He Leadeth Me

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Introduction
Of all of the Psalms, none is so sweet as the simple and short 23rd Psalm.

- In its brevity it contains the seeds of boundless hope, peace and comfort.
  - For just a moment we catch a glimpse into the shepherd’s soul as David relays,
    - as only a shepherd could, the confidence that he has in God.
  - He starts with a powerful statement, upon which the whole of the Psalm is built:
    - The Lord is my shepherd.
  - There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence.
    - David doesn’t say, If the Lord is my shepherd...
    - He doesn’t say, I hope that the Lord is my shepherd...
    - He doesn’t even say, The Lord is my shepherd, but...
      - What he says, he says with confidence:
        - The Lord is my shepherd.
  - Oh my. What a powerful thought.
    - The God of all glory,
    - the king of all kings,
    - the Ancient of Days,
    - He has condescended to the lowly position of being the shepherd of my life!
  - What a glorious revelation.
    - He, who holds back the tides until their time,
    - tells the sun when to rise,
    - directs the fury of the storm
    - and brings forth the rain from his storehouse.
  - He who is the master of all:
    - He is my shepherd!

The sweetest word in that phrase is the word “my.”

- He is MY shepherd.
  - He does not say,
    - "The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leadeth forth the multitude as his flock,"
      - but he says "The Lord is MY shepherd."
- If he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is a Shepherd to me.
  - It is personal.
    - He is mine and I am His.
He cares for me.
He watches over me.
He preserves me.

- He is my shepherd.
- The whole phrase is in the present tense, which denotes the continual position of the believer.
  - He IS... Right now.
    - Wherever I am.
      - Whatever I may be going through.
  - He IS my shepherd.
    - Not, He will be tomorrow,
    - not He might show up at some point.
      - He IS my shepherd!

These are the timeless truths that cause the twenty-third Psalm to be the nightingale of the Psalms.

- It lifts its song of peace and hope on the lonely breeze of the long dark nights.
  - Its words are words of life that cause us to forget for the moment the sorrows and grief with which we struggle
    - and to lift our eyes to heaven with the confidence that God is our only help in dark days of trouble.
- This simple Psalm has brought more comfort than all the philosophies of the world.
  - It has helped believers to overcome more doubts and more sorrows than there are sands on the seashore.
    - It has comforted the noble host of the redeemed.
    - It has sung courage to the armies of the disappointed.
- It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of more believers than I could ever tell
  - and this afternoon I felt the overwhelming presence of God as he brought three words from this Psalm to my heart:
    - He leadeth me.

**He Leads Me**

I have, on several occasions preached from this Psalm

- and I'm sure that I will visit it again at some point in the future
  - but please allow me, if you will, to deliver a short thought this evening on a single idea from these extraordinarily powerful Psalm:
    - He leads me!
- Oh what a consolation!
  - Oh what a blessed relief.
    - He leads me.
    - He chooses the paths I walk.
    - He directs my footsteps.
    - He orders my days and appoints my ways.
He leads me!

- I need to reach out tonight to someone who is struggling with your current situation in life and remind you: He leads you!
  - He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and He directs your life!
    - He leads you!
  - He is the one who upholds all things by his power and he holds you in the palm of his hand.
    - He leads you!
  - He never makes a mistake and He leads you.
  - He's never met a foe he couldn't defeat and He leads you.
  - He's never encountered a need so dire that he wasn't able to meet it and He leads you!
  - He never sleeps nor slumbers, nothing takes him by surprise and He leads you!
    - HE is all seeing.
    - He is all knowing.
    - He is all powerful.
    - And He leads you!

He Goes Before Me

John 10:14 says that “He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”

- He leads you.
  - Which means that he goes before you!
- He got to the valley before you did.
  - You aren’t walking anywhere that he hasn’t first walked.
    - He was in the dark night before you ever arrived because he leads you!
- Before you lift your head to heaven and cry out, Lord, where are you?
  - Let me tell you that he was in the middle of your storm before you ever got there!
- He isn’t just coming to your rescue;
  - He devised your means of escape before you ever encountered the trial and trouble in your life.
    - He leads you!
- He doesn’t follow you around snatching you from the jaws of the enemy at the brink of disaster.
  - He leads you!
- He’s not just waiting to hear your desperate cry before He looks in on your troubled life.
  - He leads you.
- He’s been ahead of you the whole way through this barren wilderness.
  - He is already in your tomorrows establishing provision that you don’t even know yet that you need.
• Somebody under the sound of my voice needs to grasp a simple but powerful concept in these three simple words:
  o He leads me!
• Let that powerful truth really grip your heart tonight.
  o He leads you!
• He is in charge of your life.
  o He is the one calling the shots.
    ▪ Nothing has come upon you unawares,
    ▪ no strange thing outside of his perfect will has overtaken you in your life.
      • He is leading you!
      • He is directing you!
• Keep your hand in his and watch as he leads you through this current struggle to a much better place!
  o Put your trust fully in him and watch as he provides and he makes a way where there seems to be no way.
    ▪ He is your shepherd!
    ▪ He, by his infinite grace and unlimited abundance leads you!

Still Waters and Green Pastures
God is a trustworthy shepherd.
• He is a dependable leader.
  o He is capable leader and he is good at what he does.
• He leads me through some rocky and barren places,
  o he takes me through some dry wilderness times,
  o he directs me through the low lonely valley
    ▪ and all along he is leading me to still waters and green pastures.
• He knows what’s best for me.
  o He knows where I need to go.
• He has the capacity to see much further down the road than I can.
  o All I can see is the briars and the stumbling stones.
  o All I understand is the ferocious heat and insufferable oppressing troubles.
    ▪ But my shepherd is looking ahead to green pastures and still waters.
• If I trust him, this is where he is leading me!
  o If I walk with him, this where I am headed.
• If I lay down right here,
  o if I throw my hands up in frustration,
  o if I quit along the way,
    ▪ I will linger in these dry valleys instead of arriving at the still waters!
• I need to encourage someone tonight:
  o Don’t get lost in the process.
o Don’t lose your way along the way.
  ▪ He leads you and He who leads you knows where He is taking you.
• Furthermore, where He is taking you is better than anywhere you could ever go on your own.
  o Trust Him.
  o HE is your shepherd.
  o HE leads you!
• And He’s leading you to still waters and green pastures.
  o Where He will restore your soul.
• The journey might take something out of you.
  o The struggles might weigh you down.
  ▪ But if you will follow him,
    • if you will trust him,
    • he will lead you into places where his grace and mercy will restore your soul.
  ▪ He will replenish your strength.
• He will put back into you more than you will ever lose in the journey.
  o He is your shepherd.
  ▪ He leads you!

In Paths Of Righteousness
David said, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.”
• There are a lot of paths.
  o Some are broad and easy.
  ▪ Some offer more comforts and less trouble.
  ▪ Some appeal to us, looking like the right and best way for our lives.
  o But God doesn’t see like we see.
  ▪ He sees so much more about the paths that we are walking than we could ever conceive.
• He knows the end of a thing from its beginning.
  o We trod along, putting one foot in front of the other,
  ▪ never able to see much further down the road than just to the next bend
    • or where the horizon meets the path,
      o but he sees all the way to the end!
• He knows the end from the beginning.
  o That’s why I can take confidence in the fact that He leads me.
• That promotion, with its pay raise may have seemed like the best path to me,
  o but he knows better than me!
• That move I wanted to make was so appealing to me, it seemed like the right path,
  o but he knows better than I do!
• I never would have chosen the valley.

He Leadeth Me
I would have stayed in green meadows
and spent my days by gentle waters.
- That seemed to be the best path to me.

- But he knows the paths of righteousness
  - and he leads me into those paths!
- You can take confidence in the fact that He will never lead you astray.
  - He will never take you in the wrong direction.
  - His paths are righteous paths.
- The trials that He leads you thru work out His perfect will in your life,
  - molding you and making you into the man or woman that He has
called you to be.
- The times of testing strengthen your resolve and establish your confidence in
him.
  - Every step of the way,
    - through every mountain and every valley,
    - through the peaceful times of plenty
    - and the terrible times of trial,
      - he leads you in the paths of righteousness.
- He leads you.
  - You can trust in Him!
- Whatever you may be going through today, you can trust him.
  - Wherever you find yourself along the way, you can trust him.
    - Whatever you might be facing, take confidence tonight in a
      simple but profound thought:
        - He is your shepherd and He leads you!
- If you follow him he will lead you through every hardship and every difficult
place.
  - He will lead you all the way to heaven one of these days if you will
only trust him and follow where he leads you!

CLOSE
David speaks it with such confidence and clarity.
- He who knows what it means to be a shepherd.
  - He who knows how shortsighted sheep can be.
  - He who understands that the shepherd cherishes the sheep,
    - that He cares for them,
    - that he loves them,
    - and that he will protect them,
    - even with his own life.
- David exposes the source of his confidence when he says:
  - God is MY shepherd. He leads me!
- I don’t always know where I’m going, but I don’t have to.
  - He leads me.
- I don’t always understand but that’s OK, He leads me.
  - Sometimes I have questions,
sometimes doubts rise with in me,
sometimes fear grips me –
  • but in those times, I find my confidence in the simple
  truth that my shepherd leads me!

We used to sing an old hymn when I was just a kid, it said:
  • Where he leads me I will follow,
  • Where he leads me I will follow,
  • Where he leads me I will follow,
  • I’ll go with him, with him, all the way.

It went on to say in its various different verses:
  • When he says take thy cross and follow me, I’ll go with him.
  • I’ll go with him through the garden.
  • I’ll go with him through the judgment.
  • He will give me grace and glory,
  • and go with me, with me, all the way.

If you believe tonight that He is your shepherd and that He leads you,
  • it only remains for you to make up your mind to follow Him,
    o wherever He leads you!
  • You don’t have to know the end of the thing,
    o you don’t have to know what tomorrow will bring,
    o you have only to trust in Him.
      • He leads you!
    o Your only job is to follow!
  • Tonight, someone needs to reaffirm your trust in him.
    o You need to lift your hands to heaven and let him speak peace and
      confidence into your soul.
      • He is your shepherd.
        • He leads you!