

God as Shepherd

PSALM 23

The LORD is my **shepherd**, I shall not want. **2** He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; **3** he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. **4** Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I 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 mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

JOHN 10

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. **2** The one who enters by the gate is the **shepherd** of the sheep. **3** The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. **5** They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers . . ."

10 The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. **11** I am the good **shepherd**. The good **shepherd** lays down his life for the sheep. **12** The hired hand, who is not the **shepherd** and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away-and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. **13** The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. **14** I am the good **shepherd**. I know my own and my own know me, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep."



What are the benefits of the LORD as Shepherd?



Jesus uses three images to contrast the good shepherd. What does each teach us about being a shepherd?

▶ Stranger:

▶ Thief:

▶ Hired Hand:

▶ Stranger:

▶ Thief:

▶ Hired Hand:

God shepherds his shepherds

Good shepherding begins with _____ as our _____ .

BENEFITS OF THE LORD AS OUR SHEPHERD:

BENEFIT	CONTRAST IMAGE
<p>Psalm 23 ■ green pastures, still waters, "I shall not want," oil, overflowing cup John 10 ■ "I came that they might have life abundantly."</p>	<p>They use the sheep to meet their own needs. They cannot say, "I lack nothing." They act as wolves or thieves, seeking to use, eat, take and destroy. They pursue shepherding for improper gain, seeking approval or status or power.</p>
<p>Psalm 23 ■ darkest valley, rod and staff provide comfort, table in the presence of enemies John 10 ■ "I lay down my life for the sheep."</p>	<p>They flee in the face of danger. They exhibit "hired hand" mentality. Their own survival their focus, they are unwilling to lay their life down, and hence they allow the sheep to scatter.</p>
<p>Psalm 23 ■ restores soul, guides me in right paths for his name's sake, comfort of the rod and staff; prepares a table John 10 ■ "sheep follow him because they know his voice," "I know my own and my own know me"</p>	<p>They treat the sheep "with force and harshness". They really are strangers to the sheep, with no real knowledge of the sheep, no foresight or insight, and so give no warnings or encouragements.</p>

Case Studies

- Over time you have noticed that Ken, your partner in the children's program at church, has a problem keeping commitments he has made. This is more obvious to you than to others, because it has affected you consistently. More than once you have thought about mentioning it to Ken, but each time you have held back.
- James, a pastor who began his ministry at a small church of 80, had cared deeply for his elderly flock. But over time he realized that caring wearied him and he tired of hearing only complaints. He left the pastorate to sell insurance.
- Ellen, an enthusiastic leader of her small group when things were going well, suddenly experienced a loss of motivation when conflict began to crop up within the group. Eventually she decided she wasn't a good fit for small group leader.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- What is the issue?
- What could be done?

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This Psalm is like a commercial for God: "Do you lack? You need the Lord as your shepherd!"

literally: "hunt me down"

We tend to think of ourselves chasing happiness.
Yet the picture here is of a God who chases us for our good.



JOHN 10

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Note: Many shepherds begin as good shepherds but end up as hired hands. Pain and disappointment in ministry leads to professionalization.



What are the benefits of the LORD as Shepherd?

- ▶ needs met
- ▶ green pastures = refreshment
- ▶ rest, restoration
- ▶ protection and guidance
- ▶ comfort, abundance
- ▶ goodness & mercy
- ▶ relationship, presence



Jesus uses three images to contrast the good shepherd. What does each teach us about being a shepherd?

- ▶ Stranger: sheep don't know his voice but recognize the good shepherd's voice, will follow
- ▶ Thief: comes to kill and destroy vs. good shepherd who offers life abundantly
- ▶ Hired Hand: looks like a shepherd but flees in the face of danger - good shepherd lays down life

God shepherds his shepherds

Good shepherding begins with GOD as our SHEPHERD.

We cannot **be** a shepherd if we do not **have** a shepherd.

BENEFITS OF THE LORD AS OUR SHEPHERD:

BENEFIT	CONTRAST IMAGE
<p>ABUNDANCE</p> <p>Psalm 23 ■ green pastures, still waters, "I shall not want," oil, overflowing cup John 10 ■ "I came that they might have life abundantly."</p>	<p>THIEF</p> <p>They use the sheep to meet their own needs. They cannot say, "I lack nothing." They act as wolves or thieves, seeking to use, eat, take and destroy. They pursue shepherding for improper gain, seeking approval or status or power.</p>
<p>PROTECTION</p> <p>Psalm 23 ■ darkest valley, rod and staff provide comfort, table in the presence of enemies John 10 ■ "I lay down my life for the sheep."</p>	<p>HIRED HAND</p> <p>They flee in the face of danger. They exhibit "hired hand" mentality. Their own survival their focus, they are unwilling to lay their life down, and hence they allow the sheep to scatter.</p>
<p>INTIMACY</p> <p>Psalm 23 ■ restores soul, guides me in right paths for his name's sake, comfort of the rod and staff; prepares a table John 10 ■ "sheep follow him because they know his voice," "I know my own and my own know me"</p>	<p>STRANGER</p> <p>They treat the sheep "with force and harshness". They really are strangers to the sheep, with no real knowledge of the sheep, no foresight or insight, and so give no warnings or encouragements.</p>

Case Studies

- Over time you have noticed that Ken, your partner in the children's program at church, has a problem keeping commitments he has made. This is more obvious to you than to others, because it has affected you consistently. More than once you have thought about mentioning it to Ken, but each time you have held back. *You have fled the "danger" of a confrontation with Ken. You haven't cared enough for him to risk your relationship. (security, intimacy)*
- James, a pastor who began his ministry at a small church of 80, had cared deeply for his elderly flock. But over time he realized that caring wearied him and he tired of hearing only complaints. He left the pastorate to sell insurance. *James felt he had few resources himself for the ministry (abundance) - or - James tired of putting his heart out for people. He fled the flock (security).*
- Ellen, an enthusiastic leader of her small group when things were going well, suddenly experienced a loss of motivation when conflict began to crop up within the group. Eventually she decided she wasn't a good fit for small group leader. *Ellen fled the responsibility of shepherding in the face of conflict (security). Ellen fears intimacy herself, having no confidence that conflict can end well (intimacy).*

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