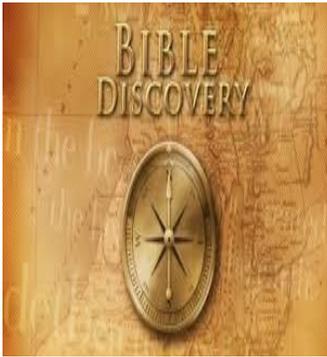


10 Aug 14

Psalm 23

Secure with the Shepherd



If you would have security for all eternity, it's not enough to know psalm 23, to even be able to recite, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..." – rather, it's *essential* you know the shepherd. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). Our hope, our certainty, our security is in the knowing presence of Jesus, the good shepherd. Our Psalmist dares to identify Jehovah as his very own Shepherd. His God's an intimately personal, loving Father. And He's *my* Shepherd! Because the Lord's my shepherd, I lack nothing. It pictures an all knowing, all powerful God who loves His people with the love of a kind, loving and caring shepherd. Because the LORD is my Shepherd He provides rest & guidance; He provides food &

protection; He provides fellowship & comfort. He provides for all of my basic needs in life and, what is more, He has given me salvation!

This psalm shows us that whatever our need, God is enough! Paul writes, "my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" [Philippians 4:19]. David understood his intimate relationship with God provided everything. *With God* as his shepherd he had abundant sufficiency so he didn't want for any physical need. *With God* as his shepherd he had abiding security so that he didn't fear anything. In these modern times of growing fears, diminishing confidence, mounting demands & increasing restlessness, this Psalm provides the assurance & remedy we're all looking to find.

**Whatever
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This Psalm finds its fulfillment in the person & work of Jesus Christ. In all its expressions & metaphors, the psalm clearly points to the character of the Good Shepherd as our Lord. As we ponder the beauty of the Psalm, considering the life & work of the Good Shepherd whom David calls LORD & we know as Jesus, may I offer some insights why **the Lord's my shepherd**? If like me, you've met the Shepherd & accepted Him as Lord, then with the Lord as our Shepherd, we confidently look to the future. Because the LORD's our shepherd the following list is just a few of the many things for which YOU will never lack.

You'll not lack any provision for your life

A seasoned missionary in Africa once said, "God always hears the scraping of the bottom of the barrel, and He always provides the necessities of life." That was also true in the Apostle Paul's personal life. He found the LORD faithful and true even in his prison cell in Rome. Bible scholar, Kyle Yates expressed it eloquently, "Because He loves me as the good Shepherd, I shall never want for rest, refreshment, sustenance, forgiveness, restoration, fellowship, guidance, deliverance from fear, comfort in sorrow, victory over enemies, security in troubled hours, joy in the Lord, power for service, or a home at the end of the earthly journey." We too find confidence in our LORD meeting all our daily needs knowing He ensures we're not in want; makes us lie down in green pastures, leads us to quiet waters quenching our thirst. The imagery is of sheep moving around grazing, finding enough grass to make them full and having all their needs met without any worry. The psalmist paints a picture of nourishment, safety & a peaceful resting place for the sheep. So too our Shepherd can be depended upon to provide us nourishment & rest. Have you found Jesus to be true in your daily life? Have you come to Him hungry & thirsting for that which this world can never satisfy? Have you come to Jesus like the woman at the well in Samaria to the "water of life"? Jesus said to the woman, "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" [John 4:14]. The "water of life" makes Jesus available to you



**Have you
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& me with refreshing rivers that bubble up within. Today, shout for joy with Paul's doxology from Ephesians 3:20-21? "*Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*" Our Lord Jesus is faithful to do exceedingly abundantly above and beyond all that we can imagine.

You shall not lack forgiveness & restoration

"*He restores my soul: He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake*" [v. 3]. God always leads men to His righteousness. It's "*for His name's sake.*" He takes the humility of man, gives us a new life in His Son Jesus, and calls us to Himself to walk in His righteousness and serve Him daily. Just as the Lord Jesus is a perfect example of the character of God, so we His followers are to become like our model. In fact, we're told to be "*imitators of Christ*". Yet we are like wayward sheep wandering about aimlessly. Isaiah 53:6 describes us spiritually. "*All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*" He restores my soul. He revives, reinvigorates, & restores the soul back to its intended condition. This is exactly what the Good Shepherd does for us unrighteous sheep! Jesus said, "*I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*" Are you in the need of *His* restoration, *His* reconciliation? God reconciles us to Himself through Christ's death. Remember how Jesus restored Peter after He rose from the dead? The Apostle Peter was acutely aware of God's forgiveness and restoration. He wrote, "*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence*" [2 Peter 1:3]. Have you accepted His forgiveness and restoration in your lives? In having accepted His forgiveness, have you forgiven those who have offended you? If God is willing to forgive us, we should be willing to forgive others.

You shall not lack encouragement & hope

The abiding presence of the Shepherd is described in verse 4. "*...for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*" When we fail, when we feel beaten down, our Good Shepherd comes to our side demonstrating His changeless love & faithfulness. When we fall flat on our face in the dust

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He lifts us up, held in the palm of His hand. Nothing in life - not pain, disappointment, suffering, or even death can separate us from our Shepherd. Before ascending into heaven Jesus reassured His disciples who stood with Him, and all disciples throughout the ages, "*Surely, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" [Matthew 28:20]. The psalmist pictures those experiences in life when sorrow & disease, disappointment & distress, pain & anguish of the soul make the heart break under its heavy load. He shows the Lord abides with us comforting us in the valley of depression, during serious illness, at times of rejection, disloyalty, death of a spouse or loved one, even the experience of death itself. It's been said, "*You might not see, hear, or touch Him, but no one sees you, listens to you, or understands you better than God.*" Whatever life throws at us is no match for what

Jesus surrounds us with, He's always that close. What are we to do when our heart is breaking, when the deep dark shadows of life gather about us, when the sun refuses to shine on us, when our tears flow without end? Like the psalmist, we're to remind ourselves, "*You are with me!*" And more, "*Your rod and your staff, they comfort me*" and having accepted His Word, turn to Jesus! What are some of the deep dark valleys you're going through today? Family struggles? Loneliness? Job security? Financial stress? Health issues? Our Shepherd walks through that valley hand in hand with us. He drives away the enemy with His rod, He guides us with His staff into green pastures. Talk about security!

You shall not lack joy and abundant life

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" [v. 5]. The Psalmist pictures enemies looking on helplessly while the honoured guest sits at a magnificent banquet given by a gracious host. Again, is a picture of the shepherd who carries a flask of oil to anoint the scratched face of the sheep. Our gracious Shepherd comes to us in our dire need, anoints us with His healing touch as the Great Physician. *My cup overflows*. Our kind Shepherd spreads a table before us every day. There's no lack of provision. Our cup runs over its brim. Jesus says, *"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full!"* He more than supplies everything we need. The joy He gives is inexpressible; His peace beyond understanding. It is grace added to more grace. Grace upon grace resulting in a cup that's constantly overflowing. ***What an awesome God we worship!***

You shall not lack assurance of eternal life

"Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" [v. 6]. Goodness is God's graciously giving what we ***don't*** deserve. Mercy is His withholding what we ***do*** deserve. Goodness supplies our every want; mercy forgives us of every sin. God is so merciful! He acts with mercy toward us *every* day of our lives. Through the death of Jesus Christ, His own Son, our penalty for all our sins was paid in full. The blood of Jesus covers all our sins. God in His goodness & mercy forgives and cleanses us. It should cause our hearts to rejoice and overflow with contented love and satisfaction; cause us to be content in the unbroken, eternal fellowship with God! Satisfied that all our needs are met! What fellowship! What joy divine!

"The LORD is my shepherd...I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Will you dwell in the house of the LORD forever? The only way possible to enter into His house is because He loved us so much that He gave His own Son as a sacrifice for us. He took our place on the cross and died in our place. Because He died for us we receive eternal life through faith in Him as our crucified and risen Saviour.

**Only way
to live
the
Christian
life!**

Indeed, this is the only way we can live the Christian life. Our Shepherd has provided all we ever need. As we hand over to Him our needs, He graciously hands over to us the provision. As we confess our sins, He forgives us. As we seek Christ, we find encouragement and hope. As we follow our Shepherd, He gives us joy so that our lives are lived abundantly. All we have to do is acknowledge our need and surrender it to Him. We exchange our need for His abundant provision which is ours for all eternity. Please keep in mind it all begins with a spiritual birth the moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.

Today, if you are unable to say with certainty that the ***LORD IS YOUR SHEPHERD***, then I encourage you to contact us at Mt Brydges Baptist Church by phone at 1-519-317-8659 or by email to office.mbbc@xplornet.com.

God Bless!