laid down His life so that lost sheep could be forgiven, restored, and brought into God's flock.

The invitation of the gospel is simple:

Trust the Shepherd. Follow the Shepherd. Belong to the Shepherd.

And when you do, Psalm 23 becomes your testimony as well.

Conclusion: Psalm 23 reminds us that the Shepherd:

Provides rest when life overwhelms us.

Renews our weary souls. He guides us along the right paths.

Takes away our fear in life's darkest valleys.

Provides for us even in difficult circumstances. And one day, He brings us safely home.

From the green pastures of life to the gates of heaven, the Shepherd never leaves His sheep.

And for every believer, the final destination is the same:

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Imagine how the view of life and living would change for so many if they could believe these truths.

Stress would be gone. **Fear would give way to faith.** Despair would be replaced by hope.

All this is ours if we will trust our lives to our great Shepherd.

So who is your Shepherd? Who do you trust when life gets hard or the way becomes uncertain? To whom do you look for direction? A teacher, a friend, a psychologist, a coach or even a spouse?

These may all be good people, **but the truth is that they too are but sheep.** They can never do what only the Good Shepherd can do.

When you finally come to the place where all of your life is placed in Christ's care, you will be able to say with David: *"The Lord is **MY** Shepherd, and I have everything that I need."*

Thanks Be to God for The Shepherd Who Leads Us All the Way Home.