

March 21, 2023

The Lord is My Shepherd

Psalm 23

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

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.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

What is one of the first Bible passages you memorized? My confirmation class memorized the Apostle's Creed and the King James version of the 23rd Psalm. Although that was many years ago, I can still recite both (well, maybe with a bit of prompting). Regardless of the translation, the opening sentence is the same, "The Lord is my shepherd."

The 23rd Psalm is oftentimes heard at funerals and has been the inspiration for many sermons. This Psalm is recited at Jewish services. This might be one of the best-known *Bible* verses.

Although I was born and raised in West Virginia, I am a city girl. My parents were city folks, as were their parents. So I have no memories of going to the family farm because that did not exist. Visiting grandparents meant going to the West Side of Charleston or to Kanawha City and never leaving the city limits.

But the role of a shepherd is universal. You do not need to raise sheep to understand a shepherd is the protector and caretaker of the flock. And we are the Lord's flock.

The Lord IS my shepherd. He is our protector and our caretaker. He is my protector and my caretaker. The Psalmist lists a number of ways in which He protects and cares for us, His flock. He prepares a table, He anoints, He comforts and more. All for his flock.

The soul of this passage is the first five words. "The Lord is my shepherd." As inspiring as that phrase is, the last passage is special, too, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." From beginning to end, this Psalm soothes my soul as well as the souls of the flock.

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for being our shepherd. Let us not forget your eternal care and love for us and help us share that care and love with others. Amen.*

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