

June 26, 2016  
Sermon for The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (VBS 2016)  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Psalm 23

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Psalm 23 (KJV)

A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

This week is Vacation Bible School week. Throughout the week of Vacation Bible School, we will be looking at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

When God wrote Psalm 23 into His Bible for us, He gave us a wonderful picture. Actually, God gave us *two* pictures in Psalm 23. Not only did God show us a picture of Himself in this Psalm, but He also showed us a picture of us. Psalm 23 talks about God and you and me altogether.

Dear Christian friends, How many people here like to make pictures with markers or pencils or paint? Did you know that when you create a picture of a person, we call that picture a portrait? Perhaps when you were little you drew a picture of your mom and you walking together. That picture is a portrait of your mom and you together.

Or perhaps you have painted a picture of your grandma or grandpa. That picture is also called a portrait—a portrait of grandma or grandpa. That word *portrait* is an important word.

*Portrait* is an important word for us because in Psalm 23, God gave us a portrait of Himself and you and me altogether. Almost like the first “selfie”.

However, God did not use an iPhone, or paint, pencils or markers to make this portrait! God used His words! I

In Psalm 23, God pictured Himself as a Shepherd, the Good Shepherd and He pictured us as His sheep. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

What a beautiful portrait—God and you and I altogether!

When God describes Himself as a shepherd, He is telling you that He wants to take care of you in every part of your life. There were lots of shepherds in Bible times, and there are still many shepherds in the world even today.

Shepherds do only one thing: they take care of sheep.

Shepherds make sure their sheep have food and drink. Shepherds stay with their sheep every hour of every day, guiding them in the daytime and protecting them in the nighttime. When a wolf or a bear or some other wild animal comes to eat the sheep, the shepherd fights with that animal and kills it so that it cannot harm the sheep.

Shepherds give everything to their sheep!

Many Bible passages say that our God is a shepherd. For example, God said through His prophet Ezekiel, *“As a shepherd seeks out his flock . . . so I will seek out My sheep. . . . I Myself will be the shepherd of My sheep”* (Ezekiel 34:12, 15).

God declared through His prophet Isaiah that He will *“tend His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms”* (Isaiah 40:11).

Our Lord Jesus also said that He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14), and we have Psalm 23:1: *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”*

When God calls Himself a shepherd, He is giving us a portrait of Himself.

By calling Himself a shepherd, God is telling us that He wants to do only one thing: take care of you and me! Shepherds make sure their sheep have food and drink. That is why Psalm 23 says about God, *“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.”* (v. 2). Shepherds stay with their sheep every hour of every day, guiding them in the daytime and protecting them in the nighttime. That is why Psalm 23 says about God, *“...he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”* (v. 3). When a wolf or a bear or some other wild animal comes to eat the sheep, the shepherd fights with that animal and kills it so that it cannot harm the sheep. That is why Psalm 23 says about God, *“I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”* (v. 4). Shepherds give everything to their sheep! Jesus, our Good Shepherd, even laid down His life for us (John 10:15), His sheep, so that we may have forgiveness of sins and life everlasting!

Psalm 23 gives us more than just a portrait of God. Psalm 23 gives us a portrait of you and me too! The Lord is our shepherd, and we are His sheep! When God calls us His sheep, He is telling us how very much we need Him every hour and every day. Sheep need safety and protection. Sheep need someone to feed them and lead them to water. When something goes wrong, sheep quickly become afraid and want to run away.

Many Bible passages call us sheep, just as many Bible passages call God our shepherd. For example, God's prophet Isaiah said, "*All we like sheep have gone astray*" (Isaiah 53:6). God said through His prophet Ezekiel, "*You are My sheep*" (Ezekiel 34:31), and God's apostle Peter called us "*the flock of God*" (1 Peter 5:2).

How wonderful it is that the Lord is our shepherd and we are His sheep! In Psalm 23, the Lord our Shepherd promises to lead us safely through every day of our lives, forgiving us, protecting us, and bringing us at last to our heavenly home. That is why Psalm 23 ends with these words: "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever*" (Psalm 23:6).

This week in Vacation Bible School, we will continue to hear and learn God's wonderful Psalm 23. We are going to see many more details in this beautiful portrait of God and you and me altogether!

In our first Bible story this week, we will hear more about Jesus, our Good Shepherd (John 10:1–18). Remember what you heard in the psalm: "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want*" (Psalm 23:1). In our second Bible story, we will hear about our Lord's amazing miracle of feeding 5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish (Mark 6:30–44; John 6:1–14). This miracle teaches us that Jesus will provide for us, now and forever! That is what we also heard in the psalm: "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:*" (Psalm 23:2).

In our third Vacation Bible School story, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, will tell us the story of a man who went out to plant seeds (Matthew 13:1–23).

In the fourth Vacation Bible School story, Jesus will tell us about a boy who went away from home, but then came back again (Luke 15:11–32).

By telling these two stories to us, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, promises that He will always lead us, guide us, forgive us, and renew us, every day of our lives. It is written in Psalm 23, “...*he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness ...*” (v. 3) and “*I for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*” (v. 4).

On our last day of Vacation Bible School, we will hear about our Lord’s Easter Sunday resurrection (John 20:1–18). After Jesus was crucified for us and for our salvation, He rose up from the dead! By rising from the dead, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, promises us that we also shall rise up and live with Him forever. As you heard in Psalm 23, “*I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever*” (v. 6).

All in all, Psalm 23 is a wonderful and beautiful portrait that God has created for us. God did not paint this portrait with paint or pencils or markers, but with His words—and God’s words give us forgiveness and life.

We are going to have a great week together! I am very happy that you all are planning to come to Vacation Bible School, students and adults, as well as all that have gather here each week, making it possible to out on this wonderful, Christian outreach.

We are all just like a flock of lambs and sheep. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is with us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, has spoken His many promises to us, and He will not change His mind. “*I will never leave you nor forsake you,*” says the Lord (Hebrews 13:5). “*I have called you by name, you are mine*” (Isaiah 43:1). “*The LORD their God will save [His people], as the flock,*” says the Lord (Zechariah 9:16).

What shall we say? How about this: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Say it with when you feel lost. Say it when you are joyful too. It is always true as God is always faithful.

*“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep guard of your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Amen.

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### **Sermon Outline**

#### ***God Gives Us a Portrait in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm*** (Psalm 23)

- I. God is our Good Shepherd.
- II. He wants to take care of you in every part of your life..
- III. Psalm 23 gives us a portrait of you and me too.