



**PRACTICING GOD’S PRESENCE: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

**WORSHIP:** Glory in the Highest/ You are worthy of Praise/ Praise You in this Storm/ There is a love Joel Payne

**WELCOME:**

What specific verse of Psalm 23 spoke to you?

**WORD:**

There are animals that have been associated with countries eg. the lion has been associated with England, the eagle with the USA and many others. As Christians, we are likened to sheep. God created sheep to remind us, that like them we are weak, defenseless and have a tendency to go astray. They cannot survive without a shepherd, we too must remember that we need a shepherd.

Psalm 23 shows us 7 different names of God.

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|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1. "I shall not want"                   | <b>Jehovah Jireh</b>     | The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:14)       |
| 2. "still waters"                       | <b>Jehovah Shalom</b>    | The Lord our peace (Judges 6:24)            |
| 3. "restores my soul"                   | <b>Jehovah Rapha</b>     | The Lord who heals (Exodus 15:26)           |
| 4. "paths of righteousness"             | <b>Jehovah Tsidekenu</b> | The Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 33:16) |
| 5. "I fear no evil for you are with me" | <b>Jehovah Shammah</b>   | The Lord is there (Ezekiel 48:35)           |
| 6. "in the presence of my enemies"      | <b>Jehovah Nissi</b>     | The Lord our banner (Exodus 17:15)          |
| 7. "anoint my head with oil"            | <b>Jehovah M’Kaddesh</b> | The Lord who sanctifies (Leviticus 20:8)    |

In the New Testament, we are told who our shepherd is: JESUS is called . . .

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|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. The Good Shepherd  | John 10:11    |
| 2. The Great Shepherd | Hebrews 13:20 |
| 3. The Chief Shepherd | 1 Peter 5:4   |

Many of us only know Jesus as our Savior that is why our Christian life is stagnating. But more than being our Savior, Jesus is our Shepherd. AW Tozier said that the most important thing about us, is what comes to mind when we think about God.

- When we encounter problems or trials and we end up anxious, worried and fearful this shows us how we know God.
- We must remember that problems are inevitable but anxiety is an option.

**The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not want.** Psalm 23:1

- This verse is very personal. This reflects intimacy with God. It is experiential.
- As your shepherd, He will supply all your needs.
- People will disappoint you, but God will never disappoint you.
- "I shall not want". Pertains to *not lacking*.
- Psalm 34:10 says " *The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing*" also read Psalm 84:11
- This shows us that God is after our best interests.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures**

- Sheep by nature will not lie down if they are anxious or hungry or lacking. But our Shepherd can make us lie down in green pastures
- Our green pastures – is where God places us. The best place He has chosen for us. Where we are right now is our green pasture.

**He leads me beside quiet waters**

- Sheep do not drink from running water, because they believe they will drown. So what the shepherds will do is to make a small dam.
- Another way to say this is: He leads me beside still waters.

- Our Lord knows our fears, our anxieties. He knows our specific needs and He will take care of them. God is the epitome of goodness. He will only do what is good for us in accordance with His will.

***He restores me soul***

- We all go through hurts and pains. We all go through different situations.
- We have to believe that God will take care for all our emotional and physical pains.
- We just have to make a choice to have a trusting relationship with God.

***He guides me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake***

- Like sheep we are prone to go astray even when the path seems obvious, we still have a tendency to stray from the path.
- God guides us because it is His nature and His name is at stake.
- He guides us with His word as a lamp on our feet and a light in our path (Psalm 119:105)
- We must not base Christianity on others because people are not perfect, people are not infallible.
- The bible is God's word and this is how God guides us. But God requires us to follow Him. To honor Him no matter what the costs. We will only know God's path if we follow God's principles.
- We must always remember that how we behave as Christians will impact His name.

***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me.***

- God continues to lead us through the deep ravine, but when we get scared we stop following God.
- The solution to fear is intimacy with God.
- To follow the Lord is not always easy, but we have to believe that the Lord loves us and when we know the Lord we will be able to serve Him. We can be witnesses for Jesus.

***Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.***

- God's rod is used to protect us from harm and from enemies. His staff is used you catch you when we start going astray.
- Sometimes God uses His rod to "break our leg". God disciplines us, not to hurt us but to teach us. Like the sheep when their leg is broken, they learn to depend on and stay close to our Shepherd all the time. (read also Hebrews 12:6)

***Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou has anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.***

- The sheep even when he sees a wolf will look at his shepherd, if he sees his shepherd beside him he will continue eating.
- Like the sheep, we have to find our security not in the absence of danger but in the presence of the Lord.
- Our Shepherd provides for us, guides us, and protects us.

***Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever***

- God's goodness and lovingkindness will chase you, often times it will overtake you because God wants to bless us.

**Discussion:**

1. Is Jesus your Savior? BUT Is He your Shepherd?
2. Are you running away from God? What makes you run away or what keeps you running away?
3. Have you ever experienced God's rod and staff? Have you experience God's discipline?

**WORKS: My Psalm 23 Life Story**

Let us ponder and internalize Psalm 23. What is God's personal message for us in this Psalm. Like Smithy (in PTC's story) can we make Psalm 23 our own? Fill up this table in your journal. (see next page)

John 10:27 says "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me" This is an intimacy check for us. Is the Lord truly our Shepherd? Have we truly followed Him even through the valley of darkness? Like the lamb, are we trusting Him completely to provide for us, to guide us and to protect us? What are evidences in our life that show that we have indeed pursued intimacy with Christ?

Let us continue to pray for each other and with each other as we journey through pursuing intimacy with God. Knowing and relying on God's provision, guidance and protection . . . relying on His discipline when we go astray. . . looking forward and dependence on His goodness and lovingkindness to overtake us as we continue to delight in His presence.

### My Psalm 23 Life Story

| Verse   | Life story |
|---|------------|
| The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing   |            |
| He makes me lie down in green pastures,<br>He leads me beside quiet waters  |            |
| He refreshes my soul.<br>He guides me along the right paths<br>for His name's sake  |            |
| Even though I walk<br>through the darkest valley,[a]<br>I will fear no evil,<br>for You are with me;<br>Your rod and Your staff,<br>they comfort me |            |
| You prepare a table before me<br>in the presence of my enemies.<br>You anoint my head with oil;<br>my cup overflows.                                |            |
| Surely your goodness and love will<br>follow me all the days of my life, and I<br>will dwell in the house of the Lord<br>forever.                   |            |