

In the Presence of the Shepherd

Psalm 23:1, 4

Psalms 23:1-4 - The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Introduction:

1. David, in addition to being King of Israel, was also a prophet according Acts 2:30. This allowed him the ability to give insights into God's relationship to man (and vice versa). In addition to those insights, he also gives us great insight into how he lived before God.
2. It goes without saying that David was not perfect. And while that may be true, we can learn a lot from David and his attitude toward his life before God, who he had as a guide.
3. We call Him our Shepherd and Jesus calls Himself our Shepherd, but I wonder sometimes if we understand what that entails. David gives us much information along that line in one of the best know Psalms. For in it, he shows us what a Shepherd does for His sheep.

I. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (v.1)

A. Jehovah as David's shepherd - v.1a, Jn 10:14-16

John 10:14-16 - "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."

1. The LORD, Jehovah, was David's confidence, hope, & sustainer.
2. David refers to God as a shepherd because he knew what the work of a shepherd involved. When it's implied in a spiritual sense, we can see how the LORD is our shepherd.
 - a. Shepherds led the sheep to green grass and clean waters; the LORD leads the faithful to safety and meets all their spiritual needs - Matt 6:33

Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

- b. Shepherds led the sheep to safety and security at night. The LORD leads us to safety through His Word and keeps us safe from spiritual harm - Prov 3:21-26

Proverbs 3:21-26 - My son, let them not vanish from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion, So they will be life to your soul And adornment to your neck. Then you will walk in your way securely And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden fear Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence And will keep your foot from being caught.

- c. Shepherds would protect the sheep from robbers and beasts of prey. The LORD protects us from spiritual robbers (those who might lead us astray) and from beasts of prey that attempt to devour the faith and confidence we have in Him - Col 2:18

Colossians 2:18 - Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

- d. There is no animal as helpless as a sheep or a lamb. Thus, it's fitting that the LORD protects His sheep who are subject to seen & unseen dangers - Acts 20:28

Acts 20:28 - "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

B. David had no wants - v.1b

- 1. If the Lord is truly our shepherd, then we shall have no lack of any real need.
 - a. The Lord will not withhold the things the righteous need to live - Psa 84:11

Psalms 84:11 - For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- b. Christ said that God gives good things to those who ask Him - Matt 7:11

Matthew 7:11 - "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

- c. James reminds us that every good & perfect give comes from above - Jas 1:17

James 1:17 - Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

II. ***“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”*** (v.4)

A. **“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”** (v.4a)

1. When a person is afraid, they usually don't walk, they walk quickly but probably run. You'll notice that David walks not in the valley of death but in the valley of the SHADOW of death.
 - a. This tells us two things
 - 1) He walked; He did not run because he was not afraid (v.4b).
 - 2) “shadow of death” tells us this was a place of fear but not a place of actual danger.
2. From this we see that the place where David was looked or sounded scary but would not actually cause harm him.
3. This is like life today. We found ourselves in places or times of great fear, but we often do not endure any real harm only fear - Prov 29:25

Proverbs 29:25 - **The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.**

B. **“I fear no evil, for You are with me...”** (v.4b)

1. David did not fear because God was with Him or we might say He was with God. Much like a frighten child, a child of God is comforted and relieved by the safety of the Lord - Psa 4:8

Psalms 4:8 - **In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.**

2. It's also important to notice that only those who are with the Lord can find safety in Him - Eph 1:3

Ephesians 1:3 - **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**

C. **“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”** (v.4c)

1. It is with the rod that God protects His sheep. He defends them from spiritual harm. The word of God is also called a sword, with this sword we too can defend our spiritual health - Rev 19:15

Revelation 19:15 - **From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.**

2. It is with the staff that God brings the straying sheep back into the fold.

III. *Who is your shepherd?*

A. Shepherding attempts from friends and family - Prov 12:26

Proverbs 12:26 - The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, But the way of the wicked leads them astray.

1. Our friends sometimes try to walk us through our life. However, their guidance often leads us to more hardship and sinful living.
2. If guidance from others causing us to contrast with the Word of God, we should dismiss such attempts at shepherding.

B. True shepherding and guidance.

1. God is the one who can truly shepherd us through difficult times.
2. God understands our problems and heartaches'; we must understand God wants to hold us up as we walk through these difficult times - Psa 119:116

Psalms 119:116 - Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Conclusion:

- A. Now that we've seen what the Shepherd does for His sheep, we must decide if we allow Him to guide and protect us. It is an individual decision as each is free to choose their own way. But realize, the wolf is waiting for that sheep who leaves the fold and is now without the strength and protection of the Good Shepherd.
- B. We all need safety, comfort, love and guidance and there is no better place to find these things than from allowing the Lord to be our Shepherd.