

God's Goodness In Six Scenes

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Oh Lord, even the grass of these green pastures, it fades, but your word stands forever.

! Lord, we pray that you will minister as this good shepherd in the midst of your congregation,! through your word, by the word of your word, by the word of your word, by the word of your word of your word, by the word of your word.

I pray that you will please heal where there are wounds that need healing. Please feed where there are souls that are hungry and thirsty.

Please restore the souls that need to be restored this moment, Lord. Do all of this for your name's sake, we pray. Amen.

Well, as human beings, we naturally long for what is good and we naturally avoid what is bitter.

There was a Christian in the 1600s in England named John Durant.

[1 : 10] It was a time of persecution and eventually being kicked out of their church building. And he reflected on how there are so many idols and temptations snagging the hearts of God's people.

And he wrote these words. Satan seems sweet. He smiles and is pleasant to you while you sin. But no, he'll be bitter in the end.

He that sings siren like now will devour lion like at last. He'll torment you and vex you and he will be burning and bitterness to you in the end.

Isn't it true that as we think about God and even our motives for coming to the house of God today, it's because we need this reminder so regularly that God is good far above anything else this world has to offer.

And our wondering hearts want to hold on to things of this world. We want to chase after these idols that will lead us away from him. And what a privilege and a joy to simply read through this glorious psalm one more time, reminding ourselves, receiving and trusting in this truth about God today.

[2 : 30] So beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I want to show you God's goodness in the six scenes that David has set out before us today.

The superscription to each psalm is also inspired and preserved by God as part of his word received by his church. We read there that it's a psalm of David.

The great Victorian British preacher Charles Spurgeon commented, A psalm of David, either as a shepherd boy with a heart as full of gladness as it could hold, meditating upon the Lord, or if it be the product of his after years, we are sure that his soul returned in contemplation to the lonely water brooks, which rippled among the pastures of the wilderness where he often dwelt in earlier years. Of this delightful song, it may be affirmed that its piety and its poetry are equal, its sweetness and its spirituality are unpassed. That's the end of Spurgeon's quote.

Verse one gives us the thematic heading. It's the relationship on which every blessing and every promise in this psalm depends.

[3 : 46] Would you look there with me? Verse one, the Lord, the word is Yahweh, the supreme I am, the name that God gave to his people so that they could know him and receive his covenant promises.

The Lord, Yahweh, is my shepherd. The eternal, infinite, unchangeable, all-powerful creator.

This God allows himself. No, he breathed out that his character and office be compared to that of a shepherd. In the ancient world, a shepherd was the lowest of all the positions you could hold.

Remember Jesse's household, there's all these brothers and then there's the teenager or preteen.

Well, send him out to go do that lowly job of caring for the sheep. And God allows himself to be compared to a shepherd.

Shepherds with the sheep 24-7. Starts to smell like the sheep. Always walking around with the sheep. He knows them very well. That's how the Lord wants us to trust his ministry among his people.

[5 : 00] Because the Lord is my shepherd, David wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I shall not want. We don't use the English language quite this way.

We would say I shall not lack. I shouldn't, you know, come short of anything that I need. Someone pointed out how David knew the many needs and cares of the sheep.

And he compares himself to a creature that's weak, defenseless, and foolish. And he takes God to be his provider, his preserver, his director, and indeed his everything.

Now, children, this doesn't mean that we won't ever want anything. Like we won't desire certain things. And it also does not mean that God promises that everything we do want or everything we do desire will be given to us.

Because our hearts are not trustworthy, right? Our hearts are often misdirected in their yearnings. But to want, it means to lack, to need, or to be insufficiently cared for.

[6 : 05] This verb, to lack or to want, it suggests a continuing state. So it means all you need to have a fullness of life and godliness will be continuously supplied for you by the Lord himself.

Just as a good shepherd supplies all that his lambs need to thrive under his loving care. Charles Spurgeon again commented, It should be the subject of thankful admiration that the great God allows himself to be compared to anything which will set forth his great love and his care for his own people.

Isn't that amazing? No man has a right to consider himself the Lord's sheep unless his nature has been renewed. For the scriptural description of an unconverted man does not picture them as sheep.

Spurgeon's saying, What is it that the Bible calls someone who doesn't know the Lord? A wolf, right? So to belong to the Lord is to be entitled to this great promise.

The position, Spurgeon commented, The position of this psalm in the Psalter as it's arranged is also worthy of notice. It follows the 22nd psalm. Do you remember this from last week?

[7 : 21] Look there and you can read this with the promises of 23 in mind. Psalm 22 is the great psalm of the cross. Spurgeon commented, There are no green pastures, no still waters on the front side of the 22nd psalm.

It is only after we have read, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? See, it's only after the cross that we can come to know that the Lord is my shepherd.

Amen. Well, that's our first scene. It's the Lord with his people as their shepherd, providing for their every care. The second scene or image in Psalm 23 is of a restful meadow.

Would you look at verse two with me into the beginning of verse three? He, referring to the Lord as the good shepherd. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

The one who is acting here, who is powerfully causing something to happen is God himself. He makes me to lie down. It's Yahweh who graciously enables us to perceive the preciousness of his truth, his word, and to feed upon him.

[8 : 42] Green pastures. In the Hebrew, literally, it's pastures of grass. It's most likely referring to those rich, lush, soft green pastures of the springtime.

To make me lie down. Someone pointed out how grateful God's people to be for the power of God to appropriate these promises. Some know of God's promises, but they cannot say that God makes me to lie in those promises.

I know all about them, but I haven't rested in these promises myself. They are not made to lie down in them. But if you can, if you are one who has this blessed assurance of faith, then you need to thank the Lord.

He is the one who's given you this gift. He's caused you in your soul to rest and trust these promises are yours in Christ. It's Yahweh, the Lord, the covenant-keeping God, who causes his people to move, to walk, and to be with him.

Notice next, he says, the Lord leads me beside still waters. Literally, in verse 2, it's waters of rest. Still waters. Not white waters that are crashing and making noise and that'll make the sheep jump and be afraid and want to go away from them.

[10 : 07] No, these are waters of rest. This picture now, we have it before us, and it's not a stretch of our imagination in Colorado. It's peaceful meadow, this quiet brook.

There the scene is set. The good shepherd with his flock leading them. It's like a painting in the mind's eye, a place of restfulness. What's the psalmist's testimony as he walks with the Lord through this scene?

What's the effect of being made to lie down on God's promises and to be led by the Lord himself along that brook? Notice what David says next.

He restores my soul. That's the effect of God's ministry upon his people. God restores your soul. The verb restores, it comes from the root to return.

I learned this week about sheep. That when they get a little too heavy set, they don't have the longest legs to begin with. Or when their wool is even thicker.

[11:13] Have you known what happens to a sheep? It can accidentally tip over on to its side. And it just can't really move. It's too fluffy and too fat to turn itself back up. So eventually it'll roll on to its back and just lay there.

But then what happens is it can't breathe very well. The air isn't passing through the lungs and the gases start to move in the wrong directions. And so it starts to cause bloating. And now this sheep, there's no way it's going to be able to unturn itself.

And so in the English language, the name for a sheep that got fallen and tipped up on its side. So its legs are up in the air is a cast down sheep. A sheep that's cast down.

And so he says, the Lord restores my soul. The Lord returns my soul. My soul got turned upside down. And I'm laying there helpless.

About to die of suffocation. Not to mention if predators come by and see. I mean, that was an easy target right there. This is well before survival of the fittest, you know.

[12:15] So the Lord needs to come to me. Just like the Lord has acted on every other way. He makes me lie down. He leads me beside still waters. He restores me in my inner being.

He sets my soul the right way up. My soul no longer will be cast down. My good shepherd must cause my soul, my life, the core of my being to be renewed.

And once again, enjoy vigorous life walking with him. God makes his sheep once again able to enjoy his green pastures.

What are these green pastures? They're a picture of food for the sheep next to still waters. Well, you know, in the Bible, food is described with the imagery of the scriptures.

I should say the other way around. When God talks about the scriptures or his word, it's given to the people as their food. Here's one example of many. Matthew 4, 4. Jesus, quoting the Old Testament, said, Man shall not live on bread alone, man's food, but man shall live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

[13:27] And what about water? Water is often an image in the Bible of cleansing and of the Holy Spirit. Think about how Jesus said in John 7, 37, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

You believe in me, as the scriptures say, for from you now shall flow rivers of living water. And this he spoke of the spirit which they had, which they that believe on him should receive.

So there it is, the image of God's word and the work of the Holy Spirit. That's what equips and restores the souls of God's people. A commentator named Christopher Ash wrote, The use of food and water imagery in the New Covenant suggests that this is to be the ongoing experience of followers of Jesus Christ, even in times of trouble.

So what we have in these verses up to this point, verses one, two, and the first part of three is a picture of a believer, even you and me. Refreshed by the Holy Spirit through the scriptures.

The Lord will restore your soul. That's the promise for you and me as well. When God is our shepherd, he will supply you and me with abundant nourishment. Through his Holy Spirit, through the Bible, his word.

[14:51] And he will do this every single day, every week and every year of your life and mine until the very end. You see how God, how good God is to his people as their good shepherd.

Well, we've seen the restful meadow. The third scene is the righteous tracks. The righteous tracks at the last part of verse three.

He, the Lord, leads me in paths of righteousness. The word paths. It means the wagon tracks. So as you would be pulling, you know, behind a pair of oxen or something like that on these little roads through the meadow, through the pasture from one town to the next.

That would be a natural path for the shepherd not to pull them off of the meadows, going to another place now and maybe another pasture that they need to get to. And you don't want them wandering

around, wandering off and going into pastures they're not supposed to be in or getting into trouble. Certainly not falling off the cliff. So you put them on these wagon tracks, these little roads. And that's the shepherd leading his sheep on those tracks of righteousness.

[15:58] In Psalm five, verse eight, you can flip there if you like or listen. David had prayed this. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness.

He has been asking this from the Lord as the king of Israel. And now here in Psalm 23, we have David's witness that God, in fact, has done this. And why is it that God leads his people? David, you and me. Why does he lead us on these paths of righteousness? It's for his name's sake. The reason God leads his people in his righteousness is for the sake of his own name. His reputation is what is at stake. Think about for us now to follow that shepherd. You can almost picture the silhouette of the shepherd among the sheep walking on these tracks and the sheep following behind.

This is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ among his flock, leading them out, as we read in John 10. They know his voice. They follow him.

[17:05] They stay on the tracks following their good shepherd. A pastor in the 1800s in Scotland, Andrew Barnard. He wrote, The church has so exclusively applied this song to herself as almost to forget that her shepherd, Jesus Christ, once needed it and was glad to use it.

Think about how our great shepherd, Jesus Christ, he was also God's lamb. God, the son who leads us now was once led by God, the father.

Our king who is enthroned in heaven was once comforted on earth by the promises of God and the sweetness of this song. Now in Christ, the reputation of God himself is attached to the walk of Christ's people.

Christ will not have his covenant keeping name be disgraced. Christ has every incentive, every reason, every motive. It's more than that. It's a covenant binding of himself to the walk of his people for the sake of God's name and the mission he came to accomplish.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we have this promise. God will make sure that each one of his true disciples walks with him, however imperfectly, all the way home.

[18:26] This is his promise to you and me. He has led us there and he will lead us all the way. That's our third scene, the righteous tracks in verse three.

Well, the fourth scene is the dark valley. The dark valley in verse four. Yea, though I walk through the valley. It's the word of a canyon.

A passageway. We can picture a lot of scenes like that, I'm sure, here in Colorado. Different hikes you've taken. It's from those low meadows. Those meadows, if those are, in fact, the springtime, you know, grass popping up.

It's so bright, especially in the Middle East compared to the desert all around. They said in the springtime and into the summer, then the shepherds would lead them through whatever passage they had to take to get up to a mesa.

You know, the top that they would enjoy. And then as that started to dry out, they'd work their way back down. Now, it's the valley of the shadow of death.

[19:33] That phrase, shadow of death, this pops up a lot of places in the Old Testament. Isaiah uses this word in chapter nine, verse two, referring to the time of exile where the people are carried out of Israel.

And that place of their exile, he calls it a land of deep darkness. Job uses this word in chapter three, verse five, when he's saying, you know, whoa, the day of my birth.

And he says, let gloom and deep darkness claim the day of my birth. Let clouds dwell upon it. Let the blackness of the day terrify it. In Job 38, 17, he combines this imagery of deep darkness with the gates of death.

In Job, we read, have the gates of death been revealed to you or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? So this valley of the shadow of death is a passage marked by darkness, danger and imminent death around every corner.

And the psalmist says, even though I walk through this valley, this passage that every human being has to go through, whether you're just or unjust alike, there are times of suffering that are common to all men.

[20:49] We are under Adam's curse, right? We are in this place of darkness compared to the eternal light of the kingdom of heaven breaking in. And so if you're a believer and you're following

the shepherd, you will still expect times of darkness, a valley of the shadow of death.

The difference is that you will walk through that with your good shepherd. Someone outside of Christ's kingdom that doesn't know the Lord Jesus must walk through the same valley all alone, hopeless.

It can be brought on by sickness, by bereavement, by aging and every disappointment. What struck me in verse four is there's a change in the language he's using.

It's a big switch. You will notice how up to this point he's referring to God in the third person singular. You notice that the Lord, my shepherd, he, he, he, he.

That's how everything starts up to this point. But notice now in verse four, a big change. At the remembrance of the valley of the shadow of death, or maybe while David was still walking in the middle of it.

[22 : 02] His witness about God becomes a prayer to God. He speaks directly to the Lord now as his shepherd.

He says, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you. You, Lord, are with me. And that's the only reason why I must not fear any evil.

In this dark valley, I have every logical reason to be sorely afraid. But because you, Lord, praying, trusting God's presence with him, you are with me.

I will fear no evil. Did Jesus experience such a ministry from God the Father in order to fulfill his mission? Passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

Remembering God is his good shepherd and he is the lamb of God. Yes, he did. Remember in John 16, 32, our Lord bore witness as he marched to the cross.

[23 : 06] I am not alone for the Father is with me. After experiencing God's faithfulness and trusting God will never leave me nor forsake me.

God continues to minister this same truth about God to his people, his flock, his dear lambs in the same way. Jesus promised his disciples and his church who would believe in him that by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us.

And he will be with us even to the very end of the age. And in light of this promise, the preacher in the book of Hebrews adds on this encouragement, Hebrews 13, 6.

So we can confidently say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear. What can man do to me? Imagine yourself through the eyes of one of those sheeps.

You're on these paths of righteousness following the good shepherd. Now you're passing through the valley of the shadow of death. It gets darker there quicker than anywhere else.

[24 : 15] The sun hides behind the mountains on either side. There's shadows and darkness and a great place for a predator to pick off the weak ones. But you can see through the shadowy area.

The shepherd walking right there. And these ancient shepherds had two pieces of wood, one in each of their hands. We don't get these details anywhere, but I imagine knowing what I do about them in the shepherd's right hand.

Something like a miniature baseball bat, a club that you would use to beat away a wolf that's about to get one of those lambs. That's called the rod. And in the other hand, the staff, it's a longer stick with a hook on the end.

So if there is a lamb that gets caught in a thorny bush, you can hook it and pull it back in. So it joins the flock. The rod and the staff, even as you walk through this valley of the shadow of death, that's a picture of protection and comfort for these sheep.

He keeps them away from the dangerous cliff, from the thorny desert and from the red eyes of the predators at night. And as his lambs walk with him, he protects them with his rod.

[25 : 30] Now this rod is so interesting to learn. You know, the picture of the shepherd always having these two instruments in his hand, no matter what you're doing. And when you're getting the sheep out of one pen onto the pastures, you're not going to leave any one of them behind.

You know, you count up to the 99th and you say, where's the 100th? And you go find it. Listen to how Leviticus 27, 32 uses this rod, the same word. Every tithe of the herd and flock and every 10th animal that passes under the shepherd's rod will be holy unto the Lord.

So as the shepherd, as the shepherd's looking over the sheep and as they're passing out the fold to go, he's counting them. It makes sense. I would count like that. Like you would with your finger.

They're passing. I'm counting with my rod every single one.

So when he gets to number 10, that one belongs to the Lord. That's how well the shepherd knows his sheep. And that's a picture to the sheep of comfort. I'm counted for.

My shepherd knows me. If I wander away, he will count. Everyone else will pass and he will count and he will know I'm missing and he will pull me back with his staff.

[26 : 36] What a good God we have. We need this reminder, too, don't we? A visible reminder, fully fulfilled in Jesus Christ, that we are protected.

We are cared for. We do not need to fear anything out there so long as we stay close and walk with the shepherd who's among his people here. Because our Lord Jesus Christ has passed through this valley of death and he came and lives now on the other side.

That's why we also can enjoy the comfort of this promise in Christ. First John 5, 4 gives us this promise. The one who believes and trusts in Christ is the one who conquers.

Spurgeon commented, observe that it is not walking in the valley, but walking through the valley. We go through the dark tunnel of death.

We do. We pass through in order to emerge into the light of immortality on the other side. If you are in Christ, you don't need to fear death.

[27 : 46] You don't need to fear the dark valley or anything in this world. Because if you are in Christ, you already have eternal life now. You do not die in Christ, but we sleep only to awake in glory with him.

And someone put it, death is not the house, but the porch, not the goal, but the passage to it. And that's the fourth scene.

The valley of the shadow of death. The fifth scene is the victory feast. In verse five, the victory feast on the other side of this valley. You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. In this scene, the people of God move from being the sheep to being guests. And the Lord moves from being their shepherd to being their host. Again, David continues to address the Lord in that direct, intimate second person.

You prepare a table before me. The word prepare, it means thoughtful arrangement of this table. For me, first person singular.

[29 : 00] You are counted by the shepherd. Now you have a seat reserved for you. You, your person, your soul, your resurrected body one day has a place set for you.

Especially arranged by Jesus for you. Who knows you by your name. It says, you anoint my head with oil. My cup runneth over.

This is a victory feast. It's an allusion to a big celebration after a great battle is over. And you're on the side that won. In the ancient world, it was the custom of the one leading this battle.

To honor his soldiers after a great military victory. By laying out all the spoils and the loot of war. And each one would line up and take their portion.

And this was often done with the enemies sitting right there. Humiliated, chained up, made to watch the whole celebration. You prepared a table before me right there in the presence of mine enemies.

[30 : 04] You see, that's a picture of a victory that is public. It's a public celebration. The king has been fully vindicated. The enemy is utterly humiliated.

This image depicts God honoring his anointed king by welcoming him to God's banqueting table. At this celebration banquet, the king's head is anointed with oil.

It's an anointing of honoring someone. Even at the time of Christ, when guests would come into the home, you would wash their feet. And if there's a very special guest that you're all gathering around like a rabbi, then he would bring out the special oils that had a fragrance.

You know, they had had spices and other aromas that had picked up into the oil. And you pour that on the head of the honored guest. In Ecclesiastes 9, we have this ancient scene of a celebration feast like that.

Ecclesiastes 9, 7 and 8. Go, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart. Let not oil be lacking on your head. These celebratory anointings were a picture along with the food and the cup that's overflowing with wine.

[31 : 22] It's a picture of joy, victory, and lavish generosity put on by the host. Showing everyone who will come around and see and hear of it.

This one who is victorious is wealthy. And he's lavishing his favor upon his anointed one. The image of a great victory feast, it continues to gain language and lines and embellishments all the way through the scriptures, all the way to the book of Revelation.

An important step on that developing of this motif is Isaiah 25, verses 6 through 8. Listen to this future prophecy that will be fulfilled. On this mountain, a picture of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

It will swallow up on his mountain the covering that is cast over all the peoples, the veil that is spread over all the nations. He will swallow up death forever.

The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people. He will take away from all the earth for the Lord has spoken. This is a picture of the great wedding supper of the Lamb, which Jesus Christ has already accomplished and secured.

[32 : 46] He fulfilled this by making the whole world know that he is the righteous one, the anointed king in whom the father is well-pleased. And this feast will be enjoyed by King Jesus and all his army on that one great day.

When, according to 1 Corinthians 15, 54, death will be swallowed up in victory. Borrowing that imagery from Isaiah 25. You see, spiritually now as a church, we already have a place at this banqueting table with God.

All that is Christ is already ours in a spiritual sense. He already shares it with his people now. We can say like the psalmist did in Psalm 16, 5, The Lord is already my chosen portion and my cup. My heart already overflows because he is so good to me. And now we feast by faith with the inner man. But there is a day coming. Brothers and sisters, one day our resurrected bodies will be with God and with his Lamb.

And we will commune with him. And we will feast with him. We will get to physically feast, smell, taste, and laugh with God and the Lamb, if we can speak that way, in his visible, touchable presence.

[34 : 09] His great feast set out for his people to celebrate the victory of God the Son. Well, that's not the last scene in this psalm.

That's the victory feast. But there is one more image for us in verse 6. And that's of the eternal dwelling. The psalm comes to a beautiful close with these words.

Surely, goodness and mercy. Better translation would be goodness and loving kindness. Chesed, covenant faithfulness.

These are covenantal terms. Surely that's what will follow me all the days of my life. The verb there is follow. And this is a description of a predator chasing a lamb.

What is it that's following this little flock? You'd picture a pack of wolves coming to devour them. But he's using covenant language saying something else will be following me.

[35 : 13] Following God's lambs. Pursuing. Chasing after. You see, these lambs used to be the enemies of God. But he laid down his life for these lambs.

Because we are sinners and we've broken that covenant with God. We deserve to have maledictory curse chasing after us. That's what we deserve.

And he says instead, I will chase down my people by binding myself for their good. It's benedictory blessings that chase after God's people.

That follow them all the days of their life. Instead of needing a prosecuting attorney now. To prosecute God's people and accuse them.

Jesus Christ stands as their advocate. And he prosecutes God's covenant of grace. That he accomplished for their good. They are now bound to his goodness.

[36 : 14] And covenant mercy. God will continue to pursue you who know God. By the grace of Jesus Christ. Poured out to you by the Holy Spirit.

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. David could pray this. Because the Holy Spirit illumined to him God's goodness.

And God's covenant faithfulness. And a future coming Messiah. Messiah. You and I can believe this. Because we look at the work that Jesus Christ accomplished. He has already secured the blessings.

Promised here for his people for all time. Colossians 3.1-4 remind us. That we have already been raised with Christ. And we will one day. Be with him in glory.

Jesus says. You know you will dwell in my house. I'm preparing a place for you. In my father's house. And in John 8.35. Jesus said. A slave does not abide in the house forever.

[37 : 14] But a son abides with the father forever. You are my sons. God says. In Jesus Christ. Spurgeon's comment was.

While I live here. I will be a child. At home with my God. Spiritually. The whole world. Shall be as his house to me. And when I.

When I ascend. To the upper chamber. I shall not change my company. Or even my place. Of belonging. My soul will be at home with the Lord.

So when you die. You're in that intermediate state. Your company hasn't changed. You are still in the Lord. Though your body is waiting for the resurrection. Then I will dwell.

Body and soul. On that great day of the resurrection of the body. In the eternal state. The new heavens. The new earth. With my God. My Savior. My eternal father. In his dwelling forever.

[38 : 13] Someone. Wrote these words. In reflecting upon this psalm as a whole. God has sent.

The gospel. Through psalm 20. 23. To speak in every language. On the globe. It has charmed more griefs. To rest. Than all the philosophy of the world.

It has remanded the dungeon. More felon thoughts. More black doubts. More thieving sorrows. Than there are sands on the seashore.

It has comforted the noble hosts of the poor. It has sung courage. To the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm. On the consolations. And into the hearts of the sick.

Of captains of dungeons. Of widows. And their pinching griefs. And of orphans. And their loneliness. Gloomy hospitals. Have been illuminated. By psalm 23. Dying soldiers.

[39 : 11] Have died easier. As Christ was here. Offered to them. You see how good God is. These are just six scenes. In one psalm.

And his word is inexhaustible. All there. To remind us. Of the goodness. Of God. In Christ. I started by quoting. That Puritan. John Durant.

In persecution. And hard suffering. As a church. In the 1600s. These were his. Closing thoughts. In light of God's goodness.

Come to Jesus. Let him be now. The shepherd. Of thy soul. And know then. That he will be sweet. In endeavoring. To keep thee. From sin.

Before thou commit it. And he'll be sweet. In delivering thee. From sin. After thou hast committed it. Oh that this thought. That Jesus Christ. Is sweet.

[40 : 07] In his carriage. Unto all his members. Unto all his flock. Especially the sinning ones. May that persuade. The hearts. Of some sinners. To come.

Into. His fold. Do you see how good. God is in Jesus Christ. Christ. He's laid down his life. For you who are his sheep.

For you who know his voice. And follow him. If you are his sheep. Then he rules over your life. You want him. To rule over your life. And to care for you. He will guide your walk.

He will feed you. Body. And soul. He protects you. And you who know the voice. Of Jesus Christ. You follow him. You want to obey him.

You want to know him more. You love him. You trust him. It's been my prayer. Preparing for today. That you and I. Would learn even more today. What it is to rest.

[41 : 04] In his green pastures. What it is to let his Holy Spirit. Restore your soul. And mine. To abide in him. More and more.

Now and forever. So make sure that the Lord. Is your good shepherd. Let's pray and thank him. Oh Lord.

We are. So much like sheep. And you are so much better. Than even this glorious description. Of a good shepherd to us. We thank you for how you've stooped.

So low. We thank you for how you've given us your word. How your word breathes life. Into our souls. And it sets. Everything right side up.

We trust that you will continue to feed us. To guide us. To teach us to abide. In you. To find. Refreshing. For our souls. In your presence.

[42 : 07] Once again. We ask all of this. In the precious name. Of Jesus Christ. Amen.