

Ag School: Learning From Our Shepherd

Opener: What's been most helpful to you in breaking the worry habit?

Scripture: The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them. Psalms 78:70-72

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. John 10:11-15 (condensed)

"I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. ²⁷Can you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:25-34 (condensed)

Discussion Questions

1. Psalm 23 is so familiar that we can fail to appreciate its depth, so let's take a closer look. Psalm 78:70-72 describes David's experience as a shepherd and how he applied it to taking care of God's sheep. How does the shepherd/sheep relationship illustrate our relationship with the Lord?
2. How does John 10:11-15 add to what David says in Psalm 23? Who would be an example of a "hired hand"? Have there been times when you or someone you know has followed other shepherds? What did they offer that seemed more desirable than what Jesus offers?
3. When David says, "I lack nothing" ("I shall not want") is he saying we'll get everything we want? If not, what is he saying? How and what does the Lord provide for His people? Psalm 23:1-3
4. It's impossible to make sheep lie down to rest if they're not free from fear, pests, friction with other sheep, and hunger. With that in mind, what's the significance of "He makes me lie down" for us? Vs. 2
5. Like David, we live in a world that is full of reasons to worry. But Matthew 6:25-34 tells us not to worry about anything. Does worry include fear and anxiety? How have social media, smartphones, and the internet contributed to worry and anxiety? From Psalm 23, how can we face our fears with God's help?
6. How has God refreshed/restored your soul? What does it mean that God leads us into right paths for His name's sake? How has your path changed since you came to follow the Good Shepherd? Ps. 23:3
7. Up to vs. 3 life is good—but all of a sudden we're surrounded by enemies in death valley! How does knowing that Jesus is our shepherd change the way we handle hardships? How do the rod, staff, table, overflowing cup, and dwelling in His house forever change our perspective on tough times? Ps. 23:4-6

Wrap Up: Psalm 23 is all about knowing God in a way that fills us with trust, peace, and fulfillment no matter what life brings our way. Is that possible? As it turns out, it is, but it takes surrendering to Him as our shepherd. So what do you need to do to fully surrender to the Lord? What's keeping you from following Him to green pastures and letting Him restore your soul?