

PSALM 23

I. The consideration (Psalm 23:1).

- a. David sets out a great thought for consideration in the first verse.
- b. He tells us that Jehovah, the great title of God, is his shepherd and because of that he would not be needing anything.
 - i. David, as we know, came from a shepherding background.
 - ii. This imagery would have been extremely familiar to those of his day.
- c. With God as His shepherd, there would be a lack of nothing that was needed.
 - i. More than likely, this had in mind the spiritual necessities of life.
 - ii. There would be a lack of nothing needed because Jehovah was David's shepherd.
 - iii. David said something similar to this in Psalm 34:10.
- d. The Lord called Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).
 - i. He is our Shepherd and he has promised to take care of us.
 - ii. Through Him, every spiritual need we have is met (Ephesians 1:3).
 - iii. Notice what Paul told the Philippians (Philippians 4:19)
 - iv. Also, He promised us that as long as we put the kingdom first, all of our physical needs will be met as well.
- e. David sets out before us the consideration that with God as shepherd, there will be nothing wanting.

II. The confirmation (Psalm 23:2-5).

- a. David gave us something to consider in verse 1 and now goes about confirming it in verses 2-5.
- b. The first thing David points to in order to confirm that he would not want because God was his Shepherd is that God provides for him.
 - i. A shepherd was to lead his flock to pasture in order for them to feed.
 - 1. He had to know the type grass that was there.
 - 2. There are certain plants that are harmful to sheep and he had to know them.
 - 3. God would lead him to the best places to find provision.
 - ii. The sheep would be led to still waters where there was safety to drink.
 - 1. These were not waters that pull the little sheep in and carry him off.
 - 2. God would provide all that was needed.
 - iii. God does this in a tender way.
 - 1. The word translated "leadeth" means "to lead gently or peacefully".
 - 2. God does not force anything on us and David understood that.
- c. David then confirms it by saying that God restores his soul.
 - i. Think of the times David sinned.

- ii. He describes his feelings in Psalm 32 and 51, as well as others.
 - iii. He cried out for his relationship with God to be restored.
 - iv. When repentance is shown, God restores the relationship every time.
- d. The leading of God, when in a right relationship with Him, will always take on in the path of righteousness.
 - i. “Leadeth” in verse 3 is a different word than in verse 2, and means guide, direct, or lead carefully toward a definite goal according to a definite plan.
 - ii. Shepherds didn’t just wander around in the desert areas looking for good pasture and still waters.
 - iii. They knew where those places were and they led their flocks on the most direct path to them.
 - iv. God has a definite goal for His sheep, and a definite plan to get them there.
 - v. Again, God does not force us to follow Him, but He does lead those sheep that want to go to heaven.
 - vi. He does it for His own name’s sake, or His own reputation and honor.
 - 1. How long would a shepherd last at his job if he was haphazard and uncaring about his flock?
 - 2. What if God was that way about us?
 - 3. How would people think of Him?
 - 4. God’s leading us sets Him before the world and wants to show the world His care that He offers to them through the care that He gives to us.
 - 5. One writer said that God’s name is on the line.
- e. David confirms his wanting nothing in God by showing God is there in the dangerous times.
 - i. Think of how many times the life of David hung in the balance.
 - ii. God was with Him at every turn.
 - iii. A shepherd, in getting his flock to the best pasture and water, sometimes had to lead that flock through dangerous areas.
 - 1. There would be valleys in which he would lead them, where rocks could hide predators.
 - 2. There would be ledges off which sheep could fall.
 - iv. The rod and staff of that shepherd were used for those instances.
 - v. The sheep did not fear when their shepherd was leading them because he cared for his sheep, knowing that his reputation was on the line.
 - vi. God cares for us in our darkest moments.
 - 1. God is there with a way of escape when we are tempted by sin and could lose our souls.
 - 2. God is there when dangers threaten us.

3. David fully understood this (Psalm 46:1).
- f. David then confirms his wanting nothing by showing the care God gives when enemies abound.
 - i. Some think that the view of a shepherd is now changed, while others don't.
 - ii. Either way is possible.
 1. If the shepherd imagery is continued, the idea is that even when predators are near, the shepherd is able to care for the sheep in such a way that they can feed peacefully.
 2. If it is not shepherd imagery, the idea is though the enemies who would do David damage were constantly looking for way to do that damage, David could sit and eat peacefully because of the presence of God.
 - iii. The idea of anointing with oil seems to suggest that the imagery has changed, although shepherds would put oil on the wounds of the sheep to help keep away infection.
 - iv. What David is showing no matter which imagery it may be is the close relationship that he felt with God.
 1. The preparation of food and the anointing of oil were signs of an intimate, friendly relationship.
 2. If it isn't shepherd imagery, when one came to a friend's house, the host would wash the feet of his guest and put oil on his friend's head to show his acceptance.
 3. If this was not done, it was a sign of disrespect.
 4. David was showing how close he was with God.
 - v. Because of this treatment from God, David could say that he had more than enough.
- g. Think of the many great blessings we have being God's children.
 - i. We have such a close relationship that we can approach His throne at any time.
 - ii. He gives us every good and every perfect thing we have.
 - iii. He has shown the depths of His love by giving us His Son.

III. The culmination (Psalm 23:6).

- a. David lacks nothing necessary because God is his shepherd and he confirmed it in several ways.
- b. David now gives us the culmination of allowing God to be his shepherd.
- c. David said goodness and mercy would follow him all the days of his life.
 - i. The goodness of God is shown in the mercy that He offers.
 - ii. David knew that as long as his shepherd was God, then he would be blessed with that goodness and mercy from God.
 - iii. God's goodness and mercy is God in action.

- d. When David's days were over, he knew that it would culminate in his being in the house of God forever.
 - i. David knew that as long as God was his shepherd, heaven would be his eternal home.
 - ii. All of this is possible because of the fact God was His shepherd.
- e. The Good Shepherd longs to provide this type care for us.
 - i. We are promised in this life, everything we need (2 Peter 1:3).
 - ii. We are promised a home in heaven when this life is over (John 14:1-3).
- f. God's shepherding culminates in all we need in this life and a home with Him in the next.