OUR GREAT SHEPHERD

**DATE: 7/5/2015 am**

**TEXT: Psalm 23:1-6**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Psalms 22-24** are precious pieces of Hebrew poetry

In **Psalm 22**, we have a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as the ***Good Shepherd***

We saw that Psalm as a clear prophecy of His crucifixion

**Psalm 24** portrays the Lord Jesus as the ***Chief Shepherd***

He is pictured as a King coming in power and glory

Sandwiched between these two great Psalms is **Psalm 23**

This Psalm is one of the most well known and best loved of all the passages in the Bible

Here, Jesus is pictured as the ***Great Shepherd***

**Psalm 22** pictures the death of Jesus for sinners

His death is the event which made it possible for us to be saved

**Hebrews 13:20** ***– “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,”***

**Psalm 24** pictures the end of the age, when King Jesus will reign in perfect righteousness

On that day, those who have been washed in His blood, and saved by His grace, will reign with Him

**Revelation 20:4 – *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”***

But, between the time we got saved, and the day we go home to heaven, there is a life to live!

That is where **Psalm 23** comes in

In these six precious verses, we are allowed to listen in as one of the Lord’s children lifts his heart in song to honor the Lord he loves

In these verses, David tells us that there is plenty to get excited about when it comes to the Lord and His goodness in our lives

Friend, it isn’t all doom and gloom!

If you know the Great Shepherd, you have plenty to be excited about

Let’s listen in on David’s song to …

***“Our Great Shepherd”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

First, let’s look at **v.1** and …

**I. “WHO WE EXALT” – v.1**

***“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want”***

Notice Who it is that David Exalts

David identifies the object of his love as ***“the LORD”***

This is the Great I AM!

This is Jehovah

This is the God of creation, the God of salvation, the God of eternity, the one and only God!

**A. His Name**

David calls Him ***“LORD”***

Some people call Him God

Some people call Him Friend

Some people call Him Father

Some people know Him as Jesus

That is Who David is talking about!

God has placed His Name, *all over* this Psalm

In Hebrew **Jehovah** is often followed by a suffix

Describing one of His many characteristics

For example –

- In **v.1** He is described as the LORD our Shepherd or Jehovah-Rohi

- Also in **v.1** He is described as the God that will Provide - Jehovah-Jireh - ***“I shall not want”***

- In **v.2** He is described as the God of Peace – Jehovah-Siloam

- **v. 3** He is described as the God that heals and of

Righteousness – Jehovah - RaphiandTsidkenu

- **v.4** He is described as the God That’s There or

Jehovah – Shammah

- **v.5** He is described as Our God our Banner and Sanctifier – Jehovah – Nissi and M’Kaddesh

- **v.6** He is described as The LORD Most High or Jehovah – El Elyon

David uses many Names for God in this Psalm

**His Name**

**B. His Nature**

Of all the names of God that David could have magnified

He’s led of the Spirit to sing about Jehovah-Rohi

The LORD My Shepherd … Why?

Because of the image of a shepherd

The one who tenderly leads, feeds and cares for His sheep

This is a perfect picture of our precious Saviour’s relationship to His people

In fact, much of **John 10** is given to this thought

I praise the Lord that when I got saved, I got more than a Saviour!

I also got a Shepherd!

I got Someone Who loves me, tends to me, cares about me, leads me, feeds me, protects me and guides me through life

When you and I got saved, we met Someone Who has made us His top priority!

If you know Him like David did, then you know that He is worthy of our exaltation!

Therefore, may the Lord’s sheep never be ashamed to exalt, praise and worship the One Who sought them and brought them in from the wild mountains of sin

The One who left the 99 to find the 1 **(Luke 15:4-7)**

**“WHO WE EXALT”**

Next let’s look at …

**II. “WHAT WE EXPERIENCE” – vs. 1- 3**

And again let’s look at **v.1** quickly

What we Experience is …

**A. ‘Personal’ – v.1**

When this Psalm begins, David is writing in the first person

It seems as though he is talking *to us* … about the Shepherd

In doing so, he uses the possessive personal pronoun **“*my*”** to talk about his relationship

-- He doesn’t say **“*the LORD is*** *a* ***Shepherd*”**

-- He doesn’t say **“*the LORD is*** *our* ***Shepherd*”**

-- He doesn’t say **“*the LORD is*** *your* ***Shepherd*”**

Instead, David tells us that he has a personal relationship by saying - **“*the LORD is my Shepherd!*”**

Can you say that?

You need to be able to!

**What we Experience is ‘Personal’**

What we Experience is …

**B. ‘Precious’ – v.2**

In **v.2** we see 2 things that make our relationship with the Shepherd Precious

**1.** Placement

***“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:”***

The Tenderness of the Shepherd

David tells us his Shepherd **“*makes him to lie down in green pastures*”**

The Shepherd knows that, unlike goats which will eat almost anything, the sheep prefer the tender, green grasses

-- Therefore the Shepherd leads them to the places where He knows they will be fed

-- He makes them lie down because he knows that they cannot properly digest their food unless they lie down

-- He also knows that sheep will not lie down unless they feel perfectly safe from enemy attack

-- He knows they need to lie down because their wool grows in thick, in direct proportion to the time they spend resting and ruminating on the green grasses they ingest

With all this in mind, the Shepherd tenderly leads His sheep to the places of greatest safety and nutrition

What a picture of what the Lord Jesus does for you and I!

He knows we must feed, He provides the best food for us

He knows we must rest and allows what we have ingested to digest properly …

**If** we are to produce the maximum fruit for His glory

Therefore, He leads us into the green pastures of His Word, allows us to graze on the riches contained therein, and shelters us while we rest in the riches of His grace

What a Great Shepherd!

He fights off the world so we have time to rest in Him!

He tenderly meets our needs!

Do you take advantage of that privilege and provision?

Then that **Place** is …

**2.** Placid

***“he leadeth me beside the still waters”***

The Thoughtfulness of the Shepherd

The shepherd leads his sheep beside the still waters because he knows the sheep will not drink from a running stream

You see, sheep are afraid of running water!

Why? They are not designed for swimming!

With their heavy coats of wool and their little spindly legs, sheep are extremely top heavy

In the water, their wool fills with water and they easily flip over and drown

The sheep know this and shy away from running water

The shepherd knows this and searches out placid pools for them to drink from

If necessary, he will dam up a place in a stream to make them a calm pool of water

The Great Shepherd also knows that His sheep need the cool waters of His grace to make it through

He knows that they need places of stillness where they can rest and reflect upon Him and His blessings

He cares about the things you are facing

**Hebrews 4:15 – *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”***

**I Peter 5:7 *– “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you”***

He provides a place of rest, peace and safety

**Hebrews 4:16 – *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”***

**Matthew 11:28 *– “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”***

Therefore, He provides those Placid Places of escape for you and I!

**What we Experience is ‘Personal’ and ‘Precious’**

What we Experience is …

**C. ‘Profound’ – v.3**

***“He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake”***

Here is where the relationship between a human shepherd and his sheep, and the Heavenly Shepherd and His sheep, move in different directions

The Great Shepherd gives His sheep something no human shepherd could ever provide for his flock - Life!

**1.** The Great Shepherd Provides Life

While the human shepherd provides everything needed by his sheep to *maintain* life,

The fact remain that he receives his sheep after they have life

Jesus, on the other hand, finds His sheep “***dead in trespasses and sins***,” - **Eph. 2:1**

You see, the phrase, “***restoreth my soul***,” literally means *to bring back*

The Great Shepherd brings back the wayward soul from death into life

**John 5:24 – *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life”***

**Luke 15:4, 7 – *“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?”  “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance”***

Just a reminder, if you know Jesus, then you have eternal life right now!

If you do not know Him, then you are dead in your sins where you sit

**I John 5:12 –** ***“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”***

**2.** The Great Shepherd Provides Leadership

The Great Shepherd always leads His sheep in the right way

Whether His path leads us through the glen, as in **v. 2**, or into the gorge as in **v. 4**

He always leads us in the best path of all - His path!

We don’t always likes where the path of life leads

But if they are following the Great Shepherd,

They can be assured that He will always lead them in the right path

**Psalm 37:23 – *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in His way”***

We’ve seen …

**“WHO WE EXALT”**

**“WHAT WE EXPERIENCE”**

And lastly …

**III. “HOW WE EXPRESS IT” – vs. 4-6**

In the first 3 verses, David has talked *about* the Shepherd

Now, beginning in **v.4**, David begins to talk *to* the Shepherd

When He considers What he had and Who he is talking about

David cannot refrain from praising the Lord!

First we see …

**A. His Praise for God’s ‘Power’ – v.4**

***“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me”***

**1.** God’s Omnipotent’s Brings Peace

***“I will fear no evil;”***

Even though the sheep must at times pass through some frightening and dangerous places

They travel in peace knowing that their shepherd has everything under control!

That same confidence should dwell in the hearts of each of God’s children today!

Yes, the path leads through difficult and dangerous places at times

Yes, there are occurrences and events in life that are frightening

But, if we know that Jesus, the Great Shepherd is leading us; if we know that He is in absolute control of all of the paths of life, then we can pass through the shadows in peace and security

By the way a shadow can’t hurt you

**2.** Our Peace is in His Presence

***“…for Thou art with me;”***

The Presence of the Great Shepherd is with His sheep

This is the theme which permeates this Psalm

From the idea of His Leadership in **vs. 2, 3**

To His Presence in the darkest of times in **v. 4**

To His intimate activity in **v.5**

The Lord is seen in close proximity to His sheep

He is always there to lead them, feed them, protect them and to watch over them

This is the blessed truth that God’s children should rejoice in

**Hebrews 13:5b – *“…for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

**Matthew 28:20 – *“…and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”***

**3.** His Omnipotent’s Brings Protection

***“Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me”***

David mentions the implements of the shepherd’s protection – ***“Thy rod and Thy staff”***

Each one served a specific purpose

Each one was an illustration of the Shepherd’s protection

The sheep knew their purpose

They brought comfort

As the sheep of God, we understand the purpose of the Rod and Staff of God

They bring comfort of God’s protection

We enjoy a place of absolute protection with Him

He Protects us from the Enemies

He Protects us from ourselves

**Colossians 3:3 – *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”***

I’m Glad God is All Powerful!

**We Praise Him for His Power**

Next David gives …

**B. His Praise for God’s ‘Provisions’ – v.5**

***“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over”***

**1.** God Provides Rest

***“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:”***

Usually a soldier in enemy territory would be forced to gulp down a hasty meal as best he could

… while he feared of being discovered, captured or killed

However, the Lord spreads a table for His children right in the middle of the enemy’s territory and all the enemy can do is watch us as we feast on the blessings of the Lord

**2.** God Provides Remedies

***“Thou anointest my head with oil;”***

In David’s day when guests visited in a home, they were often anointed with oil to show them how much they meant to their host

It was considered an insult not to wash the feet and anoint the head of your guests (Luke 7 & Simon the Pharisee)

As we move through this life, the Lord takes many opportunities to anoint us with the oil of His grace

His goodness and blessings are all reminders that we are precious in His sight!

**3.** God Provides Rejoicing

***“my cup runneth over”***

David tells us that the Lord’s blessings in his life are so great that he has more than he can handle!

His cup is past full and has run over into the saucer!

In those days, when a guest was sitting with his host

The host would often rise and refill the cups

If the host came and only filled the cup half full,

It was the host’s way of saying – *“The evening is over, it is time for you to leave”*

If, however, the host came by and filled your cup full,

He was saying - “*I am enjoying your company and I would like for you to stay with me for a while longer*”

When the Lord filled David’s cup, He caused it to overflow

The Lord was saying - “*David, I’m enjoying your company and I hope you will continue to abide with Me!*”

Does the Lord ever fill your cup?

When He does, He is telling you that He enjoys your company and He is reminding you that He loves you greatly!

**We Praise Him for His Power**

**We Praise Him for His ‘Provisions’**

Then look at …

**C. His Praise for God’s ‘Promises’ –v.6**

***“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever”***

**1.** Help for Today

The pilgrim is assured that goodness and mercy will be his constant companions on the way home

These are the components of grace and remind us that as we travel we will always be blessed with grace sufficient to the need

**II Corinthians 12:9 –** ***“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”***

We need to know that there is nothing in life that we can face that will be greater than His ability to see us through

You see, we are following the One Who plans and knows the way we take

**Job 23:10 – *“But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”***

He also goes with us along the way to assure us of safe passage through this violent and harsh land

With Him near, there is nothing to fear!

**2.** Help for Tomorrow

David concludes this Psalm with a precious reminder that this life down here will end some day,

But that those who know the Lord will move to a new realm to live for eternity

Some people believe that David is referring to the Tabernacle in this verse

I like to think that he is looking a little farther away than that!

I think he is looking forward to a time when he will be in the presence of the Lord in Heaven

That is the destiny of every child of God today!

**John 14:2b, 3 – *“I go to prepare a place for you” “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”***

**Revelation 21:4 – *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”***

**Revelation 22:3-4 – *“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve “Him:” “And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads”***

**CONCLUSION**

Friend, do you know the Great Shepherd today?

If you do, then you can sing, with David

You know how good and how great He truly is!

You know He is worthy of your love, your faith, you praise and your devotion

What a Glorious Saviour! What a Great Shepherd!

Of course, if you do not know him today, then much of what I have said has been foreign to you

However, if you don’t know Him today, and would like to meet Him, you can

If you are tired of wandering lost and alone on the wild hills of sin, then come to Him if He is calling you today!

I sure am glad that I know the Shepherd!

I want you to know Him too!

**“WHO WE EXALT”**

**“WHAT WE EXPERIENCE”**

**“HOW WE EXPRESS IT”**