

## LIFE WITH A SHEPHERD

August 7

We live through storms in our lives by following the Lord our Shepherd and by being in a community of people.

- We were created to live and thrive, not exist in survival mode.

Psalm 23 (NASB)

(VERSE 1)

**“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”**

John 10:1-5 (AMP) – Jesus said, **“I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up from some other place [on the stone wall], that one is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep [the protector and provider]. 3 The [a]doorkeeper opens [the gate] for this man, and the sheep hear his voice *and* pay attention to it. And [knowing that they listen] he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out [to pasture]. 4 When he has brought all his own *sheep* outside, he walks on ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice *and* recognize his call. 5 They will never follow a stranger, but will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”**

*Shepherd* – to tend, to rule, to associate with as a friend

- What makes a shepherd is not the staff or rod; it’s the heart.
- Sheep are helpless creatures who cannot survive long without a shepherd.
- They do not learn well and are extremely difficult to train.
- A shepherd’s main responsibility is the safety and welfare of the sheep.
- His presence puts them at ease as nothing else could do.
- He marks and brands the sheep so everyone knows who they belong to.
- They are very slow animals who cannot escape predators—they have no camouflage and no weapons for defense such as claws, sharp hooves, or powerful jaws.
- He watches over the health of the sheep—disease, insects, etc. and rids them of what he deems as harmful to their health and well-being.
- Shepherds shared pens—when one shepherd came in, all HIS sheep would rally to him because they know his voice and will only follow him.
- We can become used to voices of fear, shame, regret, and addictions, that we only recognize their voice and therefore follow them.

*I shall not want* – He provides for my every need.

- The flock looks to the shepherd for all its needs to be met.

- David said he lacked nothing because He knew God was with him.
- I won't lack...I won't fail...I won't decrease!...I will not become empty...He doesn't pass over me!
- The shepherd is who you depend on to meet your needs, whose voice you listen to and who you ultimately follow.

(VERSE 2)

**“He makes me lie down in green pastures;”**

- A pasture is a home—a familiar place the sheep know.
- A good shepherd knows when the pasture is no longer providing nourishment his sheep need or is no longer safe.
- He moves them daily into new pastures to get fresh food and makes sure they are getting sustenance to keep them healthy.
- He brings them to GREEN pastures so they can be revived.

**“He leads me beside quiet waters.”**

- He LEADS me, doesn't force me, but shows me the way.
- Quiet waters were meant to be a place of rest.
- Sheep can't produce the best wool and gain the most weight unless they get the rest and nourishment they need.

The Lord knows the best place for you to get nourished in every season of life.

- Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT) – **“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”**
- Because He is focused on hope and our future, He will move you from one place to another, even daily, to keep you healthy.
- Sheep will stay in the same, comfortable pasture forever and eventually die unless the shepherd moves them.
- Jesus knows where you need to go and how to get you there, but you have to listen for His voice to lead you out and into the next place.

(VERSE 3)

**“He restores my soul;”**

- *Restores* – He refreshes, repairs
- He turns back your soul and causes your life to return.
- He revives your spirit when you're exhausted.

**“He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”**

- He does NOT lead us down paths that lead to ruin—other shepherds will!
- He leads you to the right place, to do what He's called you to at the right time.

(VERSE 4)

**“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;”**

- *Walk* – unfortunately it doesn’t say, “run”, but it does say “through”!
- Though I feel like I could die under the weight of everything, You are with me!
- Psalm 27:1 (NLT) – **“The LORD is my light and my salvation--so why should I be afraid? The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?”**
- Why fear when the Lord is with you?

**“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”**

- Rod – a big stick with a knob used for killing predators or keeping unruly sheep in line.
- Staff – (usually hook) used to pull wayward sheep in or inspect their fur for parasites or ailments.

(VERSE 5)

**“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;”**

- A shepherd will go to a high plateau that is difficult to reach but where there is good, healthy grass for the sheep to graze.
- He "prepares" the land by removing any poisonous grasses and flowers.
- He’s talking about a feast and a *spread* of food.
- Feasting was a time of laughter and joy—our enemies watch this.
- When you dined with a king, it said to every enemy, “This person is sitting at MY table and I am protecting them.”

**“You have anointed my head with oil;”**

- Custom – oil was mixed with perfume and poured on people’s heads during festival occasions—it was used to refresh and invigorate.
- It indicated abundance, prosperity and rejoicing.
- This represents the Holy Spirit—He refreshes and energizes us.

**“My cup overflows.”**

- I am satisfied—I am wealthy.
- Custom – as long as the host continued to fill a guest's cup, it meant that the guest was welcome.
- We are always welcome at His table and in His presence.

(VERSE 6)

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

- *Follow me* – His favor will chase me
- For all my days, His presence will be my dwelling place.