



**The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.**

I'd like to make 4 observations of this one verse, and the implications of each observation-

**The Lord IS my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.**

**Not WILL BE** my shepherd when I get it together/ stop this sin/accomplish that

**Not WAS** my shepherd but no longer because, I haven't come to church in a while/ sleeping w/ my partner not married

He IS my Shepherd- despite what you may have done OR (watch this)... what your situation may seem like

That the Lord IS currently my Shepherd assures me: **Gods' presence is persistent, despite my circumstances or sins.**

He is still *currently* and *presently* your shepherd.....(now follow with me)-

by implication then, He is still *currently* and *presently* shepherding you.

Which means: **I am where I am because my Shepherd knows what I need**

Perhaps you needed to lose your job so that you'd remember what trust in Him really looks like

Maybe you had to go through that heartbreak to realize your identity is not in your partner but in your Creator

Maybe everything that could be going wrong is going wrong- this is not where you want to be...

But, if The Lord is your Shepherd this is the place He either brought you TO or is taking you THROUGH

Either way, He walks with you

2<sup>nd</sup> observation:

**The Lord is MY shepherd; there is nothing I lack.**

Kyle M Yates, *"We almost shudder as we realize the audacity of a man who dares claim God as his very own. And yet that is exactly what David did. And that is what we can do without the slightest hesitation, because he has made it clear to us that we are to claim him as our own, even as he claims us as his own, if we have given our hearts to him."*

The monumental blessings of this poem are NOT for everyone.

Everything hinges on that personal pronoun "*my*".

Unless He is *my* Shepherd, then the rest of the Psalm does not belong to me.

On the other hand, if He is really *my* Shepherd, I am safe/ secure.

Now, that He is MY Shepherd means that I am the....what? The sheep!

That The Lord is MY Shepherd and I His sheep means: **I am not my own therefore I am never on my own**

He owns me. I do not own myself- sheep don't own themselves.

**Psalm 100:3** Acknowledge that Yahweh is God. He made us, and we are His — His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Sheep don't own themselves- the shepherd owns them –

they have no need to worry about learning to fight lions- the shepherd fights for them.

they have no need to learn to go to work to be able to buy grass to eat- the shepherd provides.

they don't have to worry about setting up the GPS or printing out the MapQuest to reach their destination- they just follow the shepherd as He leads them.

We are not our own- That concept bothers some. To be owned by God, to not be my own.

Yet it's true, He bought us with His own life. And it's a good thing He owns us!

Sheep without a shepherd will inevitably die- their wool will grow so much it'll weight them down,  
they'll get lost, wolves will devour them.

Those who don't want to be owned by the Shepherd will likewise face destruction- sin will grow and weight their souls down, the devil will devour them, will face the wrath of God as they have to pay for their own sins since they refused the Shepherds payment

3<sup>rd</sup> observation

**The Lord is my SHEPHERD; there is nothing I lack.**

What comes to your mind when you think about God? Not what should come to mind, what actually does?

The answer is fluid depending on our current self-assessment.

What comes to mind when we think of God may vary when...

you sinned... again/ When you're afraid or uncertain/ When life's difficult/

When people are difficult/ When you've been rejected, abused or forgotten/ When you're angry

When we think of God, the titles that perhaps come to mind are Judge, King, Creator, Messiah, Savior- all of which are true. But God Himself referred to Himself in another way also.

He is described here as a Shepherd. And not only here-

Ezekiel 34 is an indictment against Israel's leaders- religious and political, they failed to lead His people well-

then God makes the statement that He himself will shepherd His people!

**Ezekiel 34:11** "For this is what the Lord God says: See, I Myself will search for My flock and look for them.

**Ezekiel 34:16** "I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.

**What others fail to do for me, and what I fail to do for myself, God has committed to do**

David knew what it took to be a shepherd; it was dangerous and demanding,

**1 Samuel 17:34-35** Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it.

the sheep are defenseless (literally have NO defense mechanism)

and there are beasts, lions and bears wanting to kill, and thieves wanting to rob

the shepherd must do for the sheep what they can't do for themselves: protect and provide

This picture of God as our Shepherd is littered throughout scripture

**Ezekiel 34:31** "You are My flock, the human flock of My pasture, and I am your God." This is the declaration of the Lord God.

**Isaiah 40:11** He protects His flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them in the fold of His garment. He gently leads those that are nursing.

But not only in the Old Testament; The New Testament echoes this imagery!

**John 10:11** tells us He's a **Good** shepherd;

**Hebrews 13:20** tells us He's a **Great** shepherd;

**1 Peter 5:4** tells us He's the **Chief** of Shepherds –

God has identified Himself in this way to us to remind us:

What others fail to do for me, and what I fail to do for myself, God has committed to do.

4<sup>th</sup> observation

**The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.**

Brad Bonhomme- "Our Shepherd meets the full spectrum of our needs:

*physical, spiritual, emotional, directional, relational, and eternal."*

**What is your greatest need?????**

Money, friendship, love, clarity, justice

If God is your shepherd and you are following His leading, don't you trust that He's guiding you in the right direction to meet your need?

There is NO THING I lack under His care.

**I am not only free from the fear of “need”- I am free from the fear of “want”**

Yet there is always a temptation to meet needs ourselves that we worry God isn't meeting.

We worry, so we TO TAKE SHORTCUTS

(SHOW SLIDES) Israeli hills- circular pathways- can't go straight up (shortcut) w/out getting hurt unless you're a goat (John 10 makes it clear you want to be a sheep not a goat)

We get hurt when we worry and take shortcuts

If we truly trust He is our shepherd and He is good, and He cares for me, what excuse do I have to worry? None

**Worry happens when I forget who God is towards me.**

**Contentment happens when I remember I am His sheep, He is my Shepherd** (\*Ray last week)

Our Shepherd is relentlessly committed to your wellbeing! It is His delight to provide for you what you need

GOD DOES NOT VIEW YOU AS A PROJECT

He's not overwhelmed, frustrated, regretful. He LOVES His sheep! He protects His sheep. He provides for His sheep.

**John 10:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> This happens because he is a hired man and doesn't care about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> “I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me, <sup>15</sup> as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father. I lay down My life for the sheep.

So, there it is, one little verse, one great treasure- **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.**

**MAIN TAKEAWAY- God committedly cares for those who come under His care** (\*WORSHIP TEAM COME UP)

In 1868 Henry Williams Baker wrote a hymn based on Psalm 23. On his deathbed it is said that his last words were that song. The first stanza, based on V1, reads:

*“The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never. I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine forever.”*

**CHALLENGE- Memorize Psalm 23** (if you haven't already)

May it be a reminder for us to follow our Good Shepherd

Stop following Goofy sheep- follow the Good Shepherd

Stop following wicked wolves- follow the Good Shepherd

Stop following lying lions- follow the Good Shepherd

Let me bring it closer to home cause some of you aren't hearing me

Stop looking for a date where the devil plays- look for the Good Shepherd to lead you to them or them to you.

Stop visiting pages full *exposed* sensuality to satisfy your *secret* sins- find comfort and contentment in the Good Shepherd who knows how your hormones are wired and has promised you will lack nothing you need.

Stop being absent minded or even absent literally from home because family is stressful- look to the Good Shepherd to give you the strength and even love you need to keep showing up.

Stop worrying over what you don't have- know the Good Shepherd provides all you need.

Bullpen-

**Matthew 25:31-33** <sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on the left.

**John 10:1-14**

“I assure you: Anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the door but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The doorkeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t recognize the voice of strangers.”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me

This psalm tells who God is in relationship to those who are His own, and who we are in relationship to Him

God IS actively involved in the lives of His children, His sheep

*The fear of "want" is one of the most disturbing fiends of the human soul. Men are everywhere fearing that they shall lack a something which they regard as vital to their interests, Godliness expels this fear from the human heart by inspiring unbounded confidence in the bountihood of heaven.*

Picture ravenous wolves and lions and bears coming to attack these helpless stupid sheep

(sheep have no defense mechanism)

He protects from real predators: sin, judgement, death.

Jesus didn’t come to die for you to simply *prove* His love for you (though it did prove it)

He died to *protect* you from the dangers you weren’t capable of overcoming!

And He can still protect because He defeated your greatest problem, sin. Death. Separation.

Jesus didn’t give His life as a gesture to *prove* His love, but as a sacrifice to *protect* His sheep

“The pearl of the book of Psalms” Kyle M Yates

“The psalm tells of darkness and enemies and mountain defiles and gorges of sorrow and distress and disappointment, but it tells also of a shepherd who walks with him, whose one purpose is to find food for his flock and to protect them from beast and robbers.”

David, whose hand, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned this psalm, knew what it was like to be in dangerous places, to rely upon God in hours of peril and hours of almost certain death. Knew what it was like to have his enemies at his heels and understood something of loneliness and isolation in the desert and the wilderness. He knew that God is good even when life is not.

God’s voice isn’t the only one calling out asking us to follow

But God’s voice is the only one that truly has our wellbeing in mind- the others are thieves and impostors who will rob us of our time, sanity, reputation, relationship with our family and/or God

Every other shepherd we’ve ever followed has left us wanting- never able to provide ALL that we needed

Relationships, drugs, drinking, money, accolades, success, vacations, etc.

God addressed even those who were supposed to care for the people on His behalf (Ezekiel 34) and ultimately concluding He Himself would shepherd them (V11)