



June 7, 2026  
Series: Week 1  
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## “Living in the Fullness of the Shepherd’s Care”- Psalm 23:1

### Background of Psalm 23

#### **Context...**

- Written by David as an older man... looking back at God’s provision through the dangers and triumphs of his life.
- Psalm 23 is known as a “wilderness psalm” because it reflects back on David in the Judean Wilderness and the Children of Israel traveling through the wilderness after God delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
- God did not immediately deliver them to the Promised Land, but instead, guided them on a journey **through** the wilderness.

#### **Conclusion...**

- Just like David and the children of Israel, we are on a journey.
- On this journey we experience many of the same things: ex. People we are close to letting us down, giants that seem impossible to conquer, being overlooked, scary paths that lead to unknown places.

#### **Consider...**

- What are you facing right now in your life that is similar to the ones that David and the children of Israel faced? Would you like some guidance and help to get through whatever you are facing?

### The LORD is My Shepherd - Psalm 23:1a

#### **Context...**

- The** indicates that the next word, LORD, is unique.
- LORD** is the Hebrew word, Yahweh. It means He is self-subsistent — the One who has always existed and depends on no one else for life. The God who created the universe and is all-powerful, all-knowing. I AM WHO I AM.
- Is** is the present tense — currently, presently, right this minute... and ultimately it is the grammatical glue that allows us to construct reality, state truth, and describe states of being.
- My** is a very personal, possessive pronoun, always used as an adjective to clarify meaning. We use this word to show ownership
- Shepherd** - The role of a shepherd required defending the flock with a willingness to sacrifice personal safety for the welfare of the sheep — whether it meant defending them against predators or searching for even one that wanders away. It involved intimate knowledge of each sheep. Taking care of sheep was all about guiding them, providing for their daily needs and protecting them. Taking care of sheep is an arduous job. Sheep are often stubborn. They frequently wander off the path and they consume constantly. They are in very much need of a shepherd but often do not realize it.

#### **Conclusion...**

- So, to say “The LORD is my Shepherd” is making a declaration that the all-powerful God who created the universe, the God who is eternal, the God who is all-knowing, the God who will deliver us and the God who will sustain us is our personal provider, protector, and guide.
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd and He wants us to have a rich and satisfying life.

#### **Consider...**

- In what ways are you actively and intentionally allowing the LORD to be your Shepherd?
- What are some ways you can exclude Jesus from being your Good Shepherd?

### I have all that I need (I shall not want) - Psalm 23:1b

#### **Context...**

- For David, living in God’s shepherd-like care was the end of dissatisfied need.
- King David **declared** “I shall not want” because “All my needs are supplied by the LORD, my Shepherd.” But he also **decides** “I shall not want” because “I decide to not desire more than what the LORD, my Shepherd gives me.”

#### **Conclusion...**

- Three key areas to living a life without lack:

1. **Trust** - We must trust the Good Shepherd and follow what He instructs us to do.

2. **Die to Self** - We must **surrender** our will and desires to Him.

3. **Love with an Agape Love** - "Love seeks one thing only: the good of the one loved."

**Consider...**

-Can you say with Job... "though God slay me, I will still trust Him?"

-What areas of your life and desires do you need to surrender to the Shepherd?

-How are you doing at loving God and loving others?

**Dallas Willard Quotes** from: "Life without Lack - Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23"

"The words of the Twenty-Third Psalm are among those things that people profess to believe. Many can recite the Twenty-Third Psalm from memory, including people who don't believe much of anything about God. Some have learned the psalm purely as poetic literature. **But far too few have experienced in their own lives the vivid reality described by the psalmist.** Unfortunately, "The Lord is my Shepherd" is a sentiment carved on tombstones *more often than a reality written in lives.*"

"Living a life without lack involves recognizing the idea systems that govern the present age and its respective cultures ... and replacing them with the idea system that was embodied and taught by Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul warned us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12 NASB) These higher-level powers and forces are spiritual agencies that work with the idea systems of this world. These evil systems have been used to dominate humanity through fear and self-obsession, so that the uppermost thing filling our minds is likely to be ourselves. That is why Jesus' teachings emphasize the importance of death to self, giving up your life and not seeking to save yourself. What does Jesus say about your life? "If you seek to save your life, you will lose it." But, of course, that is what nearly everyone does, especially everyone who lives according to the ordinary, fallen course of the world. They spend their whole earthly existence trying to save, enhance, and enrich their lives. And what happens? They lose the most important things in their life: an intimate relationship with God and with others."

**"As the three points of the triangle of sufficiency at the heart of the life without lack.** They are not in a static, but a dynamic relationship to each other. There is a divine synergism between them, as each one nourishes the other. Faith feeds death to self; death to self feeds love; love feeds faith; and on it gloriously goes. When these are fundamental realities in your life, you are exactly where David was when he said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." You will find yourself saying, "What about that thing I was wishing for? I thought I needed it. But now, I find that I am just fine without it!" When you get to that point, your life is so full of good that you are prepared to take the absence of something from your life as sufficient proof that you do not need it. Not because you are trying to make it happen, but because it simply happens to those who know the all-sufficiency of God. This is not something you can make happen, but God can... and will. The ultimate freedom that comes to the one whose life is characterized by faith, death to self, and love is the assurance that you have everything you need in God."

The LORD is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

<sup>2</sup>He lets me rest in green meadows;  
he leads me beside peaceful streams.

<sup>3</sup> He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honor to his name.

<sup>4</sup>Even when I walk  
through the darkest valley,<sup>[a]</sup>

I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a feast for me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You honor me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings.

<sup>6</sup>Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will live in the house of the Lord  
forever.