

We Have a Good Shepherd Watching Over Us

Message 5 of 5 in the series "You're in the Story"

1. God has always taken care of His people like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep.

"Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is our God. We are the people he watches over, the flock under his care." Psalm 95:6-7a (NLT)

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides 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. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23 (NIV1984)

a. Sheep need a shepherd.

- Sheep are stupid.
- Sheep are fearful.
- Sheep are defenseless.

b. We need a good shepherd because we are like sheep.

"All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own."

Isaiah 53:6a (NLT)

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Matthew 9:36 (NLT)

2. God is still taking care of His people like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep.

a. God provides for our needs. "I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet water." (Psalm 23:1a-2)

"And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe." Psalm 4:8 (NLT)

b. God restores our souls. (Psalm 23:3a)

"...Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:28-29 (NLT)

c. God guides us. "...He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:3b)

"The LORD says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.'" Psalm 32:8 (NLT)

"...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate (counselor), who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth." John 14:16-17a (NLT)

d. God comforts and protects us. "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." (Psalm 23:4)

"The LORD says, 'I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them.'"

Psalm 91:14-15 (NLT)

e. God brings us honor and blessing. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life..." (Psalm 23:5-6a)

"Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun." Psalm 37:3-6 (NLT)

- f. God will take us home to live with him forever in heaven. "...and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." (Psalm 23:6b)

"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." John 14:2-3 (NLT)

3. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who watches over us.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." John 10:11-16 (NIV)

"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!" Luke 15:4-7 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

Read the following verses from Psalm 23 and answer the following questions:

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides 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. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23 (NIV1984)

1. Why does the Bible say human beings are like sheep? (See Isaiah 53:6 & Matthew 9:36)
2. Why do we need a shepherd? What does a shepherd do?
3. What do "green pastures" and "still waters" look like in your life? Share a time when God provided for your needs.
4. How does God restore someone's soul? (see Matthew 11:28-29)
5. How have you experienced God's guidance in your life? What do you think it means for God to guide us for "His name's sake?" (see Isaiah 30:21 & John 16:13)
6. React to the following statement: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." Have you experienced God's blessings like this?
7. What do you think it will be like to dwell in the House of the Lord forever? Why don't we talk about heaven more often? (see Revelation 21:3-4)
8. Read Luke 15:4-7. How does it make you feel to know that angels threw a party in heaven when you repented and gave your life to Jesus?
9. Spend a few minutes as a group praying about whatever the Lord brought to your attention during your discussion (God's protection, provision, guidance, heaven, etc.).