



## The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm

March 30

**RESOURCE:** Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*.

**CONTEXT:** The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is so famous its meaning can almost escape us. We want to have a fresh look at this beloved Psalm. While a traditional funeral Psalm it actually is about God's providence care in the everyday life of the one who trusts in the LORD. It is from this place that the Psalm gained its fame. We'll consider it in 3 scenes beginning today with vv. 1–3.

**Challenge:** Might you memorize the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm?

**FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP** (Mt 16:13–20)

- What is a means of grace?
- How is the Church as a means of grace?
- Is the church made up of individual Christians or are individual believers added to the Church? How does our answer affect the way we view the Church?
- In Mt 16 what wonderfully shocking things did Jesus say about the Church?
- What does it prove or what are we missing if we neglect this means?

**READ:** Psalm 23 (today we'll study vv. 1–3)

### QUESTIONS:

1. **What has been your experience of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm?**

#### A PSALM OF DAVID

1. *Read 1 Sam 16:11 & 17:34–36 for this Psalm's context.*

#### The LORD

2. *We recently studied Ex 34:6–7. Who is this Shepherd Lord of the Psalm? Why do we need to define who our God is?*

3. **Throughout the whole Psalm, but especially in vv. 1–3, is the emphasis on us or the LORD?**

#### The LORD is my shepherd

4. **In what ways is the LORD like a shepherd?** *Think about Jesus as the Good Shepherd in Jn 10:11.*

5. **In what way are we like sheep?** *Think about Isa 53:6a.*
6. **Why is the personal possessive pronoun “my” important for understanding the promises of this Psalm?**
7. **How does this Psalm emphasize the personal nature of faith in Jesus Christ and His care for us?**

#### I shall not want

8. **Since David knew physical wants is there a contradiction here or is it speaking about a higher satisfaction?**

9. **If we are content in the Lord's care how will we be spiritually healthier?**

10. **What confidence in the LORD does this phrase bespeak?**

11. *The rest of the Psalm answers ‘why we shall not want.’*

#### He makes me lie down in green pastures

12. **What is it about the shepherd that makes timid sheep willingly lie down? What do they receive as a result?**

13. **Why are the LORD's pastures better than those we might seek out? How does He lead us to them?**

14. *Think about what Jesus said in Mt 5:6.*

#### He leads me beside still waters [or waters of rest]

1. *We all have a natural spiritual thirst. Why is it dangerous and unhelpful drinking from the world's springs?*

2. **The waters to which the Lord leads His sheep are still (i.e. safe) and satisfying. In what ways does Jesus quench our spiritual thirst so that we are satisfied? How does He lead us to these waters?**

3. *Think about what Jesus said in Jn 6:35.*

#### He restores my soul

4. *The Lord refreshes us by knowing Him and through His provision of spiritual water and food. We rest in His care. However, even saved sheep sometimes become spiritually lost (1 Sam 21) or destitute (Ps 42:11). In the hard times, what solace is it that Jesus will find us & restore our souls? (Lk 15:1–7).*

#### He leads me in paths of righteousness [or in right paths]

5. *Sheep are stupid creatures. They are also creatures of habit. They'll overgraze and follow old paths even if they'll lead to harm. How does the Good Shepherd lead us from the wide path and down the narrow path? (Mt 7:13).*

For His name's sake

15. *Name is synonymous with honour or reputation.* **Though He cares for us, what is the ultimate reason Jesus cares for His sheep? How does living for Him show we are His sheep and bring Him honour?**

16. **How can you use this Psalm personally in ministry and evangelism?**

**NEXT TIME:** April 6<sup>th</sup>- Psalm 23:4