

# FEASTING ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF *JESUS*

## The Good and Faithful Shepherd

John 10, Psalm 23

INTRODUCTION: Last week we saw in **John 10:7 NKJV** Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **I am the door** of the sheep.

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS HIMSELF THE DOOR INTO THE FOLD.**

**John 10:11 NKJV** “**I am the good shepherd**. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Jesus’ statement was far more meaningful to His hearers than it is to us living two thousand years after He walked the streets of Jerusalem and the country roads of Galilee. Sheep and shepherds were a part of their lives, and even city people knew a lot about them.

For the Jews, especially familiar with the Psalms, Jesus saying, “I am the good shepherd” would have immediately reminded them of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

In fact, in Hebrew, Jesus’ statement, “I am the good shepherd” would have been exactly the first line of Psalm 23 with the addition of the one word, “good.”

In that statement, Jesus was applying all the truths spoken by the Holy Spirit through David to Himself, and we will use that psalm this morning to be reminded of the treasure we have in Jesus, who indeed in His life and death and in the centuries since His resurrection and ascension back into heaven has proven Himself over and over to be the good and faithful shepherd.

**Psalm 23 NKJV** A Psalm of David.

**1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

**2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.**

**3 He restores my soul;**

**He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.**

**4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me;**

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

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.**

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

First we see that **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PROVIDES FOR HIS SHEEP.**

Psalm 23:1 NKJV The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

“I shall not want” is a statement of fact. “I shall not want” is a statement of faith.

Then we see **THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS.**

Psalm 23:2 NKJV ... He leads me beside the still waters.

- The Lord, like the middle-eastern shepherd, leads, rather than drives, His sheep.
- Sheep are natural followers.
  - To their own benefit, they will follow their own shepherd.
  - To their own detriment, they will follow each other.
  - The same can be said of the sheep of the Good Shepherd.
- The only time the shepherd “drives” sheep is when they have wandered away from him and into danger.

We should each ask ourselves:

- Are we following the Good Shepherd or other people?
- Are we allowing the Good Shepherd to lead us where He desires rather than to drive us from danger by means of chastisement?

**THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS TO LIFE GIVING WATER.**

- Sheep need water regularly.
- We need God as sheep need water.

Psalm 42:1–2 NKJV 1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. ...

- We saw last week that Jesus gives living water, the Holy Spirit, to all who trust Him.
- But impatient sheep sometimes drink from polluted mud holes.

**Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV** “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

- When we eat and drink of the Spirit, we produce the fruit of the Spirit,
  - like love, joy, peace, kindness, and faithfulness.
- When we eat and drink of the flesh, we produce the works of the flesh,
  - like fornication, hatred, jealousy, angry outbursts, and selfishness.
- Everybody drinks something. Everybody drinks something spiritually. Which are you drinking?

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS EVEN SHEEP WHICH HAVE FALLEN.**

**Psalm 23:3a NKJV** He restores my soul; ...

- The sheep pictured here is of a sheep which is cast or cast down, stuck in a hole. Their center of mass has shifted, and they cannot get up.
- The parallel for us is when our soul (mind, will, emotions) is cast down.

**Psalm 42:11 NKJV** Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

- We are stuck, and cannot rescue ourselves.
- As the shepherd rescues the cast sheep, the Good Shepherd rescues the one whose soul is cast down by restoring the soul.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS ON RIGHT PATHS.**

**Psalm 23:3b NKJV** ... He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

- Sheep will follow themselves, creating ruts, ravaging the land, and destroying themselves.
- Isaiah said, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.”

- The Good Shepherd takes us off the destructive path and puts us on the path of righteousness.
- Some paths are right; some paths are wrong. The Good Shepherd knows the difference.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS US THROUGH THE VALLEYS.**

**Psalm 23:4 NKJV** Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; ...

- The Good Shepherd does not route us around the valleys of life but goes through those valleys with us.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PROTECTS AND GUIDES WHILE HE LEADS.**

**Psalm 23:4b NKJV** ... Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

- The rod of the shepherd was a weapon. Think club. It usually had a knot or enlargement at the end. Sometimes shepherds imbedded iron in the end as in a mace. It was used for two purposes.
  - To protect the sheep from predators.
  - To discipline wayward and unruly sheep who were a danger to themselves and others.
  - It was a constant reminder of the shepherd's authority and control.
  - The shepherd's rod reminds us that the Good Shepherd chastens those whom He loves, those who belong to His flock. Psalm prophesies the Messiah will rule with a rod of iron, same word.
- The staff was the shepherd's crook, used for guidance, rescue, and to draw the sheep to Himself.
- Sometimes sheep will jump down from a high plateau to a ledge that has good looking grass, but then they cannot jump back up.
  - If the shepherd tries to rescue them when they first jump down, they go down further, not wanting to leave the luscious grass they have to themselves.
  - The shepherd must wait until they have become thoroughly exhausted trying to return to the flock, until they can barely move, before he can reach down with the

crook of his staff, and maneuver them to where he can reach them with his hand and pull them to safety.

- So also, the Good Shepherd often must wait until we have tried everything else to rescue ourselves and hit the bottom, before we allow Him to rescue us.
- Both the rod and the staff are used for the good of the sheep.
- The rod for protection and discipline. The staff for guidance and rescue.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PREPARES A TABLELAND OF ABUNDANT LIFE.**

**Psalm 23:5 NKJV** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; ...

- The “table” for the sheep is the tableland.
  - The best tablelands are prepared by the shepherd.
  - The shepherd prepares abundant provision for his sheep, even though they are surrounded by enemies.
- The Good Shepherd prepares a tableland of abundant life.

**John 10:10 NKJV** The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PREPARES AN ANOINTING.**

**Psalm 23: 5b-6 NKJV** You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;

- The human shepherd prepares an ointment of olive oil and herbs to keep away the flies and parasites or to heal a scab. The anointing oil is poured on the head of the sheep.
- The Good Shepherd has given us the Holy Spirit. A fresh anointing comes every time we are filled with the Spirit, meaning we submit afresh to His control and empowering.

### **THE GOOD SHEPHERD PREPARES A PLACE.**

**Psalm 23:6b NKJV** ... And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

I love the confidence of David, a two-legged sheep himself. “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Can you say that without a maybe or a hope so?