

The Good Shepherd

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[0:00] Psalm 23, Psalm 23, we make a joyful noise in this church, amen? Joy unspeakable and full of glory.

! Psalm 23, Psalm 23, as we just read it earlier and we'll read it through verse by verse now, Psalm 23.

It's a psalm, a rejoicing, a song full of joy, chock full of precious, powerful comfort for you and me, amen?

For here and now, for today. These words have brought peace and comfort and joy to the many people of God down through the history, down through the ages and, I'm sure, beyond our age. Psalm 23, blessed words of God. And it's a psalm of David. David the shepherd. Psalm 23, verse 1. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. It speaks of the shepherd's care, doesn't it? Of his overseeing, of his limitless provision.

[1:15] A psalm of David, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. David depicts himself here. David the shepherd depicts himself as a sheep.

A sheep totally dependent upon his great shepherd's provision. And notice it's his personal shepherd's provision. The Lord is my, my shepherd. You can confess that yourself, believer tonight. The Lord is mine, mine, all mine, my shepherd.

My shepherd, my own shepherd, my personal shepherd. Psalm 23 is very personal. There are no references to we or us or they, but only my, me and I and you of God. It's you and God here in this psalm, this precious psalm.

And this is David's testimony, his personal experience with God. God is personal. Isn't that precious? He is personal. He is for you. And if God before you, who can be against you? We've got a relationship here. He is mine, my shepherd.

We've got a relationship with our God and King. You can say with my God, with my shepherd. And David is saying here that God, the God of whole, our universe, is personal for him.

[2:37] The God who made everything is in control of the stars, the universe. As the good shepherd, he looks after me. You can say that, believer tonight. Amen.

You can say he is mine, my shepherd. He cares for me. He looks after me, my life, my whole life. And I shall not want. I shall not want for nourishment.

As the shepherd cares for the sheep, he makes the sheep to lie down in green pastures. I want not for nourishment. I shall not want for refreshment.

It says he leadeth me beside the still waters. I shall not want for strength. He restoreth my soul. He's the strength of my soul. David says that everything, everything that he genuinely needs has been provided for him by his shepherd.

People of God tonight, God is faithful. God is faithful. And he's dependable. You can count upon him. Our shepherd knows us. Your shepherd knows you. Amen.

[3:43] Isn't that right? Your shepherd knows you. He knows you through and through. He knew you even before you came out of your mother's womb. He knows every sheep of his pasture. He knows every sheep in his flock.

And our Lord provides. Our Lord, our shepherd, he knows the sheep through and through. He knows each and every one by name, no matter the size, matter the multitudes.

Yet he knows you. He knows you. He knows you by name, personally. And we can know his supply. He knows what's best for us. The Lord knows our needs even before we ask him.

He supplies our needs. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. You could say the Lord is my pastor. I shall not want. Because the pastor, the pastor of pastors, he is the pastor, the shepherd.

And I shall not want. He knows what's best. He knows our needs and he supplies them. He knows our needs even before we ask him. Yet he forces us to pray, doesn't he?

[4:44] That we are to pray. We are to pray. Ask him. He knows your needs already, but ask him. Learn to lean on him, to depend on him. Your shepherd. Verse 2.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the shepherd. Notice here the tenderness of the shepherd. That he makes us to lie down.

Sometimes we need to lie down, don't we? We can get too busy. I met a man yesterday. He was saying he works 18 hours a day. I don't know if you work that hard. But I think it's a good time to lie down, isn't it?

It's a good time to take time to cool your heels and to have some rest. And David tells us here that his shepherd makes him to lie down.

And lie down not just anywhere, but in green pastures. In green pastures. You know, sometimes I've had occasion where I've been driving around and it's been a busy day.

[5:42] And I just see, I've got to confess here, sometimes I see a nice bit of green grass in a park. And I get my travel rug out and lie down on that green grass. I think, what a weird man this is.

But, you know, it's such a restful thing. Not that I go lying around all the time. But there's that sense where that lovely lush green grass, that lovely carpet to lie on. And one day I was lying on the green grass in Salisbury and some police woman came up to me and sort of questioned me, thinking I might be a drunk or something, I think.

But, you know, there's a time and a place to lie down, isn't there? And God wants us to take some rest, to take some refreshment, to come to those green pastures where we can find that rest for us all.

David tells us that his shepherd makes us lie down in green pastures. Now, the shepherd knows that unlike goats which eat weeds and other trash, the sheep prefer those tender green grasses. And the shepherd leads his sheep to those places where he knows they will be fed. He makes them to lie down, it says. Because they cannot completely, properly digest their food unless they lie down.

[6:50] So it's important for a sheep to lie down. The shepherd knows that the sheep will not lie down until they feel perfectly safe from attack. And, friends, our shepherd makes us lie down in green pastures.

Looks over us. And he knows that we can be safe under his watch. And we know that we can lie down. And as the sheep lies down, because their wool grows so thick and rich, that as they spend that time resting and ruminating on the green grasses, it does the sheep good to lie down.

But the shepherd knows what does us good, what we have need of. And his tender and his care is watching over us. What a picture for us as God's people today. Amen? That our Lord looks after us. He knows when we need rest, when we need refreshment. He knows that we must feed. And he provides the very best food for us. Amen? This is the best food we can eat, isn't it?

This is honey. This is sweeter than honey. This is taste and see that the Lord is good. This is good tucker. This is number five on the nutrition scale, isn't it?

[7:58] For your soul, because it can't get better than this. There's nothing better than the word of God. And we know that the sheep must rest to ingest and digest properly. And to then provide the maximum fruit for the glory of God.

Now, the Lord knows what you have need of. He knows when you need to have time of rest. And he knows those green pastures that you can feed your soul on. The green pastures. This is green pastures for your soul.

And graze there, rest there, in the riches of his grace, in the promise of his word for you. What a tender shepherd. Tender shepherd. Fights off the world.

As you can rest, you know you can rest. You can close your eyes and you can be at peace. You can have a restful sleep. He is watching over you, 24 by 7.

I like to think, really, we've got a 24 by 7 security, don't we? Might have one of those stickers on your house. The property, 24 by 7 surveillance.

[8:58] That's the kind of surveillance God has over us. He watches over us. He is the overseer. He is the bishop. He oversees. He sees over us. He watches over us. And he fights off the enemies who would disturb our rest and unsettle us and hurt us.

Tenderly meets our needs. What a privilege. What a provision we can know. You can know that. The Lord is your rest. He is our Sabbath.

He is the Sabbath. He gives us that rest. You can know a physical and a spiritual refreshment for your soul. He says, come unto me and you shall find rest for your souls.

Don't you want that kind of rest? You know, it might have a rest for your body, a rest, you know, for your mind, but a rest for your soul. That only comes from him, doesn't it?

And you can know rest. Rest beyond anything you ever offer. Rest for your soul. Rest from sin. Rest from guilt. Rest from shame. Those green pastures are rich, verdant pastures where the sheep need not move from place to place because he leads us where they are.

[10:07] He shows us those words that we need to feed our hearts, our souls. He leads us to those green pastures and to the still waters. It speaks of that communion with God, a communion with God.

My shepherd, his pastures, his still waters. Let's hear his voice. He wants us to come to those still waters.

It's a fact that sheep will not drink from a running stream. They've got this fear of water lest they drown. Their heavy coats, their little legs can make sheep vulnerable.

They can't really enter the water such that their wool would get heavy, it could hurt, it could die. So the sheep will shy away from running water.

So the shepherd knows the water that's going to be good for us, the water where it's placid and where they can drink and where they can be calm, that calm pool.

[11:04] The cool waters of his refreshing. What a picture of God's refreshing, of his blessing. Notice those places we need, places of stillness.

It's a busy world, isn't it? Messages to do with quieting the busy soul. You know, the sense of the busyness.

It's easy to buy into that. We get so busy, busy, busy, and we don't have that quietness of our soul. Still waters is where we need to go. Take time for the still waters.

You know, we can often get so caught up in the rat race, you could say, where only the rats win anyway, where we're just busy, busy, and not taking time.

But take time to come to the still waters. Refresh yourself. The shepherd knows the cares that you face, and he provides that place of rest. Enter into his rest. Enter into that place of his safety, of his refreshment.

[12:06] Those still, calm waters. Take time to drink deep of those still, calm waters. That refreshing of his word, the living water. Our shepherd cares.

And the shepherd guides. We see verse 3 now. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. He restoreth my soul.

Since you can know a comfort and a protection and a guidance of the shepherd. It tells us here, brother, sister, he restoreth my soul. There's a time when your soul can get frazzled and wearied. He restores it. He brings it back into shape, as it were. Now, you hear of people in the furniture restoration business. Well, God's in the soul restoration business.

He restores my soul. Sometimes our soul, our person can be such that we can get overwhelmed with the weights and burdens of the world.

[13:08] He restores my soul, it says. Our Lord provides healing. Shepherd literally revives the life of the sheep under his care.

Sheep, as we reflect on them as an animal, sheep can be somewhat dumb and innocent and really incapable of defending themselves.

You know, they're quite helpless at times. And if a sheep will fall on its back, it cannot get up unless someone rolls it over and helps it stand back on its feet.

What a helpless creature a sheep is. And really, doesn't that picture for us how we are for him? As helpless creatures, really, ultimately, we need the shepherd to restore us, to get us back on our

feet.

And life knocks us off of our feet sometimes. There's a classic book. A shepherd looks at Psalm 23. And this man, Philip Keller, I believe he may have been a shepherd himself, he gives us these striking pictures of the care of the shepherd, of the gentleness of the shepherd.

[14:13] And he comments on verse 3 when it says, He restoreth my soul. He says that this is a language that every shepherd would understand.

Because sheep are built in such a way that if they fall on their side, then onto their back, it's very difficult for them to get up again.

They flail with their feet in the air, their legs, they bleat, they cry. After a few hours, gas builds in their stomachs such that it hardens, their air supply gets cut off, and eventually they suffocate. It's called the cast down position. But a shepherd who sees the sheep as it's there, with its legs up in the air and gasping, the shepherd comes, he reassures the sheep, he massages the legs of the sheep to get the circulation going.

Gently turns the sheep and lifts it up. And he holds it so that it can regain its equilibrium. So he can't be able again. What a picture for us, brother and sister.

That's our God. That's our shepherd. That's your shepherd. That's my shepherd. And he helps us get back on our feet. And life turns us upside down, and we're helplessly failing that he comes to us, and he restores us.

[15:24] He gets us back on our feet again. He reassures us by his grace. And he lifts you. He lifts you. Brother, sister, he's lifting you. You know, if you ever come to those places in life where you're cast down, something's just, it's been a hard time, it's been overwhelming, you're cast down, then he will come.

He'll come and he'll restore you. He'll help you get back on your feet again. You know, when you see people who get off track, you want to restore them, don't you? You know, people that have gone right off on some wayward track, and you just think, oh God, just pray that they will be restored.

They will be restored. Restored to fellowship. Restored to communion with God. Restored to their walk of God. Restored to their fellowship of the saints. That's our heart when it's cracked, that we restore them.

We want to see them refreshed in their faith and rebuilt into the body of Christ. They might not be some wayward machine.

God is a faithful shepherd. He's faithful. He's faithful to God. And he was for David. And it says that he does this, he restores our soul, it says for his name's sake.

[16:43] It's for his own name's sake. He does it for his sake, for the sake of his glory. When we think, brother, sister, you are a witness for his sake. You are a testimony for his sake.

And God wants to restore you for the sake of his glory, for his name's sake. He is no careless and irresponsible shepherd. He is watching over you, and he is faithful to provide, to come alongside, to lift you back, to get you back on feet again.

And it says of this shepherd that he leads me in the paths of righteousness. Friends, we can know his guidance. We can know the shepherd's voice. In John 10, 3 through 4, it tells our Lord is saying of the shepherd, identifying himself as that, the good shepherd.

John 10, verse 3, he says, The sheep hear his voice. He calleth the sheep by name, and he leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

They know his voice. Now, friends, you might know, Julie and I have some sheep. I think Julie's a better shepherd than I am, because they know her voice. She's the one who feeds them.

[17:57] And we go back in the back paddock, and they don't even have to hear her voice. They just see her. Maybe they smell her. Not that she smells bad, but they recognise she's there.

They recognise Julie is there as the shepherdess. I'm being a bit flippant here, but she's that shepherd. She's that shepherd that goes out in the back paddock. And the moment they say, the moment they lay eyes on her, the moment they hear her, and she does make some call, and you should see how fast they run.

Those sheep come running, because they know that the shepherd has food. The shepherd will supply. And what a gracious God we serve, that we can hear his voice, and that it says his sheep hear his voice.

And, you know, the neighbour sheep don't come running, but our sheep come running, Julie's sheep come running, when Julie calls them. And it's the same with our God, isn't it? As we hear his voice, where is his voice?

Some people think his voice is in some kind of airy-fairy, fuzzy feeling, or some extra-biblical utterance. But no, this is his voice, right here, between the pages of this book, between these covers.

[19:09] This is his voice. This is the shepherd's voice. And we should hear his voice, should know his voice, and hear his voice. And we know that our Lord will speak to us through his word.

We go on here, verse 4. It tells us that our Lord protects. His shepherd, my shepherd, your shepherd, it says he protects. Yea, that I walk through the valley of the shadow of even death. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff. Friends, our shepherd protects us from danger.

He helps us through the times of trial, even the trials of life, the trials even of death. The phrase, the shadow of death, is interesting, isn't it?

Some have commented that light is necessary to cast a shadow. And friends, a shadow cannot hurt you. There's no substance to a shadow. We have the assurance of God when the shadow of death comes, that his light is here for us.

[20:18] His light, God is with us. God is light. And the light, as it were, dispels the darkness. God leads his people through even that valley of the shadow of death. Friends, he leads us, even in times of sorrow.

He's not far, far away. He's right there. Right there. It says, thou art with me. Doesn't it? When you are in such a time, you can say this, thou art with me.

You can confess that. You can believe that. You can claim that, that he is with you, even at such a time. In those gloomy valleys of life, the weeping comes, when loss happens, even when the sun seems so shrouded that he's still shining.

His light is still there, even in a time of sorrow. And we will not fear evil, as God will be with us. And he will bear us through. Notice it says through.

Don't you love that word? It says that he leads us through. That's Psalm 23, verse 4. Yea, I walk through the valley.

[21:32] You don't stay in the valley. Amen? You're going through. Aren't you going through? And on the other side, you'll be there again. Notice he will bear us, and he'll say, he'll guide us through.

Now, it's interesting. People have reckoned and recorded the words of dying people. In the time of death, people work in aged care, and it happens all the time.

I've worked in such settings too, with people tossing away all around. You think, death, it's a reality of life, isn't it? And friends, you want to make sure where you're going.

There's various words, dying words of various people that have been recorded. And here's some dying words, some quotes here, of people who did not profess faith in Jesus Christ.

These are telling words. There was an English atheist, Thomas Hobbes, who said, I am taking a fearful leap into the dark. He was horrified.

[22:31] French infidel. Voltaire, well-known infideler, hater of God, said, I am abandoned by God and man. I shall go to hell.

Voltaire knew where he was going. At his deathbed, he knew where he was going. He knew there was a God he'd abandoned and knew he was going to a hell. Sir Francis Newport was another unbeliever.

He wailed in anguish on his deathbed. He said, Oh, eternity, eternity, forever and forever. Oh, the unsufferable pangs of hell.

He knew the pains of hell, there on his deathbed. His dying words. There's many more quotes. You can, I think, saw something one time, a multitude of quotes.

It's a very telling testimony, a gripping testimony. Dying words, the last words of a man, of a woman. And what a contrast, in contrast to what we've heard, what a contrast to hear the words of people

who knew and loved Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

[23:37] For example, Dwight L. Moody. A man of God, he says this, This is glorious. Earth recedes, heaven is opening, God is calling me.

What a contrast, the words of a saved man. Sir David Brewster, another believer in Christ, he says, I will see Jesus, see him as he is. I have had the light for many years.

Oh, how bright it is. I feel so saved, so satisfied. Precious in the sight of the Lord.

Same. And here's another man. He was burning at the stake here. And these are his words as he was dying, his dying breath uttered these words that speak to us today.

As he was burnt at the stake of his faith, he says, Blessed be the time that ever I was born for this day. We shall not lose our lives in this fire, he said to his fellow martyrs, but only change them for something better.

[24:43] He knew that something better awaited him. Child of God, even if physical pain and heartache are part of our earthly journey, the heavenly Father will give us grace.

Give us grace in our dying day that we, as we pass through, through that dark valley. Amen. You can say, Thou art with me.

We need not fear. Even death, the great shepherd will be with us. I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Amen. Can't you claim that today?

You say, Thou art with me. Let's say it together. Thou art with me. We know the presence of our Saviour. We are protected. We are protected from sin, from ourselves.

And he gives us the way of escape. He's watching over us. He's the great bishop. He's the great overseer of our soul. He's the God of all grace and power. And we can know his faithfulness for thou art with me.

[25:43] He's ever faithful. Now, sheep are, as we say, you could see sheep as quite a vulnerable kind of animal. They're weaponless.

They're weak. Unarmed. And they've got many enemies. Strong enemies that hate sheep. You know, Julie and I in our backyard, we had chickens at one time.

I think I possibly told the story that our chickens in a wide cage, pretty safe. And yet, we're hearing stories about a fox.

A fox that was out there and we got one of these traps, like a little cage trap, set a bait and one night, bang, a fox got caught.

You know, Julie likes little dogs. You know, we had a little chihuahua at one time and he went and said, fox, you probably, yeah, and he thought, oh, what a cute little dog. A cute little fox, you know.

[26:45] But so you go near it and, you know, teeth, bare teeth, you know, the fangs, almost frothing at the mouth, ready to bite your hand off or your finger if you get anywhere near it.

And we know, there's enemies of sheep. Foxes are one such enemy. Know that sheep are vulnerable. In David's day, there's lions and wolves and, you know, wild dogs.

And Jacob, as a shepherd, in Genesis 31, 40, says that Jacob watched day and night. Day and night. That's what the shepherd should do, isn't it?

He says he's never going to slumber nor sleep. He's constantly on guard for you. He's constantly vigilant over you. His eye is ever over us.

God is faithful. They'll art with me. Know he's faithful to you. He's faithful to you. And we can cast our burden on the Lord. It goes on to talk about the rod and the staff.

[27:46] Some have reckoned that could be the one instrument used in a two-fold way. Whatever the case, some reckon it could be two different instruments. But nevertheless, the rod and the staff, they've got four major applications for the shepherd.

The rod and the staff are like the symbol of the authority of the shepherd, of the power of the shepherd. And we see that the rod, the staff, that was used to fight off animals such as lions and leopards and bears and hyenas and wolves that were to prey upon the sheep.

That was to fight off. It was for protection. Second, the crook part of the staff, like little hook, was to gently seize the sheep and to guide them away from danger, from the edge or out from under a bush where it might have got caught, where it might be running away, to take hold of the sheep and guide it back into safety, back to the flock.

So it was, again, that kind of helping, that protecting. And thirdly, the shepherd used this instrument to examine the sheep, to rod the staff over the sheep's fur, fleece rather, and to protect the sheep's wool or any rashes or wounds or defects to care for the sheep and the sheep's welfare.

And fourthly, it was also used as they called it a passing under the rod where the shepherd would hold his rod and count each sheep and to know when the sheep were there, whether they entered the gate and whether, where's that one?

[29:18] The 90-year-old safer, where's that one? The shepherd would know the one that was missing, the ones that are missing, that our shepherd watches over us such that he knows where we are and where we are not.

And he recognises when we're straying, when we might need care and reaching out. And friends, he is faithful.

And he searches for the lost one. Think of numbers of folk that we long for and we're missing. Our heart goes out to them.

I know there's people here, shepherds' heart. Likewise, have that heart, that longing to, where are they? How can we go? Pay to help of shepherding, of caring, of being mindful.

You don't trust your shepherds who are faithful to watch over and he watches over everything of your life. He affects us.

[30:20] Verse 5. Thou preparest the table before you and you don't want enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil and you don't trust me. You don't trust me. You don't trust me. Here he's saying David's writing of the experiences of life.

Now there's enemies out there. Some people that are just committed against you no matter what you do. There's enemies and we're in the presence of our enemies.

Life's life. Everyone is for you. But we have security in our God. We have safety in our God. And God kept David safe in the threats of many threats that he faced.

Many enemies that he had to encounter. And God exalted and honoured David. David the shepherd boy. David the sheep. God the shepherd would watch over him.

And he exalted David and put his foes to shame. And in ancient days it was customary for the host of a banquet to anoint the honoured guest with oil. Pour this oil, this perfume, kind of olive oil upon the guest, the honoured guest.

[31:25] And it's a picture here for us. Brothers and sisters, you are honoured. What a privilege we have to be saved, to be S-A-V-E-D. What a blessing, what a joy that he would choose to bless you with such a blessing.

That he would anoint your head with oil. That he would let your cup run over. The blessings of salvation, of the bountiful, abundant life that he has granted.

And it's here of the shepherd sparing no blessing. Now he doesn't just give us a cup that's kind of half full. It's just flowing over.

There's an abundance. There's an abounding. There's an overflowing. There's a, just a, a bouncy. A blessing. That's the picture of God, isn't it?

That you have an abounding, a flowing over, an overflowing such that your life can be blessed and you can bless others too. That you can be a blessing. Six.

[32:25] Surely good follow me and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. David's telling here of a constant shepherd all the days of my life.

All the days. Even the bad days. Amen? Even the bad days. Here's with me. All the days. A double L. In the Hebrew, that means all.

That's what it is. Amen? All the days. All the days of my life. There's a constant fellowship. There's a constant communion. There's a constant interchanging between you and him.

That you have this constant fellowship. This closeness with your God all the days of my life. This precious communion. That's that God's goodness and mercy.

It follows you. It chases after you. It's pursuing you. Goodness and mercy all the days of my life.

Notice it says that only children of God dwell in the house of God.

[33:31] the house of God or the family, the household of God. It says we need to be children of God. For you to enjoy the blessings of Psalm 23,

you've got to be his sheep.

You've got to be his child, his son, his daughter. And to dwell in the house of your God, household of God, family of God, you need to be born again into the family of God.

You'll be born anew. Born as a son, a child, a daughter of God. And notice it says that we will dwell in the house of our Lord, our God, forever.

Forever. We have eternal life. This life is eternal. At the start, it goes on forever. There's no end point. There's no stopping and starting, losing and getting back.

It's forever. That's how long it is. Eternal life. For instance, there's a writer who shared about the Lord Jesus and explains how really Jesus is.

[34:34] Jesus, our Lord Jesus is my shepherd. Think of the Lord Jesus. It tells of him as the chief shepherd, he's the great shepherd, he's the mighty, mighty shepherd.

And he has a shepherd's heart, beating with pure and generous love. I'm quoting here F.B. Mayor. It says he's got a shepherd's heart, beating with pure and generous love.

That counts it, not his lifeblood, too dear a price to pay down as our ransom. This shepherd paid down his life for the sheep. Amen? Secondly, he says he has a shepherd's heart that he takes in the whole flock and misses not even the poor sheep wandering away on the mountain cold.

We have a heart that we have to who is not seen. So today, where are they? Let's have a shepherd's eye that we keep looking out for one another.

Look out for one another. And this shepherd, our shepherd, the great shepherd, he has the shepherd's eye. The Lord Jesus watches. He sees you. He sees where you're at. Wandering, some.

[35:45] As some do wander away, don't they? All we like sheep are gone astray. It's prone, prone to wander. Lord, I feel it.

He has a shepherd's faithfulness such that he will never fail nor forsake nor leave us comfortless nor flee when he sees the wolf coming. Shepherds faithfulness let you down.

He's not going to stop loving you. He's not going to stop shepherding you. He's not going to stop caring for you and protecting you and guiding you. all the days of my life.

That's how long he's going to be with you, for you, with you. And he has the shepherd's strength such that he'll be able to deliver us from the jaw of the lion or the paw of the bear.

That's our God. He's mighty, isn't he? He's mighty to save. He is mighty. He is almighty. Almighty. This is the God that we love, that we know, the great shepherd, the mighty shepherd, the strong shepherd.

[36:45] And he has the shepherd's tenderness that no lamb so tiny that he will not carry it. No saint so weak that he will not gently lead. No soul so faint that he will not give it rest.

He pities as a father, he comforts as a mother, his gentleness makes great. He covers us with his feathers. Soft, warm, downy. A loving shepherd.

He goes, he can't hold it, doesn't he? Takes the lamb. We've got some lambs here, some new Christians. We need to look after them, brothers. We that are older, we that are more mature, we need to look after the younger in the faith.

We need to look after the lambs. Lambs need care. I think Julie and I know, we had a time where we had our twins.

twins, twin lambs. Mother rejected one. He had to take special care that rejected lamb sustained.

[37:52] So he had to effectively tie up the mum sometimes so the little lamb could get some nourishment. The little lamb buy, be sustained.

Friends, we need to brother and sister not neglect the lambs. collecting like us. Christian, it looked like no one has been in recent meetings.

Checking up the lambs. Especially caring for them. God help us shepherd's tenderness.

Friends, we're just drawing to close now. And the question for everyone here this evening, is he your shepherd? This is the critical question.

The story about a young boy went on a youth camp, summer camp, they come sitting and the teacher gave some instructions telling of the Psalm 23.

[38:59] they went through this Psalm and the teacher said this. He says, he especially wanted them to get these five words.

The Lord is the Lord. He wanted to make sure that was emphasized these young children. And excuse me, the Lord is my shepherd.

My shepherd. And he got the youngsters, this camp speaker, this preacher, said, when you go like this, the Lord is my shepherd.

The drill, the Lord is my shepherd. Hold on to that finger. And that winter, the boy is lost.

There was a snowstorm and the searchers got out there, but it was too late. It couldn't reach him. Imagine a snowstorm in our climate.

[40:18] That was dreadful. This deep snow, snow drifts. And friends, this little boy froze to death. He died in snow. And they found him huddled under a tree.

And his jacket, in his jacket, he was grasping his ring finger. He was grasping his ring finger. His frozen body was such that he was grasping.

And the parents were told to contact the youth speaker from the camp who explained to them his message. The Lord is there. He comforted them with that assurance, sad an occasion as it was, a sad and horrible thing, that at least there was some comfort there, that his son prospered.

before slipping into our unconsciousness, had not died alone.

Now are shepherds guiding through even the valley. Friends, our Lord Jesus says, Jesus is the good shepherd.

[41:43] You must trust him. Can we truly say the Lord is my shepherd? Pray you can declare that by faith, not presumptuously, not of your own mind, really.

just him, simple, he is mine, I am his. He says, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they give me eternal life.

They shall never perish, neither shall any man my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.

You must think two hands, don't you? Jesus is in the father's hand. No man is able to pluck you out of his hand.

I and my father are one. Friends, you can know a great comfort here. I shall dwell in the house forever. He is my shepherd.

[42:53] Shall not fear. Thou art with me. I will go through the valley of the shadow of death because I trust, I pray, I beseech you today.

Know the good shepherd, there's none greater, he's the best, the greatest, the almighty, mighty great shepherd, the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, the good shepherd, giveth his life for the sheep.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you. Precious saviour, precious shepherd, our pastor, our shepherd, our mighty God, our mighty Lord and King, the mighty God, Lord, we thank you that you gave your life for the sheep and Lord, let us be sheep that hear your voice, that we can identify like David, that we can be your saying thou art with me, my shepherd.

Praise you Lord, Jesus name.