

Easter Trilogy – Part 2
The Good Shepherd Trilogy
Psalm 23

I. Intro

- A. Last week, began messages leading up to Easter – Easter Trilogy
- B. Last week – the prophecy of cross, the agony of cross, and the victory of the cross
- C. Today, very well-known passage, a passage that has brought comfort to countless people during times of grief and mourning; passage about the Good Shepherd – Jesus used title to refer to Himself
- D. **John 10:11 (ESV)**
¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
(just what we saw last week with cross)
- E. Last week, Psalm 22 – redeeming work of our suffering Savior
- F. Today, Psalm 23 – love and care of our Good Shepherd Savior
- G. Next week, Psalm 24 – finished work of our Glorious Savior
- H. **ALL RECITE Psalm 23**
- I. **Illustration:** Young boy memorizing Psalm 23; *The Lord is my shepherd and that's all I need to know*
- J. The trilogy of Good Shepherd today – the character, the compassion, and the comfort

II. The Shepherd's Character

- A. **v. 1** – Key to understanding all other verses; it begins with God's name, *The Lord* – personal name for God, YHWH (Yahweh), the unpronounceable name of God
- B. Hebrew name includes three tenses; *Yehi* – he will be (future); *Hove* – being or he is (present); *Hayah* – he was (past); describes God as eternal, timeless, self-sufficient One
- C. **Revelation 1:8 (ESV)**
⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
- D. **In red letters, words from Jesus Himself: Revelation 22:12–13 (ESV)**
¹²“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.
¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
- E. **[SLIDE]** When we understand who God, the Lord is, then we can understand His character – He is our Shepherd

- F. Job of shepherd extremely difficult; watch over and care for stupid animals; 24 hour/day job; it could be dangerous – life threatening; shepherd willing to give his life for these stupid animals; to be a shepherd a person really had to love doing what they did; shepherd had to be a caring, diligent, tireless person – involved great deal of sacrifice
- G. This is who Jesus is for us – He is our caring, diligent, tireless, sacrificing, Good Shepherd; because of this we, His sheep, love Him and trust Him, and will follow Him anywhere He leads, He provides all we could ever want or need
- H. [SLIDE] Our character is to reflect the character of our Good Shepherd
 - i. Difference between reputation and character; reputation – what others see and think about you; character – the person you really are when no one else is watching
 - ii. As believers/followers of Jesus Christ, both our reputation and character are to be Christ-like, they both should match up

III. The Shepherd's Compassion [SLIDE]

- A. REFER v. 2 – 4
 - i. v. 2: The Lord is the Shepherd to provides rest for our weary souls; He gives us peace – He is our peace
 - ii. v. 3: The Lord is the Shepherd who restores, who gives us guidance and direction
 - iii. v. 4: The Lord is the Shepherd who protects, who is always with us, who gives us comfort
- B. Question: Why do we need the Lord as our Shepherd? Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)
⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; ...
- C. We all are like sheep because ...
 - i. 1 – we are dependent; in this sinful, evil world we need someone who will watch after us, care for us, fight for us; we can't survive in this evil world without the Good Shepherd
 - ii. 2 – we are dumb; Gr. *stupid*; may not be intellectually stupid but we are born into this world “spiritually” stupid; sheep have to be led, they can't be forcefully driven like cattle; sheep won't drink from a running body of water because the rushing sound scares them – shepherd has to block the flow of the water so it will become “still” (*He leads me beside still waters*)
 - iii. 3 – we are delicate, our bodies are delicate and can be easily harmed, even destroyed; sheep often times would lay down and then not be able to get back up without shepherds help – in field with hot sun they could end up baking to death
 - iv. 4 – we are dirty; dirty because of sin; Isaiah 64:6 (ESV)

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment [*filthy rags*]. . . . ; **sheep are incapable of cleaning themselves – shepherd cleans them by extracting foreign objects from sheep’s wool; we can’t cleanse ourselves from sin, we are only cleansed by the blood of our Good Shepherd**

- v. **5** – we are defenseless; our Good Shepherd doesn’t lead us “over” the valley, He doesn’t lead us around the valley, He doesn’t lead us “in” the valley, but He leads us “through” the valley and is with us every step of the way

D. 23rd Psalm shows us our Lord’s character, our Lord’s compassion, and ...

IV. The Shepherd’s Comfort [SLIDE]

A. **Question:** How does our Shepherd comfort us? Two ways to mention

B. **1** – His provision; **REFER v. 5**

- i. When it came time for sheep to rest, the shepherd would go before them and prepare a safe place for them – a place of refuge
- ii. This is the “table” referred to in passage; Jesus says - John 14:2–3 (ESV)

²In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

- iii. **Whenever no still waters were available for sheep to drink from, the shepherd would keep a cup in order to provide the sheep drink; Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well - John 4:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

- iv. **With our Good Shepherd’s provision – our *cup overflows***

C. **2** - Lastly, the way our Shepherd comforts us is through his presence; His presence is with us both in this temporal life on earth, and in eternal life

- i. **Illustration:** Years ago, an explorer was able to capture the birth of a Panda for the first time on film. Which is amazing because a mother panda can become very violent if anyone comes close to their young. After the little panda cub was born, the mother did something very precious. To protect the cub from outside elements, to shelter the cub from the dangers of outside world, she spread her enormous body over her tiny cub and didn’t move for 28 straight days – didn’t eat, sleep, or even take care of mother nature’s call for herself during this whole time
- ii. This is what our Good Shepherd’s presence does for us, His omnipotent (powerful) presence “spreads” over us to protect and

**comfort us all through difficulties/struggles of life - He never leaves us
nor forsakes us**

V. Close

A. This is our Good Shepherd's character, compassion, and comfort

**B. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want* - or as the little boy in earlier
illustration memorized, *The Lord is my shepherd, that's all I need to know***