“The Shepherd and His Sheep”

**Psalm 23**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 11/7/21)

We all know the 23rd Psalm. Most of us memorized it as children. Why study it

now? Pastor Steve confided that many at Hayden Bible Church are being led through the valley of the shadow of death right now. Many are even being called to glory. Many of our extended family are touched by illness and death. Though many have heavy hearts, **we know** it is well with our souls. We have contentment, we have peace. Beyond a shadow of doubt, **we know** for certain that the Lord **is** our Shepherd.

Our Shepherd provides all we need to live for His glory. We lack nothing. The condition and contentment of a flock of sheep says a lot about the nature of their owner. Your life also bears witness to the nature of your Owner. The wellness of God’s sheep has everything to do with their relationship to their Shepherd. This is a living relationship, not based on circumstances, but on the faithfulness of God.

Psalm 23 is a song of dependence, a song of allegiance, and a song of perseverance. It is NOT for everyone: it is only for those who follow Christ. There is a vast difference between knowing this psalm and knowing the psalm’s Shepherd. It’s the difference between eternal life and eternal condemnation! That’s why every single week we remind people of the saving work of Jesus on the cross.

Psalm 23 is a declaration of dependence on God. The Lord, Yahweh, is my Shepherd. He is the one, true God. He said, “I will be your God and you will be My people.” His people are able to know him personally, even though He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He is personal with His people, present with His people, and powerful with His people. Scripture repeatedly describes us as sheep, when, in fact, sheep are pretty dumb! They can’t feed themselves, or protect themselves, or even figure out where they should go. Like sheep, we are created for utter dependence on Yahweh. We are not self-sufficient; we are not self-directed. Even our daily nourishment (both physical and spiritual) must flow from our Good Shepherd. (Q1) (Q2)

Psalm 23 is a pledge of allegiance. King David was regarded as a shepherd of his people, but his Shepherd was Yahweh. He was subordinated and submissive to his King, the Lord of Hosts. David said, “He rules my life” and he meant it! Some people today don’t know our Lord, so they have no right to claim Him as their Shepherd. They have a “greeting card” religion, not a real, lively relationship with our Lord. In John 10:11 Jesus says, “I am the good Shepherd.” This is a declaration of Diety (see John 10:30-31). He wants to shepherd people back to Himself and lead them all the way home.

Psalm 23 is strategically placed between Psalm 22 and Psalm 24. There are no green pastures of Ps. 23 without Christ’s suffering at Calvary prophesied in Ps. 22:1,15-18. The only gateway into God’s flock is through the gateway of the cross of Christ. Jesus came so that we could be His sheep. Without Jesus, we are sheep without a shepherd. If you depend on Him and yield your allegiance to Him, you can truly say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” (see John 10:27) (Q3)

Psalm 23 is also a song of perseverance. The Christian life is not an easy life, but it is an abundant life. We are surrounded by fierce enemies, like doubt and regret. (Q4) But just like the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts, we are reminded that Christ’s blood makes it so that all is well with our souls. Psalm 24:7-10 describes our glorious future with our King. The Good Shepherd has come and has given His life for His sheep. Joy and contentment will be yours if you can truly proclaim, “THE LORD IS **MY** SHEPHERD!” (Q5) (Q6)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What are these green pastures of spiritual nourishment?
2. Sometimes we don’t feed in the good pastures our Shepherd directs us to. Sometimes our feeding is superficial. Give examples.
3. What is involved in following your Shepherd?
4. What other enemies do we face besides doubt and regret?
5. Which part of Psalm 23 did you need to hear today?
6. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. How are elders supposed to shepherd the flock under their care?

**“Glory to His Name” (Hoffman)**

Down at the cross where my Savior died,  
Down where for cleansing from sin I cried,  
There to my heart was the blood applied;  
Glory to His Name!

*Refrain:*  
Glory to His Name,  
Glory to His Name:  
There to my heart was the blood applied;  
Glory to His Name!

I am so wondrously saved from sin,  
Jesus so sweetly abides within,  
There at the cross where He took me in;  
Glory to His Name!

Come to this fountain so rich and sweet,  
Cast thy poor soul at the Savior’s feet;  
Plunge in today, and be made complete;  
Glory to His Name!