



February 5, 2017

Psalm 23:5-6

"The Song of a Shepherd" Part 3

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In the concluding message in a three-part series in Psalm 23, Pastor Gary reminds us that we are like sheep and God is like a shepherd who loves us and cares for us. In the last two verses of this psalm, David expresses his heart about the God who protects us, comforts us, and wants us to spend eternity with him in heaven. David's concluding words are about how he wanted to *"dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* He had the assurance that when he died he would go to be with the Lord in heaven. Do you have this same confidence that you would go to heaven when you die? Pastor Gary's message will help you have that assurance!

Part 1 And Part 2 - Review

1. Sheep are senseless, defenseless, and fearful, which creates a natural bond with their shepherd, because sheep are completely dependent upon the shepherd.
2. God wants to have this same kind of special bond and relationship with us, and he wants us to know how we are completely dependent upon him.
3. **Psalm 23:1-3a** - *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul..."* (NKJV)
4. When we try to do life our way, like senseless, wandering sheep, we will oftentimes find ourselves on a harmful path because we have not followed the leading of the Good Shepherd.

5. Pastor Gary said: “God is going to lead us on the right path. It is a good path with God. It is a pleasant path with God. It is a straight path, in the sense that it is unencumbered by things that [would harm us].
6. God is good to us, not because of our goodness, character, or reputation, but because of his goodness, his character, and his reputation!
7. Pastor Gary said: “The greatest comfort to fearful sheep was to be in the presence of their shepherd. The thing that will bring the greatest comfort to you and me, in our times of fear, is to always remember that God is with us. The Bible says that he will never leave us nor forsake us; that he is our abiding Good Shepherd. You know, God is omnipresent, so he can be at all places at all times. And, he can be with you as much as he is with me, as much as he is with somebody else... Because God is with each of us, and cares for each of us, and it is his presence that we need to be reminded of when we are going through those valleys. When you are going through a valley, whatever particular valley it might be: some worried place, some dark place, some discouraging place, some fearful place, always remember, God is with you.”
8. Pastor Gary said: “So, whatever valley you might be going through or have gone through or are presently going through, please never forget your Good Shepherd is with you, and he loves you. And, he will see you through. God doesn’t promise us the mountaintop experiences for every day of our life, but what he does promise us is that when we are in the valleys he’s with us... [Those] who have gone through some very painful valleys in [life oftentimes]... say, ‘Though I don’t want to go through it again, and though I don’t wish it on anyone else, I’m thankful I went through it.’ And why are they thankful they went through it? Because oftentimes in the valley is when that relationship with Christ becomes even more precious and even more real.”

The Song Of A Shepherd

9. [Psalm 23:5a](#) - “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...*” (NKJV)
10. The word “*table*” is often misunderstood, because most people are unfamiliar with sheep and the life of a shepherd.
11. Pastor Gary said a plateau is what is being spoken of in this verse, because it would have literally been a grassy, hillside location in which the sheep could graze without fear of attack from predators.

12. "In some of the finest sheep country in the world, especially in the western United States and southern Europe, the high plateaus of the sheep ranges are always referred to as 'mesas' - the Spanish word for 'tables.'" ¹
13. The three primary enemies of sheep are coyotes/jackals, wolves, and lions, and in the United States alone, predators accounted for 250,000 or 31% of sheep deaths annually.
14. What is being communicated in this verse is that the shepherd provided a peaceful grazing place for his sheep in the presence of their enemies, which caused the sheep to be at ease because they knew they would be protected.
15. The parallel between sheep and us is that we too have an enemy, the devil.
16. **1 Peter 5:8** - *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..."*
17. Pastor Gary said: "Satan desires to devour you... He wants to destroy your life. He wants to destroy your marriage. He wants to destroy your kids. He wants to destroy everything about your life. He wants to destroy our church. He's on the prowl 'like a roaring lion.' Now, that said, he's a real enemy [and] he's a formidable foe, but our Good Shepherd is stronger still! And even our strongest enemy is no match for the power of God. And, yet, the warning is that you have to be 'self-controlled and alert' because you've got to be prepared; *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.*' So there is a responsibility that we have, but please know, that it is your Good Shepherd who is looking out for you. Jesus himself will protect you, and thus, he will 'set a table before you in the presence of your enemies.' And you can rest in peace"
18. **Psalm 121:7-8** - *"The LORD will keep you from all harm - he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."*
19. **Psalm 23:5b** - *"You anoint my head with oil..."* (NKJV)
20. Flies and parasites torment sheep, so caring shepherds would apply olive oil to their nostrils, ears, and head, because it was a natural repellent.

¹ W. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 125.

21. The parallel for anointing oil is the Holy Spirit, because in the New Testament, oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.
22. In John chapters 14, 15, and 16, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Comforter.
23. Pastor Gary said: “In a similar way that a shepherd loves to anoint the head of the sheep to bring comfort and relief, God, by his Spirit has saturated us that we might experience relief and comfort for some of the most tormenting things that we experience in life. God longs to bring relief and comfort to our tormenting times... He is intimately acquainted with our suffering and our grief.”
24. [Isaiah 53:4](#) - *“Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows...”* (NKJV)
25. [Isaiah 66:13](#) - *“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you...”*
26. [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#) - *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles...”*
27. [Psalm 23:5c](#) - *“My cups runs over.”* (NKJV)
28. The imagery David is writing about is that with the Lord there is abundance, excess, and more than enough!
29. [Romans 15:13](#) - *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*
30. [Jude 2](#) - *“Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.”*
31. In terms of what we possess, we experience the abundance that comes from the Lord.
 - a. Earning an annual income of \$34,000.00 or more places you in the top 1% of the world’s population!
 - b. For those below the poverty level in the United States, 99% of these individuals/families have electricity, running water, flushing toilets, and a refrigerator, and 95% own a TV.

32. [Psalm 23:6a](#) - *"Surely goodness and mercy ² shall follow me All the days of my life..."* (NKJV)
33. [Isaiah 30:18a](#) - *"... the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion."*
34. [Lamentations 3:22-23](#) - *"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."* (NKJV)
35. The Hebrew word for "follow" is a military term that literally translates as chase or pursue, which brings a completely different understanding to this Scripture, because we might otherwise have thought that God's mercy trails along behind us.
36. God's goodness and mercy pursues us, which demonstrates his incredible love for us!
37. [Psalm 23:6b](#) - *"And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."* (NKJV)
38. David was not writing about living in the temple in Jerusalem for the rest of his earthly life; he was writing about heaven, which he was confident would be his eternal home.
39. [John 14:1-4](#) - *"[Jesus said,] Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."*
40. [2 Corinthians 5:8](#) - *"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."*
41. [John 10:11](#) - *"[Jesus said,] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*
42. We can have the same assurance as David, because Jesus, in [John 5:24](#), said: *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

² Some Bible translations use the word love, instead of mercy; however, the Hebrew word used in this Scripture is hesed, which means, mercy.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Psalm 23](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Share experiences you've had concerning funeral services or sermons in which [Psalm 23:5a](#) has not been explained properly.
4. Read and discuss [1 Peter 5:8](#), [Psalm 121:7-8](#), and Pastor Gary's comments about our common enemy. (See #17 above)
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments concerning the Holy Spirit. (See #23 above)
6. Read and discuss [Isaiah 53:4, 66:13](#), and [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#).
7. Spend time talking about the ways you have been comforted in difficult times.
8. Allow the people in your group to share stories about the ways they have experienced abundance and blessing that came from the Lord.
9. Read and discuss [Psalm 23:6a](#).
10. Read and discuss John 14:1-4.
11. How did you come to the place of having confidence and assurance that heaven would be your eternal home when you died?
12. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).