

# Psalm 23: Everyone's Favourite

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, would you turn with me this evening to the book of Psalms and Psalm 23.

The book of Psalms, Psalm 23. And we'll read that Psalm together.

Psalm 23, a Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

[ 1 : 10 ] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. As I said, we're beginning a study this evening on my favourite psalm.

And as I said to you before, the reason for studying or looking at this, at our favourite psalms, is because, well, by the response, we all seem to have our favourite psalms.

A psalm which we hold dear to us. Of course, all the psalms are precious to us because they're God's word. But as individuals who go through individual experiences and different providences that we encounter, there are certain psalms which we would consider as particularly precious to us.

Either because it has encouraged us in a difficult period in our life, or it has spoken to us powerfully, or it was used by the Lord to shape our life in a particular way.

And the psalms are precious to us. And we ought to see them as precious because they speak to our soul. And was it not John Calvin who famously called the Book of Psalms, he said in his preface, in the preface to his commentary on the Book of Psalms, Calvin said, I have been accustomed to call this book, I think, not inappropriately, an anatomy of all parts of the soul.

[ 2 : 46 ] And he says, there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious, that is not here represented as in a mirror.

And you know, Calvin's statement is so true and so telling of the experience of all of the Lord's people, that in the mirror of God's word, and especially in the Book of Psalms, we not only see who God is, but we also see who we are before a holy God.

And the Psalms present to us the anatomy of all parts of the soul. Because they have this unique ability to address every area, and every circumstance, and every feeling, and every emotion that we go through in our lives.

And this is what makes the Psalms so wonderful, that they're able to speak to our soul in a way in which no one else can. But this evening we're looking at a Psalm which speaks to everyone's soul. Because it's a Psalm which every one of us can relate to, and it's a Psalm which every one of us has found to be precious. Because out of all the 150 Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Psalm 23 is without doubt the most well-known.

[ 4 : 07 ] Millions of people the world over have memorised it, and whether they go to church or not, or they have a church connection or not, this Psalm is known by many, and it is loved by many.

I mentioned to you before that by doing this particular study, we'll always associate a Psalm with a person. Like if you think of, well, Psalm 43, Psalm 143, whatever he went.

You associate a particular Psalm with a person. And, well, that's certainly true for Psalm 23 in my experience, because every time I think about Psalm 23, I'm reminded of when I was only about 14. And when I was 14, I was in my parents' car, and I was with a friend, and my mother was driving us back to my house.

And on the way, my mother piped up with a question. The radio was broken, so she asked the question, any requests? Which Psalm do you want me to sing to you? This is to me and my friend.

[ 5 : 18 ] And just as I was about to tell my mother to be quiet and stop embarrassing me about her Christian things, my friend, as far as I know, never went to church.

Yet amazingly, in God's providence, he now lives in Heather Hill. But in that day in the car, he responded to my mother's question by saying, sing the shepherd's psalm.

And, you know, went straight through me. Sing the shepherd's psalm. He never went to church.

And yet that's what he knew. And, you know, I've never forgotten that moment.

And I reminded him of it not so long ago. But it makes me think that everyone is familiar with this psalm, even those who don't go to church.

And it's for that reason we can conclude that Psalm 23 is everyone's favourite. But I believe that the reason Psalm 23 is so well-known and so well-loved is because it's personal.

[ 6 : 18 ] It's a personal psalm. And it addresses the soul in a personal way. And that's what I'd like us to consider, first of all, about Psalm 23.

I want us to see that it opens with this personal proclamation. A personal proclamation. Because David says in verse 1, The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. David's personal proclamation, it arose out of this natural relationship which he had towards his own sheep as their shepherd.

And from there, David could see the spiritual application of the Lord's relationship towards him.

Because being a shepherd, in ancient Israel, it was considered to be one of the lowest tasks of all the family.

If the family needed a shepherd, like David was, he was the youngest son, and he was given the unpleasant job of looking after the family flock. In which the shepherd would have to nourish and guide and protect the sheep all year round.

[ 7 : 29 ] Day in, day out. And such a menial task, it begs the question, who would want to be a shepherd? Who would want to be a shepherd?

Who would want to own filthy, ignorant, disobedient, and determined sheep? Who would want to look after them all day, every day, and be out in all weathers at all times?

And yet David's personal proclamation affirms to us that that's what the Lord does with us. He takes filthy, ignorant, disobedient, and determined sheep, and he claims them as his own.

And we belong to this shepherd only because the shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. That's what we read earlier in John 10. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me. My friend, the only way we're able to make the personal proclamation of the Lord is my shepherd is because the shepherd is because the shepherd has made the personal proclamation about us.

[ 8 : 46 ] You are my sheep. And this is what David is proclaiming that he had discovered for himself. He had come to know and experience a personal relationship with the Lord.

And he had come to realise that the good shepherd knew him personally. And that's the key word in this personal proclamation.

It's the word my. The Lord is my shepherd. And Jesus says about us, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

And is that not our personal proclamation tonight? Yes, we can say it collectively as a flock of the good shepherd, but we can also say it, all of us can say it individually.

We can say it individually and apply it to ourselves personally. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

[ 9 : 52 ] And you know, this personal relationship between the sheep and the shepherd, it always reminds me of the story about the young shepherd boy who was both deaf and unable to speak.

Maybe you've heard the story before. Maybe it's, I'm sure it's been retold in different ways. But this is the one I've heard. And it was when this young shepherd boy from Wales, he was once in the Welsh Moors and he met two Christian men.

And these two men, they explained to this young boy using sign language that Jesus wanted to be his shepherd. A shepherd who would always look after him and take care of him just as he was looking after and taking care of his own sheep.

And although this young shepherd boy couldn't speak, the two men taught him to repeat the words, the Lord is my shepherd. They taught him to repeat them using his fingers.

The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. And they told him that when he always reached the fourth finger, he was to remember the importance of claiming the Lord as my shepherd. [11:11] shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. shepherd. And that's what he was told. And so the story goes that some years later, one of the Christian men, they were passing through the same village near to these moors where they met a young shepherd boy.

And when this man was in one of the local shops, the man asked the shopkeeper if he knew this young shepherd boy and wondered if he was still around and what he was doing. And it turned out that the shopkeeper was the shepherd boy's mother. And she explained that there had actually been terrible storms the previous winter and he was out in the moors with his sheep and there had been a snowdrift and he had been buried in the snowdrift and he had died. But while the mother was speaking to this man, she was saying to him that there was one thing she couldn't understand about him. And that was that when she, when they discovered her son's body in the snow, he was found holding his fourth finger. And the Christian man had to explain to the grieving mother what he had taught her son. That he had taught him to make the personal proclamation the Lord is my shepherd.

[12:40] The Lord is my shepherd. My friend, this lovely little story, it illustrates to us the personal love which the Lord has for each and every one of us.

And every time we see these words, the Lord is my shepherd, it's a personal proclamation that we do not have any other shepherd apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because he and he alone is my shepherd. My shepherd. But in this opening verse, David not only makes this personal proclamation about his shepherd, he also draws attention to the personal provision of his shepherd when he says, I shall not want.

I shall not want. And in these words, David affirms that when the Lord is his shepherd, he will not lack in any way. He will never be deprived or disadvantaged or underprivileged because he is a sheep of the good shepherd.

Of course, the world will tell you that when you make the Lord your shepherd, you're losing out. You're losing out on the fun and the entertainment or the real enjoyment of life.

[13:57] The world will tell you that when you make Jesus your shepherd, well, it's a big mistake because you're going to miss out on everything. But as you have come to discover for yourselves, they are the ones who are missing out.

Because when you make the personal proclamation, the Lord is my shepherd, you have the assurance that you will also have the personal provision of the shepherd.

And you will not be in want. You will not lack anything. Because as the Apostle Paul reminds us, that when the Lord is our shepherd, we receive every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And as we go through the psalm, David will highlight some of these blessings and the personal provision we receive in Jesus Christ. Because he says in verse 2 that when we make the personal proclamation, the Lord is my shepherd, we have the personal provision of peace.

The personal provision of peace. He says in verse 2, he makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters.

[15:11] So as David drew from his experience as a shepherd and he made the spiritual application of the Lord being his shepherd, the first provision which David highlights are the peaceful locations that the shepherd would lead his sheep.

He would lead them, as he says, into green pastures, which in the hills of Israel was this lush green area of grass that would flourish after the rainy season.

And it would be a pasture land that would provide food and nourishment for all the sheep. And the fact that David says he makes me to lie down in green pastures, it indicates that he was full.

He was full, he was satisfied. And that's what sheep do when they're full, they lie down. When they're satisfied, they lie down and they chew the cud.

And you know, that's what we have to do as sheep of the good shepherd. We have to feed upon the abundant provision of the gospel and feed upon the Lord.

[16:23] Feed upon his word. The Bible reminds us that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. So we need to feed upon the Lord.

We need to fill ourselves with the word every day. And when we do that, when we fill ourselves, when we keep eating, eat the scroll, said John in the book of Revelation.

We need to eat it. We need to fill ourselves with it. And when we do that, it'll be like us saying, as the psalmist said in Psalm 65, we surely shall be satisfied. by thy abundant grace and with the goodness of thy house in of thy holy place. But when we're filled and satisfied by the word, we have to lie down and chew the cud. We need to ponder and reflect and meditate upon what we're reading or what we're hearing and consider how we're going to apply all that in our lives. [ 17 : 25 ] It's no use hearing it. We have to live it out. We have to apply it. But we not only need to consider what we've been reading or listening to, we need to reflect upon the fact that our shepherd has led us to the still waters.

He has led us to a place of peace. It's not rough water. It's still water where there is peace. Peace in our heart. Peace with God.

peace. And it's a peace which Paul says is indescribable. You cannot describe that peace to someone who doesn't have it themselves.

Because as Paul says, it's a peace which passes all understanding. It passes all understanding. But it's when we experience that peace and those still waters that we're reminded afresh of the Lord's grace coming into our lives.

We're reminded of the glory and the wonder of the Lord being our shepherd and that he would look upon us at all. After all our waywardness and our lostness and being so far away from him.

[ 18 : 39 ] And yet when we first tasted of that life-giving stream, it quenched our every thirst and it satisfied the deep desires of our soul.

And it became in us, as Jesus says to the woman of Samaria, it became in us a well of water springing up to everlasting life. My friend, it's only our good shepherd who could make this personal provision of peace for us.

He could only do it. But what's interesting is that the good shepherd leads his sheep to the provision of peace by his voice. He doesn't drive us, he doesn't force us, he leads us by his voice.

That's also what we read in John chapter 10, when Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And when Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice, he was throwing attention to the fact that hearing the voice of Jesus is what brings peace.

That's what brings true lasting peace into our soul and into our experience. And my friend, you know that you're a sheep which belongs to the good shepherd.

[ 19 : 58 ] When you hear the word of God and your earnest desire is to obey it, you know that Jesus has claimed you as his own and he's said, you are my sheep.

When you say with the hymn writer, I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. Lay down thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast.

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad and I found in him a resting place and he has made me glad.

And what has made you glad is that he brought peace into your experience and because there is peace, you now love the voice of the good shepherd.

You love his voice because it's that voice which tenderly speaks to your soul day after day. It's what the psalmist says in Psalm 85, I'll hear what God the Lord will speak for to his folk he speaks peace.

[ 21 : 03 ] And it's that voice which makes you feel safe and secure. It's that voice which reassures you that there's shelter and protection. it's that voice which provides for your every need.

A voice that you can trust. A voice you know that you can trust. My friend when we can say the Lord is my shepherd we have the personal provision of his peace.

But we also have the personal provision of his pardon. The personal provision of his pardon. He says in verse 3 he restores my soul. He leads me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake. And in this verse David now draws our attention to the personal dealings which the Lord has with us as his sheep. And in particular David is talking about the occasion when the lost sheep was found. In which the Lord personally sought the lost sheep and provided pardon. Just like in the parable of the lost sheep where the shepherd he left the ninety-nine sheep in the field and he went after that one lost sheep.

[ 22 : 15 ] He personally sought that lost sheep and dealt with it individually. Of course that's how the Lord deals with his entire flock but when the Lord dealt with us as an individual he dealt with us at an individual level and at a personal level.

And he did that because he knows us and he knows how to deal with us and he knows what we need. Which is why David says he restores my soul.

The personal pronoun again my soul. But this phrase he restores my soul it can also be translated as he brings me to repentance.

obedience. In the sense of conversion or coming to a knowledge of our lost state and our need to be saved.

What David is saying is that we don't come to that knowledge by ourselves. He brings us to that point. He leads us to that point in our lives through all the different events and different providences that we've encountered and each and every one of them was there and put in place in our lives because the shepherd put them there.

[ 23 : 35 ] And you know when we look back maybe at our conversion or through providence in our experience when we look back and see the way in which the Lord has worked through our life we see that everything was there for a reason.

It was all there to bring us before our conversion to bring us to a knowledge of our lostness and a need of this shepherd. And I suppose to give an illustration, the illustration that's often used for us to understand the restoration of the soul it's the illustration of when a sheep has fallen over onto its back and it can't get up again.

And if a sheep is like that well I'm sure you might have seen one before they're crying and bleating and kicking its legs in this failed attempt to try and turn itself back over.

And it said that most of all I'm told I don't have sheep after a while maybe gas will collect in the stomach of the sheep and eventually it could cut off its air supply and it could die or it could starve itself if it cannot feed.

But if a shepherd sees the sheep on its back the shepherd will reassure it, the shepherd will then gently turn it over, lift it up onto its legs and hold it so that it will regain its balance.

[ 25 : 00 ] And my friend it's a beautiful picture of restoration that when we were in our lost state and still strangers to grace and to the shepherd, we came to a knowledge of our helplessness to save ourselves.

And it was then that our loving shepherd found us and he drew near to us and he reassured us of his forgiveness and he lifted us up by his mercy and he held on to us by his grace.

And in that moment he restored our soul and he began to lead us in paths of righteousness. And he did it all as David says, for his name's sake.

He did it all so that he would be glorified. And it's amazing how scripture is all connected because it's something of what Isaiah reminds us of in Isaiah 53, that we have a wonderful shepherd who restores our soul.

Isaiah says that all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. But why did he do it?

[ 26 : 14 ] And if we carry on reading through Isaiah 53, Isaiah tells us that he shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

Our good shepherd restored our soul by experiencing the anguish or the travail of his own soul. And in doing so, he gives to us a personal provision of pardon.

It's wonderful. And so when we make the personal proclamation, the Lord is my shepherd, we have the personal provision of his peace, the personal provision of his pardon.

Then in verse 4, we have the personal provision of his presence. The personal provision of his presence. And we can see that in verse 4.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

[ 27 : 20 ] And in this verse, David now brings us into new territory. The valley of the shadow of death. And the vivid description of this valley, David is seeking to emphasize that there is no other route that we can take.

Because we can't go over the valley, we can't go around the valley, we can't turn back from the valley, we all must go through the valley of the shadow of death. And by calling this the valley of the shadow of death, it gives the idea of deep darkness, in which the darkness gets deeper and deeper, and darker and darker the further you go into the valley.

Because in the valley of the shadow of death, there is no hope, no light, no life, and no peace. death is the enemy.

And even though many people try to make light of death and the reality of death, the only reality of death is that it destroys homes and it tears apart families. It brings chaos into people's lives. And all it leaves behind is nothing but sadness and heartache and sorrow. And when we're confronted with it, death casts a frightening shadow over us. death is the last enemy and it's a powerful enemy.

[ 28 : 44 ] death is the last enemy. Death is the last enemy and it's a powerful enemy.

But what David emphasizes to us here is that it's in the presence of death, he says, that the presence of the shepherd is made known. It's a wonderful thought.

In the presence of death, the presence of the shepherd is made known. And because of this personal provision of the shepherd's presence, David can say, I will fear no evil.

I will fear no evil. But did you notice the change in the way in which David speaks about the shepherd? Because he says in verses 2 and 3, he says, he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. But then he says in verse 4, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you're with me.

[ 29 : 51 ] Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. And the picture which is given of this personal shepherd is that he's no longer ahead of the sheep. He's no longer going out in front before them and leading them into green pastures and still waters.

Because when it comes to going through the valley of the shadow of death, the shepherd, he says, is walking with me by my side.

But what brings David comfort and peace is not only the presence of the shepherd in the midst of the valley. He also says, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

His rod and his staff, they bring comfort. because when he sees the shepherd beside him, he looks to his hand. The hand of the shepherd, the rod and the staff, when held in that hand.

The hand that feeds, the hand that helps. The hand that leads, the hand that guides, the hand that restores, the hand that renews, the hand that gently pushes and gently prods.

[ 31 : 01 ] The hand which protects his sheep. And you know, I love that phrase from John 10, when Jesus affirms that his flock will always have his presence because they are kept safe in his hand.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man be able to pluck them out of my hand.

It's a beautiful thought. That even in the valley of the shadow of death, the shepherd who has conquered death and the grave, he's by our side.

He's by our side and he gives to us the personal provision of his presence. But then we see the personal provision of his protection.

He says in verse 5, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

[ 32 : 11 ] The personal provision of his protection. Because in eastern countries after a difficult day's work, the shepherd would lead the sheep into a sheep fold to rest and to sleep for the night.

And the sheep fold was like a large walled pen, like a stone wall dike. But around this pen there was no gate. There was no door.

There was no door to keep the sheep in. There would be just this opening. The wall would go round and there would be this opening. The shepherd would put the sheep in and he would keep all the sheep in and keep all the wild animals out.

And he would do it, by lying across the opening. He would lie across that opening. He would be the door. And this is what Jesus was talking about when he said in John chapter 10, I am the door.

If anyone enters by me he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief, the enemy, he comes only to steal and kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.

[ 33 : 26 ] And so when David makes the statement about preparing a table in the presence of his enemies, he's drawing attention to the personal provision of protection from the divine shepherd.

That in this sheepfold, the Lord will not allow an enemy to come near the flock. He will not allow the thief to come in and steal and destroy.

because his personal provision is a provision of protection and abundant life. And you know, I was thinking that we ought to view coming to church, and especially coming to the prayer meeting, we ought to view it as a sheepfold, which is guarded by the good shepherd.

shepherd. shepherd. Because every time we are led in here to worship, we're being led into the protection of the shepherd. And it's in here that the shepherd prepares a gospel table for us to remind us of all the blessings and all the benefits and all the promises that we have in Jesus Christ. And he does it in the presence of his enemies. They're all around, they're all outside, but inside, inside there's a feeding trough prepared for the Lord's sheep to come and to feast upon his pure delight.

[ 34 : 55 ] But what's so beautiful about this imagery is that when the sheep come into the sheepfold under the protection of the shepherd, the shepherd not only feeds his sheep, but he prepares his sheep to go back out again.

He prepares them to go back out again, and he does so by anointing their head with oil. Because the shepherd, when the sheep would come in at night and they'd go into the sheepfold, and he would pour oil over their heads, the heads of his flock, in order to protect them from the heat of the sun the following day.

He would prepare them for the next day to go out, back out into the fields. And what we ought to see in this personal provision of protection, is that the shepherd protects his sheep both day and night.

Day and night he protects them. And thinking about it, it reminded me of the words of Psalm 121, a favourite of others, and we'll come to it.

But Psalm 121, it speaks about the Lord as our keeper, the Lord as our protector, because he guards us in the presence of our enemies.

[ 36 : 16 ] He guards us when we slumber and when we sleep, because he never slumbers and he never sleeps. He's always the door, watching the sheep, in the sheepfold.

And he doesn't allow, in the Psalm, Psalm 121, he doesn't allow the moon to strike us by day, by night, or even the sun to scorch us by day. He anoints our head with oil.

He keeps us from all evil. He guards our life. And when we make the personal proclamation that the Lord is my shepherd, he keeps our going out and he keeps our coming in from that time forth and even forever more.

It's no wonder that David says my cup overflows. My cup overflows, because he's so aware of the Lord's protection of him both day and night.

Day and night. He's so aware that the Lord does in us and for us far above and beyond our asking or our thinking. My friend, what a great God we have.

[ 37 : 26 ] That when we make the personal proclamation, the Lord is my shepherd. We have the personal provision of his peace, we have the personal provision of his pardon, we have the personal provision of his presence, we have the personal provision of his protection, but lastly, we have the personal provision of his promise.

The personal provision of his promise. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God. And I suppose that after reflecting upon the personal nature of the good shepherd, David is assured that he will meet his every need.

The shepherd will meet his every need because the provision of this shepherd is an abundant provision and it's all his, not because of who he is, not because of who David is, but because of who the shepherd is.

he says surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And when David says surely, he doesn't say it out of uncertainty or doubt or insecurity, he says it out of absolute certainty and surety.

[ 38 : 44 ] Goodness and mercy will follow me. They will follow me. Literally, David is saying the goodness of God, his abundant provision and his covenant love that is unbreakable, they will pursue me.

They will pursue me day after day. They will come behind me and assure me of the shepherd's provisions. And what David says here, it reveals the all-encompassing provision of the shepherd. Because throughout the psalm, David has told us that the shepherd led him, he led him to lie down in the green pastures and beside the still waters. then the shepherd walked beside him through the valley of the shadow of death.

But now he says that the shepherd follows behind him. He follows behind him with his goodness and his covenant love. And with this, David is reminding us that the personal provision of the

shepherd, it's all encompassing.

All encompassing. But even more than that, more than that, the personal provision of the shepherd is never-ending.

[ 40 : 02 ] Never-ending. Because David reminds us that the promise of the shepherd, it's not only relevant to us now in the present, but it's relevant to us all the days of our life.

This promise is not dependent upon our knowledge, it's not dependent upon our feelings or our circumstances. promises, the promise of the shepherd, it's only dependent upon the shepherd. And the shepherd doesn't change. He remains the same, which means that this promise will remain the same and it will continue to follow behind us all the days of our life, all the days, until at last the shepherd will take us home, out of the wilderness, home to be with himself.

And as I know what John saw when he was given that revelation of heaven, where he looked at the sheep of the good shepherd gathering around the throne and he said, these are the ones who have come out of the tribulation and they've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

And he says about them, they shall neither hunger any more nor thirst. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat for the lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living water and wipe away every tear from their eyes.

[ 41 : 42 ] surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever, forever.

Is it any wonder that this psalm is called or could be called everyone's favourite? Because when we make the personal proclamation that David made, the Lord is my shepherd.

We have the personal provision of his peace, the personal provision of his pardon, we have the personal provision of his presence, we have the personal provision of his protection and we have the personal provision of his promise.

so who better to follow in this life and through death than this good shepherd may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray Father in heaven we thank and praise thee that thy son is our good shepherd enable us Lord we pray to acknowledge him every day to remind ourselves that we are his sheep that we are those who have been bought back we have been redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ remind us every day that he is the one who speaks to us not only through his word but through providence and Lord that thou wouldst remind us each and every day that he is with us he is by our side that he promises to us that greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world that if the world hate you know that it hated me before it ever hated you

O Lord help us to know that every promise that is from his mouth that they are sweet that they are precious and that they are all yea and amen in Christ O undertake for us we pray as thy flock that thou wouldst add to our number that thou wouldst build us up that we O Lord would continue to follow this good shepherd all the days of our life that we would keep pressing on towards the mark of the high call of God in Christ Jesus do us good Lord we pray thee bless us and bind us together go before us as thou wouldst always do as that good shepherd continue to go before us we pray for Jesus' sake Amen We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 23 Psalm 23 the whole psalm in the Scottish Psalter page 229

[ 44 : 35 ] Psalm 23 The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie In pastures green He leadeth me The quiet waters by The whole psalm to God's praise The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie In pastures green He leadeth me The quiet waters by

My soul he hath Restore again And he to what hath made Within the paths of righteousness Him for his own in sin Yet though I warm In death's dark fill Yet will I fear the hill For thou art with me And I wrought And stand me Comfort stills My table thou Has furnished In presence Tom my close My head My head Thou do'st With oil An eye And mind Thou overflows Goodness Goodness And mercy All my life

Shall surely Follow me And in God's hands Forevermore Forevermore My dwelling Place Shall be The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen