

YAHWEH IS MY SHEPHERD PT. 1; PS. 23:1-3 (Ed O'Leary)¹

DON'T PRAY FIRST. ~~ INTRODUCTION.

THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL TO TAKE IN ~ IN OUR LOOK AT PHIL. 3:1-11. ~~ Heavy

▶▶ So, ~ I thought that, ~ rather than barreling ahead in Philippians, ~ we would take a short break in order for everyone to catch their breath and let it all sink in.

▷▷ And hopefully you are thinking about the things we discussed and letting them sink in.

▶▶ For next 2 Sundays, ~ going to look at Ps. 23 in our brief respite from Phil. ~~ 1-3 today.

LET'S PRAY BEFORE WE DIG INTO PS. 23

PROBABLY NO PSALM IS BETTER KNOWN NOR MORE UNIVERSALLY LOVED than this one.

▶▶ In his commentary on Ps. 23, ~ Warren Wiersbe says, ~ "It's unfortunate that it's used primarily at funerals."

▷▷ He's right, ~ but why? ~~ Because the Psalm covers all the days of our lives. ~~ It covers our walk with Christ from the beginning ~ through our being ushered into our beloved Savior's presence. ~~ All the days of our lives.

▶▶ Ps. 23, ~ written by David, ~ is a song of trust & confidence in Yahweh. ~~ Personal name .

▶▶ Even though David referring to himself, ~ this Ps., ~ of course, ~ for all believers. ~~ All those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord can say these words confidently.

▶▶ I have three goals in mind for looking at Ps. 23 with all of you.

▷▷ That our trust and confidence in the Lord would be strengthened. ~~ That we will be greatly encouraged by David's words in this psalm.

↪↪ And that we will come away with a greater appreciation & sense of awe for God.

VERSE 1a. ~~ (LEB) ~~ "YAHWEH IS MY SHEPHERD," ~ THE PEOPLE OF THE RISEN King can boldly proclaim.

MY, ~ OURS IS NOT JUST ANY SHEPHERD. ~~ Briefly consider the following 5 things.

▶▶ 1st, ~ consider that Yahweh, ~ our shepherd, ~ is the Creator of the universe and all it contains, ~ and who is sovereign over all. ↴↴ 1/8

▶▶2nd, ~ consider that Yahweh, ~ our shepherd, ~ is all-knowing. ~~ He knows exactly what we need and what we're going through.

▷▷And being all-powerful, ~ he can give us what we need and also give us aid and comfort in whatever we're going through.

▶▶3rd, ~ consider that Yahweh is unchanging. ~~ Heb. 13:8 says, ~ **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** ~~ **Emphasized.** ~~ **Emphasizing that forever Jesus will be the same.**

▷▷That's excellent news for us. ~~ He will never decide one day to stop being our shepherd. ~~ Never retire. ~~ Never tire. ~~ Continue all the days of our lives.

▶▶4th, ~ consider that Jesus, ~ our shepherd, ~ tells us that he is "**the good shepherd.**" ~~ & because he "**is the same yesterday and today and forever,**" ~ he'll never be a bad shepherd.

▷▷We can always trust him to give us what is good and not bad. ~~ Satan wants us to believe otherwise. ~~ Implied when tempted Eve. ~~ But it's a lie. ~~ God is good.

▶▶And 5th, ~ consider how Isaiah describes Yahweh, ~ our shepherd. ~~ Is. 40:11. ~~ **NIV,** ~ **He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.**

(VS. 1a) ~ **YAHWEH IS MY SHEPHERD, ~ ALL BELIEVERS CAN CONFIDENTLY DECLARE.**

▶▶In Israel, ~ as in other ancient societies, ~ a shepherd's work was considered the lowest of all jobs.

▷▷If a family needed a shepherd, ~ the youngest son, ~ like David, ~ was always the one chosen for this unpleasant assignment.

▷▷Shepherds had to live with the sheep 24-hrs./day. ~~ And the task of caring for them was unending.

↪↪Day and night, ~ summer and winter, ~ in weather fair and foul, ~ they labored to nourish, ~ guide, ~ and protect the sheep.

▷▷Really, ~ one might think, ~ who in their right mind would choose to be a shepherd?

▶▶Yet, ~ this is exactly what Jesus did for us. ~~ He saved us and chose to be our shepherd.

▷▷Loved ones, ~ the great God of the universe has stooped to take on the lowly job of a shepherd in order to take care of us. ~~ What awesome love he has for us. **↪↪ 2/8**

ONE MORE POINT ON THE SENTENCE, ~ YAHWEH IS MY SHEPHERD.

▶▶ Notice the pronoun "my." ~ This shows us that our great Lord is personal, ~ and personally involved in each of the lives of his sheep.

▷▷ Not some far off, ~ impersonal God. ~ Not talking about deism, ~ that teaches God created everything but is not personally involved in his creation.

↪↪ Like the watchmaker who makes the watch, ~ winds it up, ~ sells it, ~ and has nothing more to do with it.

▷▷ No, ~ he is personally involved in his creation and in each of the lives of his people. ~ We have a personal relationship with God and he's personally involved in our lives.

▷▷ But we must never forget that it is only due to God's grace that we have this relationship with him and that he's personally involved in our lives.

↪↪ What we've been discussing in Phil., isn't it? ~ By grace alone ~ through faith alone ~ in Christ Jesus alone.

→→ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

VS. 1b. ~ ALL BELIEVERS ALONG W/ DAVID CAN DECLARE, ~ "I SHALL NOT WANT."

THE IDEA HERE IS THAT BECAUSE YAHWEH IS OUR SHEPHERD, ~ BELIEVERS WILL always have everything we need.

▶▶ Every need will be met by the guiding, ~ providing hand of God, ~ because he is our shepherd.

▶▶ But a believer might say, ~ "I don't have this," ~ whatever "this" may be. ~ And God would answer, ~ "Then, ~ you don't need it."

▷▷ Promised to provide for our needs, ~ not our wants. ~ At times, ~ he might give us our wants, ~ but there's no guarantee. ~ Is, ~ however, ~ guarantee to provide what we need.

▶▶ And isn't this what Jesus told us to ask for, ~ i.e., ~ our needs? ~ "Give us this day our daily bread." ~ I.e., ~ give us what we need in order to survive.

▶▶ Prayer in Prov. that illustrates this, ~ Prov. 30:8b-9 ~ give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. ~ Give ↯↯ 3/8

▶▶ The promise that God will provide everything we need should remove any anxiety we have about our needs. ~ And Jesus reinforces his promise in Lk. 12:22-24.

▷▷ And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

→→ Will Jesus nourish ravens and forget his people? ~ Of course not!!

↪↪ We are far more valuable to Yahweh than any birds! ~ So of course he'll take care of us. ~ Loved ones, ~ let's put all doubts away.

▶▶ One note here before look at [verse 2](#). ~ Does not say how he will provide for us, ~ just that he will.

▷▷ Yahweh will choose how. ~ We must not, ~ and I'm plenty guilty of this, ~ I do it far too often, ~ we must not put the Lord in a box and ask that he provide "this way."

↪↪ We must simply ask him to provide what we need to survive & let him choose how.

VERSE 2.

THE PEOPLE OF THE RISEN KING CAN CONFIDENTLY PROCLAIM: ~ YAHWEH MAKES ME lie down in green pastures. ~ He leads me beside still waters.

▶▶ Now, ~ there is a danger of misreading this verse. ~ Someone might get the impression that it is saying believers will have a perfect & materially prosperous life. ~ Might be tempted to think that the health & wealth gospel is true.

▶▶ But the verse does not teach that. ~ The Psalm itself goes on to speak of dark valleys, ~ evil, ~ and the presence of enemies.

▶▶ No, ~ the verse is still talking about needs being met. ~ It's an elaboration of [Vs. 1b](#), ~ showing some of the needs that Yahweh has promised to provide for.

▷▷ Far from teaching the health & wealth gospel, ~ [verse 2](#) simply emphasizes the promise that the Lord will give us whatever we need.

▶▶ The shepherd sees to it that the flock is provided sustenance ☞ "green pastures," ~ protection ☞ "beside still waters," ~ and rest ☞ "makes me lie down in green pastures."

▶▶1 side note here. ~ Protection should be viewed as protection for our souls.

▷▷That's the point Peter makes in 1 Pet. 1:5 when he says that believers (LEB) ~ "are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

↳↳"being protected by the power of God" means that God is protecting our souls, ~ ensuring that we'll receive our resurrection bodies and live forever with Jesus.

▶▶God's promise of sustenance, ~ protection, ~ and rest should give us joy and encouragement even in the darkest of times.

VERSE 3a.

YAHWEH RESTORES MY SOUL. ~ WHEN WE SIN, ~ WE BREAK FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

▷▷This is what Is. 59:2 tells us.

↳↳but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God ~ ["you and your God" speaks of relationship, ~ God's people are in view, ~ not unbelievers], ~ and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

▶▶Breaks fellowship. ~ But when we repent, ~ he forgives us and restores us to fellowship.

▷▷1 Jn. 1:9, ~ If we confess our sins, ~ he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

▷▷And Joel 2:12-13a says, ~ "Yet even now," ~ declares the Lord, ~ "return to me with all your heart, ~ with fasting, ~ with weeping, ~ and with mourning; ~ and rend your hearts and not your garments." ~ Return to the Lord your God, ~ for he is gracious and merciful, ~ slow to anger, ~ and abounding in steadfast love.

↳↳Loved ones, ~ let those words be burned into your heart and mind, ~ Yahweh "is gracious and merciful, ~ slow to anger, ~ and abounding in steadfast love."

▶▶Sometimes when we sin we may think that God could never forgive us ~ The enemy

▷▷But that's not true. ~ Our heavenly Father will always forgive us when we come to him in true repentance.

▶▶We see this in Peter's life. ~ Denied Jesus three times. ~ But he repented. ~ We see this when Matthew tells us that afterward Peter "went out and wept bitterly." ↯ 5/8

▷▷ And Jesus restored him. ~ We see that beautiful account at end of John's gospel.

↳↳ Three times Jesus asked Peter, ~ "Peter do you love me?" ~ And three times Peter answered, ~ "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." ~ **And with that restored.**

→→ You can trace that out in **Jn. 21** for the full context of how Jesus gently and beautifully restored Peter.

▷▷ And after he was restored, ~ Peter was used mightily by the Lord.

↳↳ So don't ever think that you can't be used mightily by God after you've repented and been restored.

▶▶ Every believer can say with David, ~ "Yahweh restores my soul." ~ Hallelujah

NOW LET'S LOOK AT VERSE 3b.

GOD'S PEOPLE CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY: ~ HE LEADS ME IN PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS for his name's sake. ☞☞☞ **I.e., ~ Yahweh guides us on the course of righteous living.**

▶▶ But not only does he guide us on this course, ~ he calls us to this course.

▷▷ Titus 2:11-13, ~ **NIV** ~ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

→→ We are to say no to an ungodly lifestyle. ~ And yes to a godly lifestyle, ~ while we wait the return "of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

▷▷ And in 1 Pet. 1:14-16, ~ Peter says, ~ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

↳↳ "be holy in all your conduct" means to live a life that pleases and glorifies God.

↳↳ Instead of continuing in the sinful lifestyle of our unsaved life, ~ Peter says that we, ~ believers, ~ ¶¶

→→ are to conform our behavior to our new status of being new creations in Christ. ~ We are to say No to an ungodly lifestyle ~ and yes to a godly one. ¶¶ 6/8

CONTINUING IN VERSE 3b, ~ IT SAYS THAT YAHWEH LEADS US "IN PATHS OF righteousness for his name's sake."

▶▶ Verse 3 could also be translated as, ~ "He leads me down the right paths for the sake of his reputation."

▷▷ What's David saying? ~ That it fits God's character to lead us down the right paths.

↳↳ IOW, ~ he will lead us on the course of righteous living because this is the kind of God he is.

▶▶ In Ps. 18:30a, ~ David wrote, ~ LEB ~ "This God, ~ [i.e., ~ my God, ~ Yahweh], ~ his way is blameless ~ [i.e., ~ Yahweh's conduct is always blameless]."

▷▷ Therefore, ~ Yahweh can be fully trusted to never lead us astray, ~ and will never lie to us.

▶▶ James 1:13 tells us, ~ LEB ~ No one who is being tempted should say, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. ~ Emphatic

▷▷ Unfortunately, ~ some EVV

▷▷ In saying, ~ "he himself," ~ James was emphasizing the principle that God does not tempt people to sin. ~ Maybe we can express it this way in order to bring emphasis out.

↳↳ "God himself, ~ this is God we're talking about, ~ who is absolutely holy and cannot in any way be tempted by sin, ~ in whom there is no darkness at all, ~ he himself tempts no one."

▶▶ Yahweh, ~ being Yahweh, ~ can be trusted to always lead us on the course of righteous living, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as opposed to our enemies who we battle on three fronts, ~ the world, ~ our sin nature, ~ and the devil, ~ who all lie to us and want to lead us astray and to destroy us.

▶▶ And of course, ~ God guides us by his word. ~ In Ps. 119:105, ~ the Psalmist says, ~ "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

▷▷ God's word is like a lantern or a flashlight that lights the path of life ahead of us ~ and enables us to stay on the paths of righteousness ~ and avoid stumbling into sin.

▷▷ My . . . , ~ we live in a spiritually darkened & spiritually dangerous world. ~ We need the bright light of God's word to keep us on the paths of righteousness. ¶¶ 7/8

CONCLUSION.

WELL, ~ MUCH TO THINK ABOUT IN THESE THREE VERSES.

▶▶ And I encourage everyone to think about these things this week as you go about your lives.

▷▷ I also encourage everyone to come back to [Ps. 23](#) often in your devotions this week and really think through David's words.

LET'S PRAY 8/8

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