

Psalm 23: The Shepherd Psalm

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[0 : 0 0] Well, would you turn with me this morning to the book of Psalms, the book of Psalms and Psalm 23. The book of Psalms, Psalm 23, that's page 550 if you're using the Pew Bible.

Psalm 23, page 550. And we'll just read this psalm together.

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 : 1 4] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me. All the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Now, Psalm 23 is probably, if not, the most well-known psalm in the whole Bible.

Because whether or not someone has any church connection at all, this psalm is known to many and it's loved by many. And it's a psalm which most of us, if not all of us, we've sung or read before.

Because the shepherd psalm, it's sung at almost every funeral and it's sung at many weddings. The shepherd psalm is a psalm for all occasions. And it's a psalm which is relevant to every area in our lives.

Because the shepherd psalm is a psalm which everyone can relate to. And maybe we could even go as far as to say that Psalm 23 is everyone's favourite psalm.

But I believe that the reason Psalm 23 is so well-known and so well-loved is because it's so personal. It's a personal psalm and it speaks to us in a personal way.

[2 : 2 5] And that's why we've invited people to come to church today. So that those who, as we were saying, have never been before would come and see what we do. Or those who have been to church before but have fallen out of the habit of coming would make a habit of coming.

Because our desire as a congregation within this community is that more and more people will come to know the shepherd of Psalm 23. Because the shepherd of Psalm 23 is the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And we read about him. We read about him in John chapter 10 where Jesus described himself as the good shepherd. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

And because we live in a crofting community like Barvis and Brew and Braga and Borv and all these different places. Because the shepherd analogy is one which we are very, very familiar with.

We can relate to it and we can see the importance of knowing and following the shepherd of Psalm 23. And this morning I'd just like us to walk through this shepherd psalm so that we will all see for ourselves how important it is to follow Jesus and to know Jesus as our shepherd.

[3 : 42] And there are just three things that I'd like us to see about the shepherd psalm. I'd like us to see that this psalm is a personal psalm. This psalm is a perfect psalm.

And this psalm is a promising psalm. It's a personal psalm. It's a perfect psalm. And it's a promising psalm. So let's look at this shepherd psalm.

Look and see that it's first of all a personal psalm. Look again at verse 1. He says, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

And as we can see from the title, it says a psalm of David. We can see that David is the man who wrote this psalm. And David, as a young shepherd boy growing up in the countryside of Israel, David was tasked with the role of looking after his father's flock.

David was the youngest in his family. Therefore, it was his responsibility to tend to the sheep. And as a shepherd, David's job description included providing for his sheep, providing food and water for them, and also protecting his sheep.

[4 : 47] He had to protect them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And David was always with his flock. He never left his flock. He never took his eyes off his flock.

And that was because being a shepherd in ancient Israel, it was always considered one of the lowest and menial tasks of the family. It was always the youngest son.

David was the youngest of eight. And he was given the unpleasant job of looking after the family flock. And such a lowly task, it begs the question, who would want to be a shepherd?

Who would want to be a shepherd? Because, well, forgive me if you have sheep, but we know that sheep, they're filthy. They're filthy, they're often disobedient, and they are determined in their mind.

If they want to do something, they'll do it. And so who would want to own sheep and provide and protect sheep that are filthy, disobedient, and determined? Who would want to spend 24 hours a day, seven days a week, watching over filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep?

[5 : 55] But, you know, it's on that basis that David makes this spiritual application between his relationship with his sheep and the Lord's relationship with him.

Because as a shepherd looking after filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep, David says, the Lord is my shepherd. Because I am a filthy, disobedient, determined sinner.

But what amazes David is that the Lord would make or would take a sheep like him and claim him as his own. And, you know, we might not think of ourselves as filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep.

But that's how the Bible describes us. The Bible describes us as sheep. And the Bible says to us that all we like sheep, we have gone astray. We have turned every one of us, every single one of us, we have turned to our own way.

We've all turned away from God. We've turned to do our own thing and go our own way and live our lives the way we want to live it, without Jesus as our shepherd.

[7 : 04] And because we want to go our own way and do our own thing, the Bible describes us as filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep. In other words, the Bible describes us as lost.

We are lost sheep in need of a shepherd. And I'm sure that many of us have heard of the parable of the lost sheep.

In which the shepherd, Jesus says, the shepherd had a hundred sheep and he lost one. And so the shepherd, he left the 99 in the open country and he went to look for that one lost sheep.

And he went in search for it until he found it. And when he found it, he put it on his shoulders. And he came home rejoicing. He came home rejoicing. And he told everyone, all his friends and his neighbors, to come together.

And he says, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. And Jesus says in the parable, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

[8 : 07] And what Jesus is saying to us is that we are all lost sheep in need of a shepherd. We are filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep who are in need of a good shepherd.

But the wonder of what David is saying here is that we are able to claim Jesus as our shepherd because he is willing to claim us as his sheep.

He's willing to take filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep who are lost and in need of a shepherd. He's willing to make us his own. My friend, this is the wonder of salvation, of what Jesus has done, that all we like sheep have gone astray.

We've turned every one of us to our own way, to do our own thing, to live our own lives. But it says in the Bible, the Lord laid on Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all.

Meaning that Jesus, the good shepherd, took the punishment that we deserve. Because by seeking to do our own thing, and going our own way, and living our own lives without Jesus as our shepherd, the Bible says we have broken God's law, we've lived in disobedience to the Bible, and we've sinned against God, and we've turned away from him.

[9 : 25] And yet the wonder of this personal psalm, the shepherd psalm, is that we are able to claim Jesus as our shepherd. We can say with David, the Lord is my shepherd.

Because this Jesus, whom we read of in the Bible, he took our sin upon himself. He took the punishment and the hell that we deserve for being filthy, disobedient, and determined sheep.

And yet Jesus, the good shepherd, he died in our place. He died in the place of the sheep. And the Bible says he died that we might have life. And that's what we read earlier in John chapter 10.

Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. And because Jesus laid down his life for lost, filthy, disobedient, determined, hell-deserving sheep, Jesus calls us to come to him for forgiveness of sins.

He calls us to seek him with all our heart and to trust in him with all our heart. He calls us to follow him and to commit our lives to him.

[10 : 38] And you know, the wonder of it all is that this good shepherd, he calls us to himself individually, personally, by name.

And whatever our name is, whether it's Murdo or Kathy or Callum or Mary or Kenny or Peggy or John, whatever it is, this shepherd is calling us and he's speaking to us individually and personally.

And he's calling us to come and follow him. But we have to respond. We have to respond to the call to come.

And we have to follow the good shepherd. Because it's only when we respond to the call to the good shepherd, it's only when we respond that we can truly make this personal confession and say like David, the Lord is my shepherd.

And so can you say that today? Can you say about this good shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Lord is my shepherd? And you know, David made this personal confession because he had come to know and experience a personal relationship with the Lord.

[11 : 52] He had come to realize that this good shepherd knew him personally. And that's the key word in this personal psalm, the word my. The Lord is my shepherd.

And when we confess the Lord is my shepherd, Jesus says about us, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

But you know, this personal relationship between the sheep and his shepherd, it always reminds me of the story about a young shepherd boy from Wales.

And I'm sure I've told this story before. This young shepherd boy, he was both deaf and he was unable to speak. And this young shepherd boy, he once met two Christian men who were walking in the moors of Wales.

And these two Christian men, they came up to the shepherd boy and they explained to him using sign language. They explained to him that Jesus wanted to be his shepherd.

[12 : 53] And the shepherd, they said, this shepherd, Jesus, he would be one who would always look after him. He would always take care of him. He would be protecting him all the time, just like he was protecting and caring for his own sheep.

And although this young shepherd boy couldn't speak and he couldn't hear, the two men taught him to repeat the words, The Lord is my shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. And they told him to always pause at the fourth finger. Always pause on your fourth finger and remember the importance of claiming the Lord as my shepherd.

And that when the Lord laid down his life for his sheep, they were saying to him, remember that he died for me. He is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

And the story goes that some years later, one of the Christian men who were speaking to that boy that day, they were passing through the same village and they were looking for this young shepherd boy.

[14 : 04] And this Christian, he went into one of the local shops and he asked the shopkeeper if he knew about this shepherd boy who was deaf and he was unable to speak. And they wondered if he was still around.

And it so happened that the shopkeeper was the shepherd boy's mother. And she explained that there had been a terrible storm during the previous winter. And the young boy had actually died in the moors with his sheep after being buried in a snowdrift.

But the mother of the shepherd boy said that there was one thing that they couldn't understand. The family couldn't understand what it was when they found him. And it was that when her son's body was discovered in the snow, he was discovered holding onto his fourth finger.

And the Christian man explained to the grieving mother what he had taught her son a few years previously. That he taught him to make the personal confession.

The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. And you know, it's a lovely story, although it's a sad story.

[15 : 11] But yet, it illustrates to us the personal love which the Lord has for each and every one of us. And that we need to make this shepherd our shepherd.

We need to, all of us need to make this personal confession that the Lord is my. The Lord is my shepherd.

And so we see that this psalm, it's a personal psalm. But secondly, the shepherd psalm is a perfect psalm. It's a perfect psalm.

If you read again at verse 1, David says, 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 the 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.

[16 : 09] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. And in this shepherd psalm, David not only acknowledges that the shepherd knows him, and he knows him personally when he makes that personal confession.

The Lord is my shepherd. But David also draws attention here in these verses to the perfection of the good shepherd. Not only the personal relationship, but the perfection of the good shepherd.

Because he says at the end of verse 1, I shall not want. I shall not want. And David is saying that when the Lord is his shepherd, he shall not lack in any way.

He will never be deprived or disadvantaged or underprivileged because he has confessed that he is a sheep of the good shepherd. And of course, many will tell us that when you make the Lord your shepherd, you're losing out.

Many will tell you that if you become a Christian, you're losing out on fun. You're losing out on entertainment or you're losing out on the real enjoyment of life. And maybe for you at this moment, you think, well, you have too much to do.

[17 : 23] You're too young. You have too many things to see, too many things to enjoy. You're too young to commit your life to following the Lord and make this good shepherd your shepherd.

But as this shepherd psalm reminds us, you're never too young to die. Never too young.

And yet, the shepherd psalm, it's a perfect psalm. Because the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, he affirms to us that when we trust in him, we shall not be in want.

We will never lack anything. We'll never be deprived or disadvantaged in any way. Because what David describes to us in these verses are the provisions which the shepherd gives to his sheep.

All the sheep who trust in him. And all the time, David is making all these spiritual applications between his relationship with his sheep and the Lord's relationship with him.

[18 : 24] He says in verse 2, He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. And as all shepherds know, sheep will only lie down either when they're full or they feel safe and secure.

If you go near sheep, the first thing they do is stand up and walk away. But sheep will only lie down when there's peace. And that's where the shepherd leads his flock.

That's what David is saying here. He leads them to a place of peace in green pastures and beside still waters. And you know, when we come to trust the good shepherd, that's where he will lead us.

That's where he will lead us. He will lead us to a place of peace. Where there is peace in our heart and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because when this good shepherd laid down his life for lost, filthy, disobedient, determined, hell-deserving sheep, when he laid down his life for us, he sought to bring peace and reconciliation between God and sinners.

He sought to restore this chasm, restore the relationship and bridge the chasm that separated God and mankind. And by laying down his life for us, this Jesus brought life and peace.

[19 : 50] And when we come to know this shepherd for ourselves and when we have peace in our heart and peace with God, the Bible says that this peace, the peace is a peace like no other.

And it's a peace that this world can't give to us. And it's a peace that we can't experience by meditation or anything like that because it's a peace which is indescribable.

It's a peace which passes all understanding. But it only happens when we come to know this good shepherd and confess him to be my shepherd.

When we confess him as my shepherd, we will experience that life-giving peace for ourselves. But what's interesting is that David says that when we confess the Lord is my shepherd, we not only experience peace, we also come to know his pardon.

He says in verse 3, he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. When we come to know this good shepherd as our shepherd, he brings peace and he provides pardon.

[21 : 06] And he does that by restoring our soul and leading us in paths of righteousness. And this phrase, he restores my soul, it literally means he brings me to repentance in the sense of conversion or becoming a Christian or committing our life to Jesus Christ.

He restores my soul. He brings me to repentance. And that's certainly the experience of everyone who comes to confess Jesus as their shepherd.

Because as we said, we are all like lost sheep. Like lost sheep in the parable. We've all wandered and strayed away from the Lord. But Jesus, the good shepherd, he's searching for us and he's calling us to come and to follow him.

And he searches for us and he calls us, as we said, individually and personally by name. And you know, that's how the Lord deals with each and every one of us. We may have come here today as families or as friends or maybe even as individuals.

But when the Lord speaks to us, he does so on an individual level. He speaks to us personally. At a personal level. And he speaks to our heart because he knows us.

[22 : 25] He knows our heart. He knows how to deal with us. He knows what we need. He knows what we need. And you know, the illustration that's often given for understanding the restoration of a soul and the Lord then leading us in paths of righteousness.

It's the illustration of, I'm sure you've seen it before, when sheep fall over onto their back and they're kicking their legs in the air. But if a sheep is ever left like that, now I'm not a shepherd, I'm no expert, but as far as I'm aware, it'll, well, I can expect, it'll bleat and cry and kick its legs in the air trying to right itself onto its feet.

And it's in a failed attempt. But after a few hours, gas is said to collect in the stomach of the sheep and it either eventually cuts off its blood supply or its air supply and it might lead to the sheep dying.

But if a shepherd sees the sheep and the shepherd will go over to the sheep, the sheep will start frantically kicking, but the shepherd will reassure it and then gently turn it back over onto its legs, lift it up, hold onto it so it becomes stable and then let it go in the right palm.

And you know, it's a beautiful picture of restoration. That when we are in a lost state and still a stranger to the good shepherd, we have a complete inability to save ourselves.

[23 : 52] We're on our back, kicking our legs. We cannot save ourselves. We can't get into heaven by our own merits or by our good works or by being a good person because every one of us, we've all gone astray.

But when we hear the voice of the good shepherd speaking to us in his word, just like he is today, it's then that we have to realise that we are like the struggling sheep and we need to cry out to the good shepherd that he will come to us, that he will find us in our filthiness and waywardness and disobedience and we need to plead with him to draw near to us and reassure us of his forgiveness and then lift us, turn us over and lift us up by his grace and then hold on to us, stabilise us by his mercy and then restore us and send us on in paths of righteousness.

And that's what David is saying, he will restore our soul and he will lead us in paths of righteousness. And you know, when anyone comes to know the good shepherd and confess him as my shepherd, we'll not only know his peace and his pardon, we'll also experience his presence.

We'll know his presence even in the darkest of circumstances. Because David says then in verse four, 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 know, the vivid description of this valley, it seeks to emphasise that there's no other route that can be taken. We can't go over the valley, we can't go around the valley, we can't turn back from the valley, we have to go through the valley.

[25 : 43] And by calling it the valley of the shadow of death, it gives to us an idea of the deep darkness that it holds. In which the darkness it gets deeper and deeper and darker and darker the further you go towards the valley.

And that's because death, as we all know, only too well. It's an enemy. And even though many people try and make light of death and the reality of death, and we put it as far away from ourselves as possible, we think, well, not yet.

the only reality that death actually has is that it destroys homes and it tears apart families and it brings chaos into people's lives and it leaves nothing behind it but sadness and heartache and sorrow.

And when we're confronted with it, death casts a frightening shadow over us because we can't prevent its arrival and we can't delay its visitation.

And when it comes, we're always made to realize that we are utterly helpless in its presence. We all know that death is our greatest enemy and we all know that it's a powerful enemy.

[26 : 53] But what David emphasizes to us here is that it's in the presence of death that the presence of the shepherd is made known. And because of the shepherd's presence, David says, I will fear no evil.

I will fear no evil. Now this isn't some kind of positive mental attitude in the face of death. This isn't positive thinking. Neither is it David drawing upon positive thoughts and feelings just to help them get over this awful experience.

No, David is completely assured of the shepherd's presence as he moves closer and closer towards the valley of the shadow of death.

And he only has the assurance of the shepherd's presence because he has come to know his peace and he has come to experience his pardon.

They all go together. He knows his presence because he has come to know his peace and he has come to experience his pardon. And he's come to confess the Lord is my shepherd.

[28 : 02] And you know, I love that phrase in John chapter 10. when Jesus affirms that his flock will always have his presence because they are kept safe in his hand. Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish.

Then he says, and they shall never be plucked out of my hand. And it's a beautiful picture that even in the valley of the shadow of death, the shepherd who has conquered death and the grave, this is a risen shepherd.

He is by our side. Jesus says, the thief, the enemy, he comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. But Jesus says, I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

And this is the wonder and beauty of knowing Jesus as the good shepherd. This is the wonder of knowing him for ourselves because he assures us of his presence and his protection and his pardon.

He assures us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And he's always there. He doesn't just come and go.

[29 : 18] He's always there. Just like David was always with his sheep 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is the promise. The shepherd is always with his sheep 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And you know, it always reminds me of what we were singing in Psalm 121. The beautiful Keeper Psalm. Psalm 121 speaks about the Lord as our keeper.

He's our protector. He keeps us from evil. He guards our life. And when we confess the Lord to be our shepherd, the psalmist in Psalm 121 says, he will keep our going out and our coming in.

from this time forth and even forevermore. And you know, it's no wonder David says at the end of verse 5, my cup overflows.

My cup overflows. Because he's aware of the Lord's perfection and that the Lord is able to do in us and for us far above and beyond our asking or our thinking.

[30 : 26] my cup overflows. The Lord is so good to me, he's saying. And so the shepherd psalm is a personal psalm.

It teaches us to personally confess that Jesus is our shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. But the shepherd psalm is also a perfect psalm. Because when we come to confess that the good shepherd is my shepherd, we have the provision of his peace, his pardon, and his presence.

But lastly, the shepherd psalm is a promising psalm. It's a promising psalm. Look at the last verse, verse 6. He says, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

And it's safe to say that the words of the shepherd psalm, they have encouraged many people throughout many generations. They've encouraged them when they're downcast.

They've given direction. These words have given direction to those who needed guidance. They've brought peace to those who are experiencing turmoil. They've provided assurance to those who are anxious and worried.

[31 : 41] They've given hope to those who may have no hope at all. And they've also brought comfort to those who are mourning. But you know, out of all that is written in this shepherd psalm, this verse of promise in the last verse, it brings it all to a beautiful conclusion.

Because it describes the hope for the person who trusts in the good shepherd. That their hope is that the conclusion to their life, the conclusion to their life will be that they dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

And when I say hope, I don't mean that in the sense of it might happen or it might not happen. Like we say, well I hope it doesn't rain and it might rain and it might not rain.

But the Christian's hope, the hope that the Bible speaks about, it's not a hope of uncertainty. It's a hope of absolute certainty and surety.

And that's what David is saying here when he says, surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. When David says surely, he doesn't say it out of uncertainty or doubt or insecurity.

[32 : 56] No, he says it with absolute certainty and surety. It's with surety he says that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Literally, David is saying the goodness of God and the covenant love of God that never changes towards me, these things, his goodness and mercy.

They will pursue me, they will follow after me, they will come behind me and assure me of all the shepherd's promises and they will be there for me all the days of my life.

And you know, what David says here, it reveals the all-encompassing provision of this shepherd when we come to trust him. Because throughout the psalm, David has told us that the shepherd led him.

He went before him and led him to the green pastures and by the still water. Then the shepherd walked beside him as he went through the valley of the shadow of death.

But now, he says, the shepherd follows behind him with his goodness and his mercy. He went before him, he walked beside him, he followed behind him. And with this, David is reminding us that the promise of this good shepherd, it's all-encompassing.

[34 : 09] It's all-encompassing. He's with us everywhere we go. But even more than that, the promises of this good shepherd, he says, they're never-ending.

Never-ending. David reminds us that the promises of the good shepherd are not only relevant to us now, today, but they're relevant to us all the days.

Every day, every moment of every day, they're relevant to us all the days of our life. all the days of our life. His promises of goodness and mercy and his promises of peace, as we saw, and pardon and his presence.

These promises, they're with us all the days of our life. And you know, they're not dependent upon our knowledge of the Bible or our feelings or our circumstances.

They're not dependent on these things. No, the promises of the shepherd, they're only dependent upon the shepherd. It all depends upon the shepherd. And because the shepherd never changes.

[35 : 14] Never changes in his love or his mercy or his compassion towards us. Because he never changes. His promises never change. Which means that when we confess Jesus as our shepherd, his promises will remain the same and they will continue to be all-encompassing.

They will go before us, they will go beside us, and they will follow behind us all the days of our life. all the days until at last we are brought through the shadow of the valley of the shadow of death and then Jesus takes us home to be with himself.

You know, I've always loved the illustration that's given in the book by Reverend Douglas Macmillan. Many of you may have read it.

I encourage you to read it if you've never read it before. The book is called The Lord Our Shepherd. And Douglas Macmillan, he tells the story of some of the old buttocks who used to take all the sheep off the moors and they'd walk them back through the village.

And Douglas Macmillan was from Ardnamurchan, if I can say that properly. And this is the memory he has when he was younger. He said that the men would walk out in front with their sticks and the sheep would, there would be two sheepdogs following behind.

[36 : 39] And one of the sheepdogs, he says, was called Goodness. And the other sheepdog was called Mercy. Goodness and Mercy. And Douglas Macmillan, he says that if you were to watch the sheep, sheep being what they are, they would wander and stray.

They would stray away from the road. But without even the shepherd having to whistle or turn around, goodness would run out. Goodness would run out and circle the sheep and pull it back in.

Pull it back into the flock. And then we would go a little further on and another sheep would go out, maybe even two or three, and then you'd see Mercy running out. Mercy would run out and turn the sheep back towards the flock.

And he says, that's what it's like when we come to confess the good shepherd as our shepherd. We have the promise that goodness and mercy will follow us and that we will not wander and stray from the Lord.

He will always bring us back in. And you know, we may have fears that, well, by becoming a Christian, we might think, well, I'll wander. I always am afraid that I'll stray or wander or disappoint the Lord or be unfaithful.

[37 : 51] But you know, the promise, the beautiful promise of the good shepherd is that when we keep our eyes upon him, when we keep our eyes upon the shepherd, he will not allow us to wander or to stray.

His goodness and his mercy will always pull us back into the flock. And he promises, he promises that everyone who confesses, the Lord is my shepherd.

He promises that they can also confess goodness and mercy all the days of my life shall surely follow me and that in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

But my last question is, can you make that confession yourself today? Can you say that today?

Can you say today, the Lord is my shepherd? I hope that each and every one of us will know this good shepherd for ourselves and know all the promises that he gives to us in his word.

[39 : 02] May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord our God, we give thanks for this wonderful shepherd. We give thanks that he knows us.

We give thanks that he promises to us so many good things in life. He promises his pardon and his protection and his presence and even to follow behind us, to go before us, to go beside us and to follow behind us every day.

Help us to trust in him. Help us to confess him as our shepherd. Help us to know him and to love him and to follow him and to know that he is the one who promises goodness and mercy all the days of our life and that when we depart from this world that it will be in God's house forevermore that our dwelling place shall be.

Go before us then we pray. Bless the Lord's day to us, a day for us to rest and a day for us to worship the resurrected Saviour. Do us good then we ask for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We're going to conclude by singing in that psalm, in Psalm 23. Psalm 23 in the Scottish Psalter, page 229.

[40 : 20] Psalm 23. Remind you that there's tea and coffee after the service, so you can just, if you want to stay behind, please do. You can just go straight into the hall and there'll be lovely ladies there to help you with the tea.

So please do stay behind, don't run away home. It's only 5 past 12, so there's plenty time. Psalm 23, we'll sing the whole psalm.

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. Down to the end of the psalm, to God's praise.

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.

[41 : 32] The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again.

I need to watch me within the path of righteousness.

His war, His soul may save.

Yet though my war in deaths are failed, yet will I fear not near, for Thou art with me on Thy door.

Thou art with me on Thy door. Thou art with me on Thy door. My dear love hath furnished in presence all my foes.

[43 : 22] My head thine does with Thy love and my cup overflows.

goodness and mercy and mercy all my life shall surely follow me follow me and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

shall be. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. This morning.

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