

Jesus is the Shepherd

Announcements

- **Starting Point** – Sunday, April 1st, 5:00 pm at LCC, GCC and SSC.
Help get people in your small group connected in the church by inviting them to attend Starting Point.

Warm-up

What was your favorite childhood pet? What made that pet your favorite?

Word & Application

Today we're looking at a shepherd, that is, the Good Shepherd. We'll see how he can help guide us through tough times, and how we need to listen for his voice and respond when He calls.

The Bible says Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Let's look at Psalm 23, which is all about our Shepherd, the Lord.

Read Psalm 23. These verses tell us about six attributes of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

1) The Shepherd provides (v.1)

Read Philippians 4:19. God promises to supply all of our needs. However, we sometimes doubt that God will provide. Why do you think people tend to allow circumstances and thoughts to pull them away from God's love and care? What circumstances or thoughts tempt you to pull away from God's love and care?

2) The Shepherd restores (v. 2)

Green pastures are places where the sheep are lead for food and water. This represents a place of refreshing. Jesus feeds us primarily through His Word (the Bible), and He refreshes us through worship. Through the Word and worship Jesus brings us peace even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Read John 14:27. How can the Bible and worship help us through difficult circumstance?

3) The Shepherd leads us (v. 3)

Read John 10:3-5. Life presents many paths to follow and sometimes it's hard to know the right path, but Jesus knows the right one for you. The key to finding the right path is tuning in to the Shepherd's voice.

With all the noise and distractions around us, what habits have you found that help you tune out the world and tune in to Jesus' voice?

4) The Shepherd strengthens

Read 2 Timothy 4:16-17. Here the Apostle Paul was telling Timothy about a time where he was standing before a Roman judge for preaching the gospel. His life was on the line and no one stood with him except the Lord; but for Paul that was enough.

Can you share about a time when Jesus came to your aid? How does Jesus' faithfulness in the past help sustain you presently?

5) The Shepherd defends (v.5)

The rod and the staff were the tools of the Shepherd and they have many uses. In this verse, King David says that the Good Shepherd's rod and staff bring comfort because one of the primary uses of these tools was to protect the sheep – the primary purpose of the shepherd.

Read John 10:11. These verses tell us that the Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Jesus proved He will defend us all the way to the point of death. While He is fighting for us, we also see that He provides and brings us peace.

What are some benefits of allowing Jesus to fight our battles for us? How have you seen these benefits in your life?

6) The Shepherd blesses (v.6)

Growing up, you may have come to think that God judges more than He blesses, but verse 6 gives us a picture of a good and merciful God whose greatest desire is to bless us.

Read Hebrews 13:20-21. Jesus wants to give us everything good, not just some good things– but *everything* good. Tough times can make us wonder if Jesus really is willing to give us everything good.

As you consider Psalm 23, what is God saying to you? How can you get to know the Good Shepherd more intimately?

What needs do you have that you are waiting for Jesus to meet? How can we pray as a group for you?

Prayer

Take time to pray that everybody in your group would begin to develop a personal relationship with Jesus like they have never had before. Also, take time to ask everybody in your group what specific prayer requests they have and also what prayers they have had answered recently.