**"The Sheep of His Pasture"**Psalm 23:1b-2

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* 450 Turkish Sheep Leap to Their Deaths - Published January 13, 2015[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + First one sheep jumped to its death.
    - Then stunned Turkish shepherds, who had left the herd to graze while they had breakfast, watched as nearly 1,500 others followed, each leaping off the same cliff, Turkish media reported.
  + In the end, 450 dead animals lay on top of one another in a billowy white pile, the Aksam newspaper said.
    - Those who jumped later were saved as the pile got higher and the fall more cushioned, Aksam reported.
  + "There's nothing we can do. They're all wasted," Nevzat Bayhan, a member of one of 26 families whose sheep were grazing together in the herd, was quoted as saying by Aksam.
    - The estimated loss to families in the town of Gevas (search), located in Van province (search) in eastern Turkey, tops $100,000, a significant amount of money in a country where average GDP (search) per head is around $2,700.
  + "Every family had an average of 20 sheep," Aksam quoted another villager, Abdullah Hazar as saying. "But now only a few families have sheep left. It's going to be hard for us."
* This sermon is for those who have thought about leaving the fold of God.
  + The sheep who are like Asaph in Psalm 73…
    - *1**Truly God is good to Israel,  
          to those who are pure in heart.****2****But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,  
          my steps had nearly slipped.****3****For I was envious of the arrogant  
          when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*
      * For whatever reason… you are inclined to find another pasture… another shepherd… another God.
        + Like a sheep longing for the “greener” grass of another field.
    - Maybe you have seen other sheep dive off the cliff and they didn’t plunge to their death like the Turkish sheep… maybe they are “fat and sleek with no troubles” (Psa. 73:4).
  + David gives bold statement of faith in Psalm 23 about the goodness and provision of the LORD.

Reading of God’s Word

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

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

***2*** *He makes me lie down in green pastures.*

*He leads me beside still waters.*

***3*** *He restores my soul.*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness*

*for his name’s sake.*

***4*** *Even 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 overflows.*

***6*** *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*

*all the days of my life,*

*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord*

*forever. [[2]](#footnote-2)*

**Preaching God’s Word**

1. I shall not want.
   1. This beloved psalm has three amazing public testimonies…[[3]](#footnote-3)
      1. I shall not want (vs. 1)
         1. For you are my shepherd
      2. I will fear no evil (vs. 4)
         1. For you are my companion
      3. I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (vs. 6)
         1. For you are my host
   2. Here we are seeing the implications of the LORD being our shepherd.
      1. One commentator notes how this idea is the OPPOSITE of how we often live…
         1. When asking people “What do you want?”
            1. Personally – health… wealth… happiness… new boat… new car… new Nintendo…more vacation…
            2. Socially – end of war in Ukraine… peace of earth
      2. David’s own life…
         1. As a young man… mocked by his brothers…
         2. Middle aged man… despised by his wife (Michal)
         3. And as an older man… undermined by his son (Absalom).
            1. A pastor named Chuck Swindoll shared this poem…

It was Spring, but it was Summer I wanted: The warm days and the great outdoors…

It was Summer, but it was Fall I wanted: The colorful leaves and the cool, dry air…

It was Fall, but it was Winter I wanted: The beautiful snow and the joy of the holiday season…

It was Winter, but it was Spring I wanted: The warmth and the blossoming of nature…

I was a child, and it was adulthood I wanted: The freedom and the respect…

I was 20, but it was 30 I wanted: To be mature and sophisticated…

I was middle-aged, but it was 20 I wanted: The youth and the free spirit…

I was retired, but it was middle-aged I wanted: The presence of mind without limitations…

My life is over, and I never got what I wanted.

* + - 1. Bradley Andrew - “Comparison is the thief of joy.”
    1. These are ideas that span human history…
       1. Odysseus is lashed to the mast of a sheep and begs… pleads… and threatens others to let him have his wants… the call of the Sirens.
       2. Bono has sung in stadiums across the globe… “But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.”
  1. David though says to all…
     1. A glad boast… “Look who my Shepherd is”
        1. *The LORD is my Shepherd*
     2. A bold recognition… that shows the “utmost docility”
        1. Saying it this way… “The LORD is my Shepherd, what more do I need.”
           1. Beloved, you lack nothing you need.

NIV - [*1*](https://ref.ly/logosres/LLS:NIV2011;ref=bible$2Bniv.19.23.1)*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

* + - 1. Matthew Henry – “I shall not want [or lack] anything that is really necessary and good for me… I shall be supplied with whatever I need and, if I have not everything I desire, I may conclude it is either not fit for me or not good for me or I shall have it in due time.”
      2. John Newton – “All shall work together for good; everything is needful that he sends; nothing can be needful that he withholds.”
  1. POINT: Your shepherd is the LORD God Almighty.
     1. He knows what you need and will provide it at the best time.
        1. Even amid severe deprivations…
           1. David hiding in caves from Saul…
           2. Paul chained in prisons…

2 Cor. 4:6ff - ***4****but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,****5****beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;****6****by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love;****7****by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;****8****through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;****9****as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed;****10****as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*

* + 1. No other pasture has this provision… because no other pasture has this Shepherd.
  1. Transition: The next lines shift the focus to this Shepherd… he is the subject of the sentence… He is the focus… the sheep merely benefits from the Shepherd’s actions.

1. He makes me lie down in green pastures.
   1. Sheep rarely lie down… often they are standing.
      1. Why?[[4]](#footnote-4)
         1. #1 – timidity by nature
         2. #2 – the friction with the flock
         3. #3 – flies and parasites
         4. #4 – need food
      2. So the shepherd must overcome fear, tension, aggravations, and hunger (Keller).
         1. The flesh… fear arise in us…
         2. The World… frictions come upon us
         3. The Devil… fights are waged with us
         4. Limitations… will the LORD provide for us.
   2. It is the diligence of the LORD as shepherd that addresses these to that you are at peace…
      1. **green pastures**—or, “pastures of tender grass,” are mentioned, not in respect to food, but as places of cool and refreshing rest.[[5]](#footnote-5)
         1. David could be drawing on his own experience as a shepherd or it could be a reference to how God lead his people out of the bondage of Egypt (Daniel Craigie).
            1. In Psalm 77, Asaph sounds like a sheep bleating… “have you forgotten me… but it ends with him recalling what the Good Shepherd as done…

Psalm 77:19-20 - ***19****Your way was through the sea,  
    your path through the great waters;  
    yet your footprints were unseen.****20****You led your people like a flock  
    by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

* + - * 1. As Moses concluded that leading of God, he told the people…

Deut. 2:7 - ***7****For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.”’*

* + 1. The flock of God was about to enter the land of Milk and Honey in Moses day.
       1. The flock of God was established in green pastures of Spring in David’s day.
  1. Transition: The peace pairs with provision.

1. He leads me beside still waters.
   1. Hebrew *beside waters of rest*
      1. Haboush in “My Shepherd life in Galilee” (as quoted by Calhoun)
         1. Shepherds used to come together, whereupon one of them would be selected to stand guard with the flocks on the hillside while the rest of us would go down to the river.
         2. Here, with picks, shovels, and spades, we would dig from the river into the pasture ground a trench several rods long, several feet wide, and a few inches deep.
         3. When that was completed, we would let the water from the river back up into the ditch, and as it backed up it would become 'still.
         4. Then the shepherds would call their sheep to the still waters there amid green pastures.
         5. However, the word 'still does not mean stagnant.
         6. Though the waters are still, they are continually fresh because of the stream which, slowly flowing in and out, causes the water to be calm and clean, so that the sheep may quench their thirst therefrom in safety.
   2. Point: The picture is that of a shepherd making sure that there is no lack among his charge…
      1. Protection…
      2. Provision…
      3. Peace…
         1. Food… Water… Rest.
2. Conclusion
   1. What sheep would want to leave this flock… this pasture…. This Shepherd?
      1. Answer: Every… single… one of us.
         1. Adam in the garden lacked nothing…
            1. He had perfect rest… safety… and everything necessary for happiness.

But he became like a sheep that sought another field and led others of the cliff to their death.

* + 1. Beloved, we do not have a shepherd like shepherds in the opening story who were out at lunch….
       1. We have a good Shepherd who sought us while we were straying… and became like a sheep that was bound over to death so that we would have life.
          1. John 10:11ff - ***11****I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.****12****He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.****13****He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.****14****I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,*
  1. There was a man name James Montgomery who grew up in the church and spurned it all in seeking other fields…
     1. Wreched by sin and burdened by sorrows… He was brought back by the very Shepherd he had spurned…[[6]](#footnote-6)
        1. 1 The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know;  
           I feed in green pastures, safe folded I rest;  
           He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,  
           Restores me when wandering, redeems when oppressed,  
           Restores me when wandering, redeems when oppressed.
        2. 2 Through the valley and shadow of death though I stray,  
           Since Thou art my guardian, no evil I fear;  
           Thy rod shall defend me, Thy staff be my stay;  
           No harm can befall with my Comforter near,  
           No harm can befall with my Comforter near.
        3. 3 In the midst of affliction my table is spread;  
           With blessings unmeasured my cup runneth o’er;  
           With perfume and oil Thou anointest my head;  
           O what shall I ask of Thy providence more?  
           O what shall I ask of Thy providence more?
        4. 4 Let goodness and mercy, my bountiful God,  
           Still follow my steps till I meet Thee above.  
           I seek by the path which my forefathers trod,  
           Through the land of their sojourn, Thy kingdom of love,  
           Through the land of their sojourn Thy kingdom of love.
  2. Nowhere are these truths more clearly seen and celebrated than at the LORD’s table.

1. https://www.foxnews.com/story/450-turkish-sheep-leap-to-their-deaths.print [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ps23.title&off=24&ctx=Lord+Is+My+Shepherd%0a~23%C2%A0A+Psalm+of+David.) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 23:title–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. As noted in *The Lord of Psalm 23* by David Gibson. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23, 35.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jfbcomm?ref=Bible.Ps23.2&off=3&ctx=ome+good+reason.%0a2.+~green+pastures%E2%80%94or%2c+%E2%80%9C), vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://hymnary.org/text/the\_lord\_is\_my\_shepherd\_no\_want\_montgome [↑](#footnote-ref-6)