

## A Study in Psalms, Week 2 Handout The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm

*“I am the Good Shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

Jesus, speaking in John 10:14-15

### Introduction

1. Life is **hectic**. People are **not at peace** with themselves, **not satisfied**
2. **God** has a **better** approach. <Read Psalm 23>
3. Let’s **examine** this psalm, study its **imagery**, and look for **application** to our lives.

### Background

1. Written by **David** (see the superscription)
  - a. A shepherd in his **youth** (early preparation for leading Israel)
  - b. However, David probably wrote this psalm **late** in his life
  - c. This psalm paints **two images** of God: As a **Shepherd** and as a hospitable **Host**

### The Sheep and the Shepherd

1. Knowing David was a shepherd, we may try to interpret this from the shepherd’s viewpoint
  - a. But David is speaking as a **sheep**, not a shepherd
2. <Read Psalm 23:1>
3. Shepherd imagery very **common** in the Near East—Israelites were **known** as shepherds
4. Jesus referred to Himself as “*the Good Shepherd*” (John 10:14)
5. In using the word “shepherd,” David creates a most **comprehensive** and **intimate metaphor** of God’s **love** and **care** for His flock—not as “King” or “Deliverer” or “Rock” or “Shield,” but as **guide, physician, protector** and **provider**.
6. **Good shepherds**, by definition, supply **everything** the sheep **need**
7. Contrast this with **Satan’s** portrayal of us as **lacking** and **deprived** by God
8. David says that with God as his shepherd, he has everything he **needs**.
9. **Read Psalm 23:2-4**
  - a. In vv 2-3a, the emphasis is on **rest**. The shepherd provides **rest** for his **sheep**.
  - b. God feeds us with his **Word** which gives us **spiritual** nourishment, rest and restoration.
  - c. Emphasis in verse 3b is on God’s **guidance**
  - d. Verse 4 talks about how safe we are with God as our Shepherd

### The Hospitable Host

1. <Read Psalm 23:5-6>
2. Imagery **shifts** to that of David as a **guest** and God as a **protective host**
3. Near Eastern hospitality (then and now) involves a **deep obligation** to **security** and **comfort**
4. The **overflowing cup** = the host **abundantly** sharing his **provisions** (nothing held back)
5. As a **result** of the provisions of verse 5, David declares in verse 6a that “*Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life.*”
6. And we’re promised this “guest protection” in God’s house **forever and ever!** (vs. 6b)

### Next week, Psalm 73...