

Dig Deeper Devotional



More Than Good: The Faithful Care of the Shepherd

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for caring for me, a mere sheep. Forgive me when busyness keeps me from receiving Your rest or when fear causes me to question Your goodness. Help me trust Your character rather than measure Your faithfulness by my circumstances. Teach me to follow where You lead, recognize the blessings You have already provided, and remember that through Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, You are leading sheep to safety.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Foundation

NIV — Psalm 23:1–6

“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, 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. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

KJV — Psalm 23:1–6

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 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.”

Teaching & Insight

Psalms 23 is familiar enough that we can recite its words without fully considering what is being said. The psalm is not simply about comfort in difficult moments as it describes the faithful and the care of God throughout life. The Shepherd provides rest, restores what has been depleted, directs His sheep toward the right path, remains present through dark valleys, provides in the presence of adversity, and ultimately leads His people home.

David begins with the relationship that gives meaning to everything else: **“The LORD is my shepherd.”** His confidence is not built upon favorable circumstances. David knew hardship, conflict, failure, fear, and loss. His security rested in knowing who was leading him. That same distinction remains essential for believers today. Our confidence cannot depend upon everything going according to plan; it must rest upon the character of the Shepherd.

Verse two reminds us that His provision includes rest. Many people live with schedules so crowded that rest feels almost irresponsible. We can spend tremendous energy pursuing things that eventually prove unworthy of the time they consumed. Yet the Shepherd leads toward green pastures and quiet waters because human beings were never designed for uninterrupted productivity. Rest benefits the body, relationships, judgment, and spiritual attentiveness. Receiving appropriate rest is not laziness; it is an acknowledgment that God remains sovereign even when we stop working.

David then says, *“He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths.”* Restoration and direction belong together. Sometimes we ask God for enough strength to continue doing exactly what has exhausted us. The better prayer may be for wisdom to recognize whether we are traveling the right path. God does not simply restore us so we can become busy again. He restores us so we can faithfully follow Him. Prepares us in some ways for more challenging times.

Green pastures give way to “the darkest valley.” Psalm 23 never promises that belonging to God eliminates suffering. Believers still encounter illness, financial hardship, strained relationships, grief, uncertainty, and death. The promise is not the absence of valleys but the presence of the Shepherd within them. David's confidence rests in four words: *“You are with me.”* Fear is a normal human response to uncertainty, particularly when we confront circumstances beyond our control. Faith does not require pretending that frightening situations are harmless. Instead, faith places our fear beside a greater truth: God remains present. We may not know what tomorrow contains, but because Christ lives, tomorrow does not belong to fear. The risen Jesus has already defeated the enemy human beings fear most—death itself.

Verse five presents another remarkable image: *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”* Notice that the enemies have not disappeared. God provides while adversity remains nearby. Strength arrives for a day we thought impossible. Scripture speaks directly to us in our circumstances and offers peace. Peace settles over something that remains unresolved. Other times, blessings overflow.

Looking backward, many believers can identify such moments and say with David, “My cup overflows.” Psalm 23 concludes with a promise easily overlooked: *“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.”* The Hebrew imagery behind “follow” carries the idea of pursuit. David pictures God's goodness and covenant love actively pursuing him. We spend much of life chasing what we believe will make life good, while David reminds us that the believer is already being pursued by the goodness of God.

The greatest demonstration of that goodness is Jesus Christ. In John 10:11, Jesus declares, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”* The Shepherd of Psalm 23 did more than promise guidance. Jesus gave His life for sinners and rose again so that everyone who places faith in Him can receive forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. That is why Psalm 23 ends beyond the valley: *“I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”* The Shepherd's is leading His people home.

DEED / ACTION

This week, use Psalm 23 for a simple **Shepherd Check**.

Step 1: Rest

Identify one unnecessary demand that is consuming energy better invested elsewhere. Create intentional time for physical and spiritual rest.

Step 2: Reconsider Your Path

Ask whether your greatest investments of time and energy reflect what God considers important. If something has become disproportionately consuming, make one practical adjustment.

Step 3: Think On Your Overflow

Write down ways God has provided for you during the past year, including blessings that cannot be measured financially.

Pause & Reflect

- Have I become so busy that I struggle to receive the rest God provides?
 - Which blessings have become so familiar that I no longer recognize them as blessings?
 - How does knowing that the Shepherd is leading me toward eternity change the way I view today's circumstances?
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Hebrew Insight

טו (*Tov/Towb/Tuwb*) — “Good, pleasant, beneficial”

Throughout the Old Testament, *tov* describes what is good and consistent with God's character and purposes. Scripture's declaration that God is good is therefore not dependent upon comfortable circumstances.

Psalms 23 teaches us to trust the Shepherd because **goodness belongs to His character**. Even when the path passes through a valley, the One leading us remains good.

Greek Insight

ποιμήν (*Poimēn*) — “Shepherd; one who tends, guides, protects, and cares for a flock”

Jesus uses this word of Himself in John 10:11:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Jesus is the fullest revelation of the Shepherd's care. He does not merely guide His sheep from a distance; He gave Himself for them. Through His death and resurrection, the Good Shepherd provides what we need most—forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and eternal life.

Closing Prayer

Father,

Thank You for being my Shepherd. When I enter difficult valleys, remind me that darkness does not mean You have abandoned me. Help me recognize Your provision even before circumstances improve, and give me gratitude for blessings that familiarity has caused me to overlook. Most of all, thank You for Jesus, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for all. Because He lives, sin can be forgiven, death does not have the final word, and every journey has an eternal destination. Teach me to trust the Shepherd today and leave tomorrow faithfully in His hands.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Charge

Psalm 23 does not promise a life without exhaustion, uncertainty, adversity, or dark valleys. It promises a faithful Shepherd who provides rest, restores the weary, directs our steps, remains present in difficulty, and leads His people toward eternity.

Follow the Shepherd, recognize His provision, and remember that even when the road becomes difficult, His goodness has never stopped pursuing you.

Sources

- The Holy Bible
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
- **Mondays With Mark Video Series — LifeMark Ministries**