

"I AM the GOOD SHEPHERD"

Jn. 10:11-21; Ps. 23

I. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (cf. Phillip Keller: *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*)

- A. Good: fulfilling design, properly working
- B. Marks of a good shepherd (young David exemplary)
 - 1. Knows his sheep—what makes them, what are their needs, aware of individual differences
 - 2. Cares for his sheep—right diet, rest, protection
 - 3. Capable—physically fit for demanding work, courageous in crisis

II. JESUS and PSALM 23

- A. **Needs Supplied**—"I shall not want"—infinite God with ample resources
 - 1. Though some "wants" are infinite, "want" can mean actual needs
 - 2. "Jesus is all I need" constant refrain of His followers
- B. **Rest Allowed**—"lie down in green pastures"
 - 1. Green grass & in order to quietly chew cud, peaceful place
 - 2. Jesus said come unto me "all ye that labor and ye shall find rest;" Heb. 4:1-11 re "sabbath rest"
- C. **Water Available**—"beside still waters"
 - 1. Quiet water suitable for drinking—not rushing river or stagnant pond or ocean
 - 2. Jesus to woman at the well—"living water" (Jn 4:10-15)
- D. **Soul Restored**—"restoreth my soul"—cf *Hinds' Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard
 - 1. Our leaky psyches need refilling as daily stresses diminish soul-strength
 - 2. Joining Jesus in quiet places (devotions; worship services; walks in woods)
- E. **Righteousness Enabled**—"paths of righteousness"
 - 1. Way clarified and cleared for us to follow —cf. Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*
 - 2. Jesus both shows and is the way for faithful pilgrims—early call to disciples: "follow me"
- F. **Death Defeated**—"valley of the shadow of death . . . Thou art with me" deeply consoling
 - 1. Final battle, last enemy for us mortals—cf. John Lermé, a hospice doctor in Houston: *Learning from the Light: Pre-Death Experiences*
 - 2. On the Cross death overcome by death & eternal life given
- G. **Discipline Administered**—"rod and staff" comfort (i.e. strengthen)
 - 1. Reprimand and rescue often needed to save us from harm—cf. Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*, based on "Sermon on the Mount"
 - 2. Jesus corrects, chastises as needed—pruning vine
- H. **Food Prepared**—"prepareth a table before me"
 - 1. Necessary sustenance daily as well as regular festivals
 - 2. Jesus urged us to pray for "daily bread" and declared He is the Bread of Life
- I. **Dignity Affirmed**—head anointed with oil at feasts, designating worth
 - 1. Created in God's image, worthy of honor—cf. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*
 - 2. Gift of Holy Spirit enabling adoption, regeneration
- J. **Joy Afforded**—"cup runneth over" reminding of us wine at Cana—cf. Peter Kreeft: *Mystery of Joy*
 - 1. Beyond pleasure and happiness, there is joy that comes through oneness with God
 - 2. Jesus bids us to become one with Him and the Father (Jn 14:20)
- K. **Goodness Promised**—"surely goodness" to come
 - 1. Goodness includes wholeness, holiness
 - 2. Jesus, to rich young ruler: "who is good but God" (Lk 18:18-19)
- L. **Mercy Guaranteed**—"and mercy shall follow me"
 - 1. Grace and forgiveness ever needed—"forgive us our trespasses"
 - 2. Jesus stresses loving, forgiving God, unique to Christianity—Newton's "Amazing Grace"
- M. **Heaven Awaits**—"dwell in the house of the LORD forever"
 - 1. Eternity ever desired by man—cf. Don Richardson's *Eternity in Their Hearts*
 - 2. Jesus continually invites us to join Him there—Jn 14:1-3