

The Lord is My Shepherd

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[0 : 00] Psalm 23, Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd.! Psalm 23, verse 1.

It's a psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Now we know it's scripture, we read it.

Actually it's a song. Think of that. As we know, it's rendered in different fashions as a song, as we know. Psalm 23 is a song that's over 3,000 years old.

Wow. Think of that. And David himself, as a shepherd, he knew what he was talking about. He was himself a shepherd, singing a song about a shepherd, the shepherd.

More so, my shepherd. And we can take these words to heart in a personal way. The Bible talks a lot about sheep. Sheep.

[1 : 23] Over 500 times, more than any other animal, the sheep is spoken of in the Bible. Sheep are timid, stupid, dependent, defenceless, vulnerable creatures.

The Bible relates how we are like sheep. Now one preacher declared this in a sermon and afterwards a man was a bit kind of, especially when he said they're stupid and they're defenceless, they're dependent.

He said, oh, preacher, he wanted to protest that he wasn't a sheep. And the preacher said, it's better to be a sheep than to be the alternative, a goat.

Isn't it? Better to be caught a sheep, especially the sheep who knows the shepherd. And we're just like sheep.

In all the bad ways at times, all we, like sheep, have gone astray. Talks about in Isaiah 53, doesn't it? Yeah. Very gracious. Yeah.

[2 : 31] And a man of God, of history, Hudson Taylor said this, the Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

Not was, not maybe, not will be. He is my shepherd. On Sunday, on Monday, through every day of the week.

In January, in December, and every month of the year. The Lord is my shepherd. At home. In China.

In peace, in war, in abundance, and in penury, which means poverty. The Lord is my shepherd. Shepherd. Present tense.

Current. Can we say, the Lord is my shepherd? Is he? Am I his sheep?

[3 : 28] You could really put it, when it talks about the Lord is my shepherd, the Lord is my pastor. Really, he is. He is the pastor.

The pastor of pastors. He is the pastor. And it's personal. He is my shepherd. Pastor means shepherd. He is my shepherd. It's personal. It's a decision to trust him.

It's a reception on our part to receive him. He is mine. And I am his. My shepherd. Think of that. And sheep are totally dependent on the shepherd. Now, I touched on it earlier today in my message. I'm kind of a shepherd.

Julie probably does more work as the shepherd than I do. We've got 12 sheep in the backyard that mow the lawn. That's about the extent of it. We don't shear them because they're a sheep that isn't a fleecy sheep.

[4 : 26] They're more of a hairy sheep. They're a low maintenance sheep, which is how I like it. But really, a shepherd, in the Bible days, they name their sheep.

Now, Julie knows all their names, these 12 sheep. Don't ask me, but Julie knows the names of these sheep. And it's like that in the Bible days. The sheep belong to the shepherd, and he looks after them.

He knows them by name. He calls them. He's close to them. He watches over them. And the shepherd provides, protects, guides the sheep all the time.

It's not a day job. It's 24-7, the shepherd. And so we see the shepherds that would have been out on the hillsides watching over the sheep, by day, by night, having that care. And friends, we can think of who our shepherd is and how he wants to give us that. I shall not want. We have complete confidence and trust in the Lord, my shepherd.

[5 : 34] Know that your shepherd will supply your need. Your need, what you need to have. Not so much, at times, what we would want.

But he supplies all that we have need of, all that we truly need. And he knows what we do truly need. God will take care of each and every one of our needs that we have.

We read verse 2, It says, verse 2, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

He leadeth me beside the still waters. This shepherd, this shepherd who loves you so, gives refreshing and rest for you, for his sheep. And the green pastures, it speaks of tender grass, of nourishment.

The sheep are fed, they're satisfied, they're not afraid. The sheep has found the very best place to be. It's with the shepherd. Best of all, with our shepherd, is his love.

[6 : 39] God wants us to be with him. He leadeth me. There's a closeness there. He leads us sometimes to slow down, to rest.

He brings calm, he brings refreshment. He brings us to our lives. He tenderly leads. He takes us to the still waters. There's rest there. Still waters.

Calm and refreshing. Sheep apparently need that stillness of the water. They can drink quietly there, by those quiet, flowing streams. Not the fast raging waters, where they might lose their footing and potentially be dragged in.

And with the heavy fleece at times, they could suffer danger. But he takes you to the still waters.

There's a stillness there, the refreshing of your soul.

There's a freshness there. There's a stillness there. These are green pastures. Green pastures. It's not like South Australia at the moment. There's not much screen out there.

[7 : 43] But he takes us where the green pastures are. Amen? I like to think of England. Lots of green pastures. Of course, we do have our green pastures for a season. But he knows where the green pastures are, and he'll take you there.

Green pastures. Not barren. Still waters. Not troubled. Let him lead. That's the point. He leads me beside the still waters. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

Let him lead. Let him show you his way, his plans. And rest in that leading of God. It's said that 70 million Americans suffer from insomnia.

They can't sleep. Every year, 70 million. Causes 38,000 deaths every year. Productivity lost costs 70 billion a year. These are old figures.

So, sleeping is a problem for some people. I don't have that problem. I quite easily go to sleep. And I keep Julie awake. She's the one that's got the problem. I'm snoring.

[8 : 50] But, friends, when we have trouble, read Psalm 23. It's a good psalm to take hold of, isn't it? The refreshing waters, the stillness, the presence of the shepherd.

When we have trouble sleeping, read Psalm 23. Because it's been truly said, don't count sheep.

Talk to the shepherd. Some would try to count sheep to send them to sleep.

Talk to the shepherd. That's the source of your rest. He carries you. He sustains you. And our shepherd, he offers still waters, refreshment for our soul.

We need physical refreshment. Yes, we might need a sleep. Hopefully not enjoying the preaching. But we need some physical refreshment. And we need some spiritual refreshment every day. And he's the source of all of that.

Amen. He makes them lie down. He makes the sheep lie down. Because he knows that sheep cannot properly digest their food unless they lie down. It's necessary. It's healthy for them.

[9 : 46] It's needful for them to lie down. And he knows that a sheep will not lie down unless they feel perfectly safe from an enemy attack. And, of course, do we need to fear the enemy's attack when we're close to the shepherd?

No. He will guard you. He will keep you. He will help you. He will protect you. The Lord, our shepherd, he brings this wonderful rest into our lives. Another thing about sheep is that they've got poor vision.

They can't see very far ahead. They need the shepherd to guide them. I know I could think of lately where we had some sheep pellets and we put them in a container.

And then I threw them into the paddock right where the sheep were. And the sheep just kind of didn't even seem like they didn't even see where I threw it. And they were running around to where they normally run. And I can probably relate to this.

They're kind of so dumb. You know, they can't see too far ahead. The shepherd's actually got to put them where the food is. And that's what our God does, doesn't he?

[10:47] He leads us to where the green pastures are. Because sometimes we can't even see where it is. He's got to lead us there. Another thing about their vision problem is they're inclined to wander over the edge of cliffs and stuff.

And end up caught in briars and prickles and whatnot. Because they don't have the vision to see the danger. They can't see very far ahead. So it's important for the sheep to stay by the shepherd so he can guide them.

They need a shepherd to guide them. Verse 3 we read, He can restore those who wander away. It's interesting, for those that were here this morning, we used this verse. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

It's interesting, this word, He restoreth my soul, it's the very same word, converting. We talked about conversion this morning. Converting. Our shepherd converts us.

[11:52] He converts my soul. He restores my soul. It's the same word translated in our same Bible. He restores, He converts. It's the same sense of it.

And it's the Bible, the Word of God, that brings that converting. He restores us. He converts us. It's the sense also where a shepherd has to upright the sheep who falls down.

Because sheep are inclined to be cast down. Sheep are inclined to, with the weight of their fleece, they trip or fall and lie down and get to such a point where the weight of their fleece hinders them from getting back on their feet.

They can get cast down. The shepherd has to come and get them out and put them back on their feet again. I know I've referred to it before. There's a funny video on the internet where there's some sheep that was caught in like a channel in the ground and they laboriously pulled the sheep out by its legs and got it out of this channel that was in the ground and eventually got it out of the channel back on its feet and it gleefully danced off and then it fell right back into the channel again.

That's what sheep are like, you know. But the shepherd has to come and pull the sheep out. Pull the sheep out that is cast down. Cast down. Maybe sheep can be fallen into soft grass or into perhaps mud or mire and needs to be pulled back out and put back on its feet again.

[13:20] A sheep can be cast down due to weights. As we know, a sheep can become fat with wool. As again I talked about this morning, there's pictures of sheep that haven't been shorn for literally years and they're heavy.

There's a weight there. Sheep can be cast down because of the weight of their fleece and need the shepherd to come and save them. And friends, that's what we need.

We need to have the shepherd come and lead us, restore us. The Lord leads us. He doesn't drive us. Not like Aussie shepherds or, you know, the traditional Western model of a shepherd that drives the sheep with dogs and such or horses.

But the shepherd of the Bible days, of the Bible model, is the shepherd who goes before the sheep and leads us. It's got this sense of leading with loving care. Sheep can be inclined to wander.

And there's a little picture here of representing where a sheep has got astray from the flock and fallen down the hillside and wandered off into the danger zone.

[14:27] And sheep can be just like this. They can be so stubborn and go their own way. Sheep can be flighty. I know, again, to relate for ourselves, we've got these sheep and sometimes they're hard to kind of corral and move and to direct them because they're very flighty and they're very nervous and sometimes just want to do their own thing.

They're quite sheep-headed, not pig-headed. But they can be quite stubborn and they want to go their own way. And it's been said a sheep follows his nose or stomach to whatever source of food and comfort he finds and in the process he gets into trouble.

And so just lately, and I put it on my Facebook page, my neighbour's got sheep and there's this sheep that got caught in the mesh of the fence.

So this square mesh where you've got the wire that forms all these squares to make up the sheep fence, the fence of the paddock. And there's this sheep, a silly sheep really, got her head stuck into the mesh so that her head was poking out.

She saw some greenery on the other side and the sheep's head was stuck on the other side of the paddock fence. And she was there for days. The owner was not aware and was away and I had to go and cut the fence to release the sheep's head from the mesh because she could have died.

[15 : 59] She wasn't able to feed herself. Her head was too high. She didn't have any water. It was stinking hot, really hot weather, you know, very hot days. And so the sheep was in peril.

And it's like that. Sheep can be quite at risk and need the shepherd to come and care, to watch over them. Because sheep have got trouble with vision, with knowing what to do, where to go and such. And what a picture that is, really, of us human sheep, if you like. And we can be inclined to wonder. And where will the Lord lead you? Will you let the Lord lead you? Or will you end up, he's got to go looking for you?

I know sometimes he's got to go looking for us, doesn't he? Like a picture of the good shepherd, leaves the 99, goes and looks for that one sheep. And as we talked about again this morning, and that sense of that one is worth, leave the others in the care of someone and go looking for that one lost sheep.

Could take a lot of searching. And he's got that heart to search, to search us out, just as the picture of that human shepherd. So let the Lord lead you, lead you, lead you out of sin, lead you into holiness, lead you back to him if you've strayed, if you've backslid, lead you through your whole life.

[17 : 17] Let the Lord lead, let him be the leader of you, your life. And it says he'll lead us in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Now, the word of God tells us that the Lord our shepherd, the Lord my shepherd, is also the Lord, capital L-O-R-D, Yahweh, the Lord our righteousness.

He is our righteousness. It's the name whereby he shall be called. It is a prophecy of the Lord. Jesus is who it relates to here.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. It's his very character, his very title, his name. The quality of himself is such that he is our righteousness.

Again, that's mind-boggling, isn't it? We can't say my righteousness. We need to say the Lord, our righteousness. And so we must receive his guidance.

It's been said the paths that are right may not always be the paths that seem easiest. Sometimes the paths of righteousness are sometimes the hardest paths. They're the paths that mean taking the pathway of the cross.

[18 : 29] It might mean a path of sacrifice, a path of surrender, a path of going to the altar as a living sacrifice.

An account of a shepherd, I can relate here as a shepherd in Switzerland, and there was a lady strolling by a shepherd's cabin, and she saw the shepherd there, and the sheep lying by him.

And one of the sheep was lying on the straw and was afflicted. There was something wrong. And she asked of the shepherd, what is the matter? And he told her this leg was broken.

And she was much surprised when the shepherd admitted that he broke the leg himself. And he went on to explain to the visitor about this sheep. It was a particularly wayward one.

It would not hear his voice. It would wander off. It would risk its life on the steep cliffs. It was liable to fall and be killed. And not only was it disobedient, but it was constantly leading others astray.

[19 : 38] Like a sheep do. They tend to follow the leader. It was that sort of sheep. And so finally, the shepherd broke its leg. The first time he went to feed it after that, the sheep tried to bite him.

He left it alone for two days without food. Then he brought it food, and not only did it take the food, but it licked his hands, appreciating his kindness. And the shepherd then told the visitor that in a little while, the sheep would be well and would then become the model sheep in the flock.

This would be a sheep that would not be one that would have to get his attention to hear his voice. It would set the example for the rest. He said, it will have learnt obedience through suffering.

And then someone's commented here, how like our heavenly father with his sheep. He's not breaking their legs, but often he breaks up their plans, he breaks down their vain castles.

He breaks up their fond hopes. God had to unjoint Jacob's leg before he would properly yield his all to him. Maybe we have not carefully obeyed his voice. Maybe we've not been setting the right examples before others.

[20 : 44] We've been getting too close to the edge of the cliff. Oh God, at any cost or discipline, help us to be your obedient sheep. It's an interesting parallel, interesting analogy, isn't it?

That closeness to the shepherd. Maybe sometimes God's got to really get strong with us to direct us in his ways. Maybe he's got to discipline us, this chastening of his children.

And so there's that sense of, we should be mindful that we should heed his voice, that he doesn't have to take such measures. Whose leadership are we under?

Are we willingly follow the shepherd? Do we hear his voice and follow? He wants us to. He commends that. He wants us to be humble, not going selfishly our own way, but letting him lead. Not choosing to go our own merry way, we'll end up in the thickets, in the danger zone, in the enemy territory.

We must stay close to the shepherd. He is close to those who walk his way. We read on, verse 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

[21 : 58] Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Often read at funerals, isn't it? And I've been to a funeral just this last week, and it's a telling verse.

It often speaks to people. The valley of the shadow of death. Do I fear or do I trust? Do I lean on him? The sense is here, trust in the Lord.

He is with you. We have nothing to fear. We can sometimes walk in the very valley, the very valley of the very shadow of death itself. It may be that we've had heartbreaking news.

A loved one has died. It's a telling time, isn't it? Sometimes sadness can hit very close to home. But God can help us, yes, even then. In the valley, in that dark and dismal valley, that is the valley of the shadow of death.

In that deep and gloomy valley, through those valley times of life. Friends, death is as a shadow. We think, can a shadow hurt us?

[23 : 04] No. A shadow cannot hurt us. The shadow of a dog cannot bite. The shadow of a sword cannot kill. The shadow of death cannot harm the child of God.

Where there is shadow, there's also light. So we can go to where the light is when the shadow comes. There's a light in the valley of death now for me, says the song we know. And he sustains us there, in the valley.

He's with us. That's the wonderful encouragement for you, for me, as his sheep. We might have that heart to know we're not completely alone.

We can have courage. Like David, we can confess his word, I will fear no evil. Why? For thou art with me.

David could proclaim that. He could rejoice in that. He could sing that. He will protect us from danger. While the shepherd is near, we know that there is no evil we need to fear.

[24 : 03] And that's not to say it's all going to be plain sailing. I was just reading lately, around the world, apparently the current statistics that I've read is one in seven Christians are persecuted today.

Wow, how many are here tonight? One in seven. Persecuted. Think of that, the proportion of Christians around the world. That's an amazing figure, isn't it?

But even then, he is with you. He is with you. Isaiah 43, that wonderful promise there, of course, it was applied then, but we can, I think we can relate it to God's sustaining today, that when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Even in the valleys, even in the rivers, even in the overflowing, even in that fire time, there is that truth that he is with you. And notice, as it tells us, we'll go through the valley of the shadow.

[25 : 11] It's a through. Notice that. It's only for a season, as we pass through that valley, and we'll be beyond it, ultimately. And when we are in the valley, through the valley, we can surely say, we can say like David, thou art with me.

Friends, like Paul confessed to Timothy in the second letter to Timothy, chapter 4, verse 16. He knew the times of great testing. He knew what it was to be forsaken.

He said, at the first, no man stood with me. All men forsook me. David was on his own some. He says, I pray that God may not lay it to their charge, notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me.

The Lord stood with me and strengthened me that by me, the preaching might be fully known, that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

No man stood with me, all men forsook me. You might have moments like that. You might have times like that in your life. I'm all on my own. You might feel like Elijah. There's, you know, where is, I'm it.

[26 : 23] But actually, the Lord is with you. That's what matters. And he will strengthen you. He'll uphold you. He'll deliver you. Sheep are vulnerable. Because a shepherd, a sheep needs a shepherd, because sheep are prone to wonder, sheep can become vulnerable to wolves and false prophets, false shepherds, rather.

And because a sheep so desires happiness, they can easily follow, at times, any shepherd. He'll promise them happiness. And so, as God's sheep, we should hear his voice, follow him. That should be the difference for us who know the Saviour. Yeah. And friends, there's all kinds of enemies to sheep. I know Julie and I, not long ago, in our backyard, we saw a brown snake. It was about that long. No joke. It was quite like, probably a metre long brown snake. And they could, they could come after a sheep. They could have got that sheep that was stuck in the, the mesh of the paddock fence.

It couldn't have escaped. It would have, would have been, very vulnerable. And then we know we've caught foxes as well. There's one fox. And people might be, oh, cute little fox that runs across.

[27 : 33] And when you put him in a cage and they're, their fangs, and they're, yeah, they're drooling, ready to, to chomp your hand off, you know, a fox is not a nice creature.

Especially, if there's a little lamb there, they'll be vulnerable to that. So, friends, there's all kinds of enemies for the sheep, is the point. And for you too, that believe.

Friends, there's enemies, there's enemies of the gospel, there's, fightings without, within, there's the, there's false prophets, there's false shepherds, there's all kinds of, wacko things that, that could attack us as God's people.

not just the unbelieving but the strange teachings and stuff that's out there you need to stay close to the shepherd it goes on to say that thy rod and thy staff they comfort me so the shepherd had these two especially these two instruments of defense and deliverance we see the rod was a shorter club type device the rod was used essentially against the enemies of the sheep to strike them and to protect the sheep and then we see the staff more like the shepherd's crook type as pictured here the longer thinner with a hook or crook at the end the staff was used to pull the sheep from harm so a sheep and a thicket for example on a steep slope or just to take them away without encumbering the shepherd the staff would hook the sheep by its legs and draw them out thy rod and thy staff they comfort me and we could think some like to relate how the bible is that for us this is the rod and staff sometimes god's got to hit us with it like a rod like a club sometimes he's got to pull us out like a staff and he just draws us to himself that kind of thought of the rod and the staff it's the word of god isn't it in a sense and we see that there deliverance and defense verse 5 we read further thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies thou anointest my head with oil my cup runneth over we see here a table spread what a picture of god's love of the shepherd's care and supply do we receive it as do we want to come and feast at his table to come and receive his providence our sufficiency is of god it says in 2 corinthians 3 verse 5 he is sufficient i know we've had a sermon lately a message a devotion about the preeminence of christ he is all in all he's everything and all our supply is in him he is our great source of all that we have need of our sufficiency is of god 2 corinthians 3 verse 5 the shepherd examines the sheep for thorns bruises scabs and raw places we see then it says that he anoints my head with oil he anoints my head with oil we see the holy spirit is pictured as oil there could be that analogy where the oil speaks of the holy spirit it says in 1 john 2 verse 20 that the anointing we have that from the holy spirit we have the anointing from the holy one 1 john 2 verse 20 so we see this sheep he feeds his sheep there's a banqueting table there's a table spread he feeds our soul and he also anoints us on our head think of our mind think of the the mind shift that we ought to have think of the battle for the mind think of that the mind games that the enemy would play the casting down imaginations those strongholds in the mind in our thinking there's a sense where our mind should be captivated every thought to the obedience of christ we should think about what we think about and the shepherd here looks after the health of the sheep of the mind of the sheep of the of that mentality of the sheep the thinking of the sheep the sheep can get their head caught in briars and die trying to get untangled there's horrid little flies that can torment sheep laying eggs in their nostrils which turn into worms and drive the sheep to beat their head against a rock sometimes to death now these are horrible thoughts aren't they that they could get such an affliction such a worm that would drive them to despair that the eyes and ears of a sheep are susceptible to tormenting insects so the shepherd anoints the whole head with oil just pours it out you know I won't demonstrate but think of

it the shepherd covers the head he massages the head he pours it in he anoints it he pours it out pours it right over that sheep with that anointing oil to keep the sheep protected from that harm from that harassment of insects of the sores and injuries it might have sustained the thorns and such that the sheep can be healthy and that it can be safe anointing also speaks about honour and blessing there's pictures of that it speaks of favour of authority of power as kings and priests we're anointed our shepherd anoints us think of that it's a beautiful thought isn't it it's a picture also he spares no blessing he pours it out he pours it out and he keeps pouring it out he looks after us in that our health of mind of self and it says he gives us an abundance it says that he pours out this anointing we'll go back to the verse there my cup runneth over my cup runneth over what a picture that is you know this to think you could picture it of a jug pouring in and just overflowing and overflowing as we see pictured here the cup runs over and over there's an overflow that he doesn't spare the blessing he wants to give and keep on giving he wants to bring complete provision and satisfaction our shepherd gives us in abundance good measure pressed down shaken together running out all over there's many pictures we could paint of a shepherd and stories we could tell let me tell you another little illustration if you bear with me again there was a shepherd boy who lived in

[34 : 37] Germany keeping his sheep near a great wood when a hunter rode up and asked how far is the next village and the boy said to the man on the horse it's six miles sir the road is only a sheep track you might easily miss your way so the man the hunter said my boy if you'll show me the way I will pay you well but this young boy Hans the shepherd boy shook his head he said I cannot leave the sheep sir they would strain to the woods and wolves might kill them then the man said but if only one or two sheep are eaten by the wolves I will pay you for them I will give you more than you can earn in a whole year and the young shepherd boy says sir I cannot go these sheep are my masters if they are lost I should be to blame if you cannot show me the way will you get me a guide I will take care of the sheep of your sheep while you are gone no said Hans I cannot do that the sheep do not know your voice and so the story went on how eventually the man realised that the shepherd boy was committed to the sheep and it came to light later that this rider on the horse this hunter was a prince and when

Hans found this out he was surprised he thought the man might be angry with him that he didn't be more helpful to lead him but he would have left his sheep in danger and the prince said I want you to leave your sheep and come and serve me I know you're a boy whom I can trust and so when the time came that Hans could get someone else to look after the sheep he went and served the prince as his master for many years the man saw that he had the faithfulness to look after his sheep it's a bit like David isn't it David looked after the sheep he made sure they were looked after when he wasn't with them our shepherd too is faithful to us he doesn't he doesn't neglect us he loves his sheep and he cares for them and my cup runneth over he revives us and then the last verse there surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever surely there's a full certainty here this is sure talks about the more sure word of prophecy this is sure this book is sure it's steadfast it's we can be assured of its promises it's god's promises they're yea and amen surely surely yes certainly goodness and mercy they're going to follow you can you believe that they're going to follow you all the days of your life goodness and mercy rewards are promised here and beyond

I'm going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever our shepherd is tender and we have his constant fellowship in the now and in the here and now and in the hereafter it's now in the days of my life and it's in the house of the Lord forever it's now and forever that's the believer's promise that's the saviour's constant presence he will be with me I shall follow him and goodness and mercy shall follow me God's mercy God's kindness God's grace it's a sure thing if you know his grace it's sure his goodness is sure to supply his mercy to forgive all the days of my life wow that's a promise isn't it no matter how many days you've got all the days of your life he surely will be with you and surely goodness and mercy shall follow you there's a mansion a mansion prepared beyond this life where we shall ever be with the Lord that's a promise can you say amen to that we're going to ever be with the Lord there's a mansion as it were and we shall ever be with the Lord the mansion is not the issue it's that you're going to be with the

Lord we shall ever be with the Lord and you can surely believe you can believe assuredly I will dwell yes I will dwell it's the confession of faith it's not I hope that I'm going to dwell in the house of the Lord or I think I will I will dwell in the house of the Lord I will I know him he knows me I'm his and the house of the Lord is for me and it's forever and that's not saying it in a flippant kind of assuming kind

of way or a prideful selfish empty vain fleshly way but because the promise of God says I will I can say I will because his promises are true for me I will dwell there's an assurance of faith in the promises of God you don't have to stay in unbelief and doubt I can't say for sure you don't have to stay where doubt and unbelief is you can say

I will like David said you can say I will I believe and that settles it well even if I don't believe it settles it because this book is real it's true his promises are true whether I believe them or not but it says he that believeth in the son have everlasting life you have it by that assurance by the promises of God so we started off by saying how dumb sheep are but people sadly people are actually even sometimes not as smart as sheep let's face it it's true isn't it and we think as we might reach out and people reject this gift how foolish I know there's a preacher preparing a word on fools the Bible talks a lot about fools the most foolish thing you can do is to reject

[41 : 04] Christ friends but what a blessing to know we're going to be with the Lord we're going to be with the Lord he carries the sheep he carries the lambs on his shoulder it says doesn't it there's a sense where he's carrying us he's!

holding us he says my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me so friends who is your shepherd is the Lord your shepherd can you say the Lord is my shepherd amen can you say that amen amen friends just let me just prayerfully let's just close our eyes for a moment just to dwell on these words one more time if you bear with me to read it through and feel free that those that can can recollect the words to say it along with me think of these words prayerfully and confess them if you mold them over in your mind and make them stick the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want he maketh me to lie down in green pastures he leadeth me beside the still waters he restoreth my soul he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake yea though

I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me thy rod and thy staff they comfort me thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies thou anointest my head with oil my cup runneth over surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the lord forever lord we thank you for these great promises for this treasure trove of blessings that you would overflow our cup with such a provision of your love and grace such that goodness and mercy will follow us and we shall dwell in your house me that know you we shall be your sheep will hear your voice will follow you will know your heart is for us and lord that we are yours you are my shepherd we can confess each one I pray lord help us to walk in that truth pray that each one might know as your word tells us that that you are the good shepherd that gives his life for the sheep and lord we know that we can know that you have the greatest love because greater love of no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends you're the door of the sheep you're the good shepherd that gives his life for the sheep lord we thank you for that wonderful love that you would show such love to us and help us lord to always be mindful even in the darkest of valleys we know that you are with us and we can take heart that we need fear no evil for thou art with me lord we thank you for these things in Jesus name amen