

# Three Timeless Truths

Text: Psalm 23:1

Psalm 23:1 – *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. THE PSALM OF PSALMS

1. In the course of the centuries, this psalm has won for itself a supreme place in the religious literature of the world.
  - a. All who read it, whatever their age, race, or circumstances, find in the quiet beauty of its thoughts a range and depth of spiritual insight that both satisfies and possesses their souls.
    - (1) It belongs to that class of psalms that breathe confidence and trust in the Lord.
    - (2) Such psalms consist of a strong affirmation of faith in the loving care of the Lord.
    - (3) So here the psalmist has no preface of complaints about the pains of sickness or the treachery of enemies, but begins, as he ends, only with words of grateful acknowledgement of the never-failing goodness of the Lord.
2. This psalm has furnished green pastures and still waters to God's flock through all ages, and has spread a table in the midst of their enemies for millions of God's redeemed.
  - a. Go to the walls of martyr prisons...
  - b. Look at the records of the sainted...
  - c. Recall the echoes of Christian deathbeds...
  - d. Look back upon your own memories and associations...
    - (1) And you will find nothing more sweet, or spiritual, or tender, than this Psalm of Psalms!

3. As a song of trust, this psalm has no peer.
  - a. It is impossible to estimate its affect upon man through the centuries.
    - (1) Grief, sadness, and doubt have been driven away by this strong affirmation of faith.
    - (2) Peace, contentment, and trust have been the blessings upon those who have come to share the psalmist's sublime confidence.
      - (a) While the language is simple and the meaning clear, no one has been able to exhaust the message of the poem or improve upon its quiet beauty.
4. I cannot say anything that is new upon this text – I don't even have the desire to do so.
  - a. But, if I can remind you of some old and precious truths, and also put you in remembrance of sweet experiences that are past, this will be a very profitable subject for our consideration today.

## II. BODY

### A. "TRUTH ONE: THE LORD IS..."

1. David is the writer of this Psalm, and he wrote it in his later years, when he was king.
  - a. He had been a shepherd, and he was not ashamed of his former occupation; and this psalm is a reflection of that time.
  - b. When he had to wear a crown, he remembered the time when he had handled the shepherd's crook, and had kept watch over his father's sheep in the wilderness.
    - (1) And with that reflection, David considers how the Lord has been a shepherd to him.
    - (2) ***"The Lord is my shepherd"*** is all one phrase, but we find a timeless truth in the first three words of that sentence:

(a) **The Lord IS...**

2. The first four words of the Bible are, “In the beginning God.”
  - a. It is a declaration of the beginning and of God.
  - b. David’s first three words in this Psalm declare, “The Lord is.”
    - (1) In our so-called “enlightened” world today, the humanist wants to do away with the thought of God and say that man is the highest being.
      - (a) Perhaps that accounts for the mess we are in today!
3. The world needs to acknowledge that “The Lord Is!”
  - a. We need to understand that we have a Creator who knows more about us than we will ever know about ourselves.
  - b. We need to acknowledge Him and yield to Him.
  - c. Notice the following observation:
    - (1) Did you know that man couldn’t make a computer capable of storing the facts your brain knows unless the computer was the size of the entire earth? – ***I’m telling you, The Lord Is!***
    - (2) The Earth is just the right diameter – ***“The Lord Is!”***
    - (3) The Earth is just the right distance from the sun – ***“The Lord IS!”***
    - (4) The Moon is just the right distance from the earth to make life possible here – ***“The Lord IS!”***
    - (5) The crust of the Earth is just the right depth to support life – ***“The Lord IS!”***
    - (6) The Earth has a Hydrological Cycle providing water – ***“The Lord IS!”***
    - (7) The Earth has an Oxygen Cycle providing plant and animal life just exactly what they need – ***“The Lord IS!”***

4. The Hebrew word translated here as “LORD” is YAHWEH, and it means the following:
  - a. The Lord – **the One who causes to be or to exist.**
  - b. LORD – **the Covenant God of Israel.**
  - c. LORD – **the One who was, is, and shall be.**
  - d. LORD – **the Provider, Healer, Righteous One and Sanctifier.**
  - e. LORD – **the One who is present.**
  - f. LORD – **the One who is our banner.**
  - g. LORD – **the One who is our peace.**
    - (1) You must come to the conclusion that ***“The Lord IS!”***
      - (a) He is Alpha and Omega!
      - (b) He is the beginning and the ending!
      - (c) He is our protector, provider, redeemer, and our Savior!
  
5. The Lord IS, but what is He to you?
  - a. Is He your Lord?
  - b. Have you repented of sin and yielded your will to His?
    - (1) **The Lord is, but what does He want to be in your life?**
      - (a) He can be everything you want or need.
      - (b) He can be all I’ve already mentioned He is, and much, much more!
  
6. Peter Cartwright, the famous circuit rider and Lincoln’s opponent for election to Congress, once stayed overnight with a skeptical physician who claimed that the only reality was what the senses determined.
  - a. The physician said to him, *“Did you ever see religion?”* **“NO.”**
  - b. *“Did you ever hear religion?”* **“NO.”**
  - c. *“Did you ever smell religion?”* **“NO.”**
  - d. *“Did you ever taste religion?”* **“NO.”**
  - e. *“Did you ever feel religion?”* **“YES!”**

**(1) “Now, then,” the doctor said with apparent triumph, “I have proved, beyond a doubt, by four respectable witnesses, that religion is not seen, heard, smelled or tasted; and but one lone, solitary witness, namely feeling, has testified that it is an experimental fact. The weight of the evidence is overpowering, sir, and you must give it up.”**

7. Cartwright then said to the doctor, *“In pretending to relieve pain in the human system, you have been playing the hypocrite, and practicing a most wretched fraud on the gullibility of the people.”*
- a. To the doctor’s indignant protest Cartwright said, *“Well, sir, did you ever see pain?” “NO.”*
  - b. *“Did you ever hear a pain?” “NO.”*
  - c. *“Did you ever smell a pain?” “NO.”*
  - d. *“Did you ever taste a pain?” “NO.”*
  - e. *“Did you ever feel a pain?” “I most certainly have!”*
  - f. *“Then,” said Cartwright, “four respectable witnesses have testified that there is no such thing as pain in the human system.”*
    - (1) Taking advantage of the doctor’s discomfiture, Cartwright fell on his knees and commenced to pray.
    - (2) In a short time, the great depths of the man’s heart were broken up; and, after a brief period of anxiety and spiritual agony, he found the Lord with a shout of triumph.
    - (3) His slaves he sent at his own expense to Liberia; and he himself became a preacher of the gospel, with many souls credited to his ministry.
8. Do you believe God IS?
- a. No doubt, some people, perhaps some of you, question His existence.

- (1) Your questioning comes because you want to see Him like you see a horse or an automobile.
- (2) Your questioning comes because you have not been looking where the results of His works have been.
  - (a) If you really want to know He is, He will reveal Himself to you like He did to David.

- 9. It is a timeless truth!
  - a. The Lord IS!
  - b. Now, notice **Timeless truth number two:**

## **B. TRUTH TWO: THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

- 1. If we liken mankind to sheep, we can say that we all need a shepherd.
  - a. Some say Christianity is a crutch and God is for the weak.
    - (1) I say, **no one is wiser than when they recognize their limitation and their need to worship their creator.**
    - (2) Mankind needs a shepherd to lead, feed, and guide them spiritually.
    - (3) If this dimension of life is neglected, it will affect all of life.
- 2. David said, ***“The Lord is my Shepherd.”***
  - a. You must **first** acknowledge **He IS**, and that **He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.**
    - (1) Having acknowledged Him, follow Him as your shepherd.
      - (a) A **shepherd** is supposed to **lead** the sheep.
      - (b) **Sheep** are supposed to **follow**.
      - (c) In fact, sheep are known for their willingness to follow.

- 1) **It is in following that there is not want** – there is no lack of the things you ***need***.
3. Notice in the rest of this Psalm what the shepherd does for the sheep.
    - a. **Verse 2** – He makes them to lie down; He leads them.
    - b. **Verse 3** – He restores; He guides them.
    - c. **Verse 4** – He is with them; He comforts them.
    - d. **Verse 5** – He provides for them.
    - e. **Verse 6** – He is kind.
      - (1) Do you need any of these blessings in your life?
      - (2) They are available through the shepherding of our Lord.
  4. The Athenians used to have a race in which the runners carried lighted torches.
    - a. The victors that were crowned were those who arrived at the goal with their torches still burning.
      - (1) May you come to your goal – may you reach the end with your torch still burning!
      - (2) The highest tribute – the highest reward – that you can ever receive is to have it said of you:
        - (a) ***“He was a true, consistent man clear down to the end.”***
  5. When the Lord is your shepherd, you can run and not be weary; you can walk and not faint, because He restores your soul.
    - a. He makes you to lie down.
      - (1) You can run, and the torch of your life will have an eternal flame, because He is, and He is your shepherd!
  6. Now, notice Timeless Truth number Three...

**C. TRUTH THREE: I SHALL NOT WANT**

1. As David looked over his life, he made the observation that God had provided every need in his life.
  - a. Now, it must be understood that the word “want” is more in line with needs, and not foolish or flippant desires.
    - (1) The Hebrew word could be translated, “lack.”
    - (2) It would read, therefore, ***“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not LACK.”***
      - (a) That is the idea of the word, “want.”
      - (b) In other words, ***“I shall not want for any necessity.”***
2. Just suppose that you had been without all of life’s necessities for several days.
  - a. What would you list as your wants?
    - (1) Water, food, and shelter would, no doubt, be listed at the top.
3. Suppose you had not slept for two days, what would you want most?
  - a. You see, the point is, **wants** can be related to **needs** and **not desires**.
    - (1) David had his wants – he had his **needs** met by the Lord.
4. In 1973, our soldiers were released from Vietnam prisons.
  - a. Over and over again, you heard a testimony of these soldiers having compiled chapters and verses of the Bible.
    - (1) They would read and re-read this makeshift Bible.
    - (2) Their greatest want for reading material was not for the latest Louis L’Amour, but for the Word of God!
5. What is your want today?



- a. What is it that you need in your life?
  - (1) The Lord is capable of meeting your needs!
  - (2) But you must acknowledge, first of all, that HE IS!
    - (a) You must yield your life to Him so He can be your shepherd.
    - (b) Then He will meet your needs.

### III. CLOSE

#### A. RECAP THE THREE TIMELESS TRUTHS

1. Timeless Truth Number One:
  - a. THE LORD IS.
2. Timeless Truth Number Two:
  - a. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.
3. Timeless Truth Number Three:
  - a. I SHALL NOT WANT.

#### B. ALTAR CALL

1. I wonder this morning, is there anyone in the house who wants to allow the Lord to be what he desires to be in your life?
2. Is there someone here today who is ready to acknowledge that you need the Lord in your life?
3. Are you willing to let Him be the Lord of your life?
4. Remember, the Lord is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him, and part of that great reward that He gives to the seekers is His shepherding abilities...
  - a. If you accept Him as your Lord, He will meet all of your needs!

5. Won't you come?