

The Lord is My Shepherd

PSALMS 23

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. 4 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. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 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.

INFORMATION

This is a favorite passage from Psalms that many people know by heart. These verses compare our Savior to a good shepherd and ourselves to well cared for sheep. Why sheep? Why are we considered sheep in the Bible? The Bible often refers to God's people as sheep. First, sheep are not predatory animals. Second, sheep are nearly harmless animals and prefer to live a quiet and peaceful life. The Bible often contrasts sheep and wolves. Wolves are predatory and aggressive animals. Third, sheep, like other animals such as dogs, recognize their shepherd's voice. If you have 100 sheep in a field, with 10 shepherds each having 10 sheep, when any shepherd calls for his sheep, only his 10 sheep will respond. Fourth, sheep must be watched over to protect them; left on their own they are vulnerable to wolves and other predators. Fifth, sheep are prone to poor decisions; they will go where the grass is greener; even when that is not a good thing to do.

Notice that in this passage, the writer of the Psalm (King David), presents a scene of peace, tranquility, safety and confidence in the future. This is the life of a sheep when they have a GOOD shepherd. This is the life that Christ provides for his people. Sometimes, it can seem tumultuous and dark, like the valley of the shadow of death, but God carries his people through these dark places. In fact, Christ conquered death itself when he died on the cross and rose again. Even in death, a child of God can go fearlessly, knowing that Jesus awaits after the body dies.

WHAT IT MEANS TO OUR FAMILY

Read this passage carefully, again and again. Memorize it and dwell on what it says. There is great comfort in this passage. The key to benefiting from this is to realize that we are to listen for the voice of the Lord and to follow him where he leads us. Pray often and listen carefully, so that when he speaks you will recognize it and know to follow. God may not speak to you in an audible voice but he will speak to you through your life and circumstances. Be watchful for what he is saying to you.

Relevant Passages

Isaiah 40:11

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Ezekiel 34:23

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

1 Peter 2:25

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 Peter 5:1-4

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.