

J.J.

**BELOVED PSALMS Series**  
**The Lord Is My Shepherd**  
**Psalms 23**

**REMINDER : Acknowledge the Summer Sticky Program**

**INTRODUCTION :**

After 6 years, by God's grace, we have finished with the book of Ephesians. I remember when I started preaching about the book of Ephesians, my purpose is for the church to know the riches we have in Christ when it comes to his blessings of a new life, of love and forgiveness even though we do not deserve it. And how we should live with this new life and how we should protect ourselves from the enemy who wants us to be tied down with our old lives that is full of fear, of anger, of hatred, of bitterness, of malice, of lust, of greed and etc.

**Today, before we start with another book, by God's grace, I would like us to take a breather and study the beloved Psalms.** I call this the beloved Psalms because these are the joys and cries of ordinary people like us set into poetry or music that is addressed to God.

**Personally, each morning when I read my Bible,** my habit is to read a chapter from the book of Psalms first and then read a passage or a chapter from a book in the Old or New Testament.

**The book of Psalms has strengthened many a person during times of weakness or crisis.** It has done that with me and I just want to share the Psalms that are near to a lot of people's hearts.

**Today, we will start with the most familiar, the most popular and the most beloved Psalm.** It is also one of my family's favorite Psalms and my entire family has memorized it. **We're talking about Psalm 23.**

**Story :** 9 years ago, when I got my first job here in Canada, my boss invited the team to eat at a restaurant. When the menu was given to her, she had a hard time choosing what to eat. Finally, when the waitress came, my boss ordered "Shepherd's Pie". I asked her why she ordered it among the many delectable entries in the menu. She replied, "It's my comfort food". Comfort food is something that you eat and it gives you that sentimental feeling of "comfort" or "home". Food that reminds you of home or what your mom used to cook for you that gives you a sense of nostalgia and peace. It is food that you turn to when you can't decide what to eat.

**Psalms 23 is my comfort food.**

*Psalm 23 : 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Prayer

## **THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING THE LORD**

### **BACKGROUND**

**This is a very personal psalm for David.** How do we know?

- **David is himself a shepherd** (1 Samuel 17:34). So when he compares the Lord to a shepherd, David knows what he's talking about. **Our Lord Jesus call Himself the Good Shepherd**

*John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*

Peter calls our Lord Jesus, "The Chief Shepherd" 1 Peter 5:4

- **David opened up this Psalm** with *The Lord is my shepherd*

David did not say, "The Lord is **our** shepherd or the Lord is **your** shepherd. He wrote, "The Lord is MY shepherd." **It's just like saying that at this moment, it doesn't matter if no one considers him as a shepherd but as for me, he is MY shepherd.**

**Needless to say,** those who will benefit from this psalm **are the ones who personally follow the Lord as "my" shepherd.**

**Now if there is a shepherd, there is a "sheep".** As we study this psalm, we will know the characteristics of a "sheep" and how it compares to us humans. If there's someone who knows what the characteristics of a sheep, it is David since he lived with them and took care of them.

**(Show photo) It takes a certain degree of humility to compare yourself to a sheep because there is nothing flattering about this dumb and stubborn animal** as I will show you as we go through this Psalm. They don't fight back because they can't fight back. They are gentle but dumb creatures. They are short-sighted and etc. They have teeth and not fangs. **Personally, if they ask me what kind of animal are you?** I would have replied either an eagle or a lion. Now knowing what a sheep is like, I will never compare myself to one.

**Important :** But in order for us to say, "The Lord is My shepherd", we need to compare ourselves to sheep.

**There are four benefits of the sheep whose Shepherd is the Lord.**

- I. MY LORD GIVES ME SATISFACTION
- II. MY LORD GIVES ME DIRECTION
- III. MY LORD GIVES ME PROTECTION
- IV. MY LORD GIVES ME RECOGNITION

**I. MY LORD GIVES ME SATISFACTION**

*I shall not be in want* - Heb. "chacer" means "lack", so it means when we follow Christ, we shall never be in "lack". We will always be full.

**Isn't that what our Lord Jesus Christ promised when he said in**

Again, earlier we showed you John 10:11

*John 10: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

*11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

**But have you noticed that a full life, a life to the full, an abundant life is connected by making our Lord our shepherd?**

**a. He satisfies my physical needs**

*v. 1a "He makes me lie down in green pastures."*

**Picture it :** It's a picture of contentment. Sheep lying down in the grass, when it gets hungry, he just needs to tilt its head and eat.

**Application :** Those who follow the Lord are contented people because they know that God's provision is always there.

**Isn't that what the Lord promised?**

*Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*

**Illustration :** I have seen several instances when God has shown this to our family but the best example I always give is when my wife was about to give birth to Mica in the Philippines. Unlike here in Canada, you need to shell out money with every hospital or medical move that needs to be performed. Sometimes, they will allow you but they will never let you leave the hospital without payment. When my wife got pregnant with Mica, we immediately consulted her ob-gynecologist. Since my wife gave birth to Zak and Rebecca, the natural way. The doctor assumed that Mica will be born naturally and just said to prepare around P30,000. That was 10 years ago, in 2005. I just became a full-time pastor with P500 monthly allowance and was just now starting my own advertising business. We were able to save P30,000. But the day of birth came and Mica didn't want to go out the natural way. Since the baby inside Chicay's womb is now stressed, they had to perform the C-section which means the hospital fees will double to now become P60,000. Chicay and I looked at each other not knowing where to get the money but we just looked at each other and said, "God will provide".

So the C-section was performed. Chicay was wheeled out of the operating room and Mica was inside the room with us. We had an all-nighter and I was just so tired and didn't want anybody to disturb us. But then, my cellphone rang and since I don't want any disturbance, I didn't answer the call. But then Chicay's cellphone rang and I still didn't answer the call. But afterwards, my cellphone rang again and this time, I thought this must be very important and then I decided to answer my phone. When I answered the call and said "Hello", it was the loud voice of my ninang who was also my business partner in one of her projects that happened several months ago. Her first words were "Jerry, ang lakas mong manalangin" (Jerry, your prayers are strong) I asked "Why?" "Yung kliyente, babayaran na tayo." (The client will now pay us) The background of this is we had a problematic client where we did a job but refused to pay and we just said "Ipagpa-sa-Dios na lang natin" (Let's just give it to God) Remember, my Ninang didn't know that my wife just gave birth and we needed another P30,000 to complete the P60,000. So I asked her, how much is the client going to pay me. She said, P33,000++ change. It dawned unto me why P33,000. It's because I just needed P30,000 and the extra P3,000 was tithes. In short, God provided the P30,000 and he also provided the tithes that I needed to return to Him.

**Nothing is impossible with God. Didn't God say in the Bible,**

*Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

**b. He satisfies my spiritual needs**

*v. 1b - 2a "He leads me beside quiet waters."*

**Illustration :** Sheep are very fearful creatures. Any unusual sound or anything that's happening that's out of the ordinary and they easily panic and are easily disturbed. That's the reason why the shepherd has to bring them to a "quiet" stream so they would drink. They would not drink in a noisy river because they are afraid.

**Application :** Just like us, a problem here and anything that happens out of the ordinary, we panic. We were diagnosed with a sickness, we panic. We need to pay for something and we don't have the money for it, we panic. We hear someone tarnishing our reputation, we are disturbed immediately. And the Lord knows that.

**Emphasis : That's why look carefully at what David wrote.**

*He "leads" me...* the psalmist didn't say "He brings". He wants to lead us and quench our thirst. He also wrote, He guides me.

**But it also means** in order for us to have "peace", we should follow the one who leads.

*John 10:2-5 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

### **How do we know His voice?**

**Illustration :** There was a native Indian who was brought to Times Square by a friend. If you've been to Times Square, there is always noise there. Police cars, ambulance, taxis, people walking and chatting, music booming from shops, the lights and sounds are just all around you. But while walking in Manhattan, the native Indian stopped and said to his friend, "Did you hear that?" The friend said, "What?" The Indian said, "Did you hear the cricket?" The friend said, "Are you kidding me? It's just so noisy and busy out here and you heard a cricket" The Indian said, "Yes" The friend said, "Where is it?" The Indian went to a stone nearby and showed him where the cricket was.

The friend was amazed and asked how he was able to do that. The Indian answered, "People will only hear what they want to hear." Let me give you an example. Give me the coins that's inside your pocket. So his friend gave him the coins and then he threw the coins up in the air until it reached the ground. When it reached the ground and made the sound, a lot of people looked where the noise of the coins came from.

God wants you to have peace if you would just learn how to listen to His voice. How? By regularly reading, listening and meditating on His Word in the Bible. And if we trust in His Word, you will be led to quiet waters and your thirst will be quenched.

*Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! (NLT)*

### **And once you have peace, here's what happens**

*v. 2a He restores my soul.*

**Hebrew** "restore" "showb"? If something needs to be restored, it means it was lost.

**Explanation :** Tagalog term : "Nawalan ng loob." Opposite of "nawalan ng loob" is "palagay ang loob". In English, "we've lost heart"; "we've lost confidence" "We've lost strength or courage"

**In short,** when we follow our Lord Jesus, we will be encouraged again.

**Etymology :** encourage "in courage"

It's an infusion or an injection of courage.

This is what the Lord promised to those who follow Him, to those whose eyes are fixed on Him.

*Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

**Here are God's Word that I've placed in the pocket of my mind** lately that I pull out when I am discouraged or panicking and again it's because I was reading the book of Psalms.

*Psalms 125 :1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.*

**Look at the passage again we just studied.**

*Psalm 23 : 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul.*

**(Show photo again now with the lion) Do you want this? Then we should be like sheep and let the Lord be our shepherd.**

*Psalm 34:10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

**Why?** It's because the Lord is my shepherd

(Then show the Lord as the Shepherd)

**It's time for you to decide on your own.** That's going to be a personal decision and if you choose Jesus Christ as your Lord, as your Shepherd and then you will lack no good thing.

**S.G.D.**