

“The Only Sure Ground for Our Comfort and Contentment—Two”

Psalm 23:1-3

The LORD is my shepherd, I do not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

1. Describe the place where you find it easiest to be quiet and relax.
 - a. What is it about this place that most helps you to relax or rest?

 - b. What one or two things, if changed, would ruin this place for you?

2. Read through all of Psalm 23, but come back and focus on verses 1-3.
 - a. Sheep will not lie down if they are anxious or fearful, or if they are bothered by flies or pests, or if they are hungry.
 - i. What does it mean to “lie down” spiritually?

 - ii. What keeps people from lying down?

 - iii. What keeps **you** from lying down?

 - iv. How will the Lord make you lie down (cf. Ezekiel 34:13-15)? How can you cooperate?

 - b. Sheep are often raised in arid climates. What would it take for the sheep to have green pastureland in an arid land?
 - i. What does this say about the shepherd?

 - ii. What are the green pastures that the Lord has provided you (cf. Deut. 8:3; John 6:48-51)?

 - iii. Are you tempted by “greener grass”? What is the greener grass for you?

 - c. Why is water so important to sheep? What would be the common sources of water for sheep?
 - i. What is spiritual thirst? What are some of the sources from which people attempt to slake this thirst (cf. Jeremiah 2:13 and 17:5-6)?

 - ii. What is the water that our Shepherd gives us (cf. Isaiah 41:17 and 44:3; John 4:10)?

 - iii. Are you drinking from this water? What does that look like for you?

- d. Sheep can become “cast” or “cast down”. This happens when they lie down and, for a variety of reasons, end up on their backs unable to get up.
 - i. Can you think of some of the reasons why a sheep might become cast?
 - ii. What are some of the reasons a believer might become cast?
 - iii. What are some of the reasons you become cast?
 - iv. How does a shepherd treat a cast sheep?
 - v. How does Jesus treat you when you are cast?
 - vi. How might we be tempted to treat other believers when they become cast? How will the gospel re-orient our thinking toward them?
- e. Sheep need to be guided to different pasturelands otherwise they will overgraze and ruin the grass. Sheep are also notorious for following each other into dangerous situations.
 - i. Where does our shepherd guide us? How is this different than where we might want to go?
 - ii. How are people like sheep with respect to grazing or following?
 - iii. In what ways are you tempted to listen to the voices of the world? Whom or what are you tempted to follow?
- f. A shepherd’s reputation depended upon the health and productivity of his herd. A shepherd’s name might become associated with success or with failure as a sheep man.
 - i. For what purpose does David say the LORD shepherds him?
 - ii. How might understanding this purpose shape the vision or mission of the church?
 - iii. Do you see yourself as reflecting upon the reputation of your Lord?
 - iv. How does your heart react to the idea that your life is for God’s purposes and not your own?

3. What aspects of verses 2 and 3 most convict you? Most comfort you?