

Next Week's Prayers



"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Jas. 5:16

▶ Prayer Exercise

Can you think of situations or circumstances in your life where you need the safety and provision identified by David's pastoral scene in Psalm 23?

Name specific areas where you need the Lord's

Leading

Restoring

Guidance

Write your own 23rd Psalm and pray it this week.



DEVELOPING STUDENTS
OF THE BIBLE

Sunday Morning Bible Class



▶ 40 Great Prayers of the Bible

Farmerville
Church of Christ

David's Prayer to His Shepherd
Psalm 23

Prayer Study #29

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Sunday Morning Bible Class

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David's Prayer to His Shepherd

Psalm 23

Psalm 23, the shepherd's psalm, was composed by David, who himself was a shepherd in his youth:

- David was out keeping sheep when Samuel the judge came to his father Jesse's home to find a king of God's choosing (1 Sam. 16:11).
- The youngest of eight sons, David was left behind to tend sheep when his three oldest brothers went to battle. However, he occasionally visited them (17:12–20, 28).
- David used skills honed during years of shepherding to kill Goliath (17:34–37, 40–51).
- David is remembered as having been chosen by God and taken from the sheepfolds to shepherd the people of Israel (Ps. 78:70–72).

Psalm 23 reflects David's career shift. While the first four verses paint a pastoral picture, the last two have David sitting at a banquet table, most likely as king, while his enemies—those over whom God has made him triumph—look on. Having grown up in rural places, David had come to the city to exercise authority and power.

(Word in Life Study Bible)

What Can We Learn?

1. This psalm is one of the most beloved passages of the Bible, one of the crown jewels of Scripture.

2. Although it is customarily thought of as the "Shepherd Psalm," and rightly so, this psalm of David actually encompasses three distinct scenes:

- (1) the shepherd scene (vv. 1–4),
- (2) the host or banquet scene (v. 5), and
- (3) the home or heavenly scene (v. 6).

3. The shepherd motif is used here and elsewhere in the O.T. (cf. Is. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11) to characterize God.

4. It is also a marvelous foreshadowing of the "Good Shepherd," who loves the flock (v. 1; cf. John 10:11–15), feeds the flock (v. 2; cf. John 10:9; 21:15–17; Acts 20:28), tends and cares for the flock ("restores my soul," v.3; cf. Is. 40:11; John 21:15–17; 1 Pet. 5:1–4), protects the flock ("rod," v. 4; cf. John 10:11–15; Acts 20:29–32), and seeks the lost and straying sheep ("staff," v. 4; cf. Luke 15:3–7).

5. Notice "*my* shepherd ... *I* shall not want ... He maketh *me* to lie down ... he leadeth *me*." This is a "he and me" psalm. — J. Vernon McGee

Questions to Ponder

1. Look carefully at the shepherd. How exactly does he care for his sheep (vv. 1–4)?

2. "I fear no evil" (v. 4) is a bold statement. What does it mean for you to say that?

3. Enemies are prominent in the psalm prayers and appear here. Who are your enemies?

4. Why is it important to us that David chose such a pastoral scene to describe that which the Lord provided to him?

5. What is the meaning of the words, "I shall not want?"

6. The picture of "the valley of the shadow of death" is a stark one. As someone has said, the moment that gives you life begins to take it away from you. All of us are in death's valley. How does David's statement embolden you to face such a fragile life?

