



Bible Study  
11:00 AM Bible Study

Wednesday, August 30, 2023  
Teacher: Pastor Grant McCray

## Psalms 23 Study Guide

### A. The LORD as Shepherd sustains.

#### 1. (1) A declaration and its immediate result

a. **The LORD is my shepherd:** David thought about God, the God of Israel; as he thought about his relationship with God, he made the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep. God was like a **shepherd** to David, and David was like a sheep to God.

b. **The LORD is my shepherd:** David knew this in a personal sense. He could say, "**my shepherd.**" It wasn't just that the LORD was a shepherd for others in a theoretical sense; He was a real, personal **shepherd** for David himself.

c. **I shall not want:** For David, the fact of God's shepherd-like care was the end of dissatisfied need. He said, "**I shall not want**" both as a declaration and as a decision.

#### 2. (2) How the Shepherd sustains.

a. **He makes me to lie down:** The LORD as a shepherd knew how to make David rest when he needed it, just as a literal shepherd would care for his sheep. The implication is that a sheep doesn't always know what it needs and what is best for itself, and so needs help from the shepherd.

b. **To lie down in green pastures:** The shepherd also knew the good places to make his sheep rest. He faithfully guides the sheep to **green pastures.**

c. **He leads me beside the still waters:** The shepherd knows when the sheep needs **green pastures** and knows when the sheep needs **the still waters.** The images are rich with the sense of comfort, care, and rest.



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## **B. The LORD as Shepherd leads.**

### **1. (3) Where the Shepherd leads and why?**

- a. **He restores my soul:** The tender care of the shepherd described in the previous verse had its intended effect. David's soul was restored by the figurative *green pastures* and *still waters* the shepherd brought him to.
- b. **He leads me:** The shepherd was a *guide*. The sheep didn't need to know where the green pastures or still waters were; all it needed to know was where the shepherd was. Likewise, the LORD would guide David to what he needed.
- c. **In the paths of righteousness:** The leadership of the shepherd did not only comfort and restore David; He also guides His sheep into **righteousness**. God's guidance of David had a *moral* aspect.
- d. **For His name's sake:** The shepherd guides the sheep with an overarching view to the credit and glory of the shepherd's own **name**.

### **2. (4) The gift of the Shepherd's presence.**

a. **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:** This is the first dark note in this beautiful psalm. Previously David wrote of *green pastures* and *still waters* and *paths of righteousness*. Yet when following the LORD as shepherd, one may still **walk through the valley of the shadow of death**.

b. **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:** This line from the psalm – and the psalm as a whole – has proven itself precious to many a dying saint through the ages. They have been comforted, strengthened, and warmed by the thought that the LORD would shepherd them **through the valley of the shadow of death**.

c. **I will fear no evil:** Despite every dark association with the idea of **the valley of the shadow of death**, David could resolutely say this because he was under the care of the LORD his shepherd. Even in a fearful place, the presence of the shepherd banished the **fear** of evil.



d. **Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me:** The **rod** and the **staff** were instruments used by a shepherd. The idea is of a sturdy walking stick, used to gently (as much as possible) guide the sheep and protect them from potential predators.

## C. The LORD as Host.

### 1. (5) Blessing in the presence of danger.

a. **You prepare a table before me:** Without departing from the previous picture of *the valley of the shadow of death*, David envisioned the provision and goodness given by the LORD as a host, inviting David to a rich **table** prepared for him.

b. **In the presence of my enemies:** This is a striking phrase. The goodness and care suggested by the prepared **table** is set right in the midst of **the presence of my enemies**. The host's care and concern doesn't eliminate **the presence of my enemies** but enables the experience of God's goodness and bounty even in their midst.

c. **You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over:** Despite the dangers about and the **presence of enemies**, David enjoyed the richness of his host's goodness. He was refreshed by a **head** anointed **with oil**; his **cup** was over-filled.

### 2. (6) Blessing for the future.

a. **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:** The host's care brought the **goodness and mercy** of God to David, and he lived in the faithful expectation of it continuing **all the days of his life**.

b. **And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever:** The psalm ends with the calmest assurance that he would enjoy the presence of the LORD **forever** – both in his days on this earth and beyond.