**"The LORD is My Shepherd."**Psalm 23:1a

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* The sweetest sound is any language is… a man’s own name.
  + First commercial after the conclusion of the Superbowl… sells the winning team’s jersey with the star player’s name on the back.
  + In a podcast documenting the rise of Nike… they note that there are three shoe styles that matter the most in the athletic market…
    - Tennis… running… and basketball…
      * If there was one brand that best captures the idea of name and prominence in athletic shoe apparel…. It is… JORDAN.
  + Newly weds great others… have you met my wife?
  + Parents will be at parks and love to see children playing… but will especially note to others… these are mine.
* Today, we begin a nine-week sermon series through the most famous chapter in the Bible.
  + We are Psalm 23.
    - It is perhaps the most well-loved and most deeply cherished poem that unites believers.
      * Children have stuffed animals and board books with its thoughts in their cribs.
      * Ladies have these verses on hand-towels in their kitchen.
      * Men have clung to these promises in the midst of difficulties.
      * Often people ask that in the funeral services summarizing their life on earth that this passage be read and remembered.
* It begins with a bold statement of joy…
  + “LOOK who my Shepherd is!”

Reading of God’s Word

***23****A Psalm of David.*

***1*** *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

***2*** *He makes me lie down in green pastures.*

*He leads me beside still waters.*

***3*** *He restores my soul.*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness*

*for his name’s sake.*

***4*** *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*

*I will fear no evil,*

*for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff,*

*they comfort me.*

***5*** *You prepare a table before me*

*in the presence of my enemies;*

*you anoint my head with oil;*

*my cup overflows.*

***6*** *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*

*all the days of my life,*

*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord*

*forever. [[1]](#footnote-1)*

**Preaching God’s Word**

1. The LORD…
   1. The psalm begins with the personal name for God.
      1. The name “LORD” is the way God revealed himself to Abraham.
         1. And from everyone who is a child of Abraham by faith they know God by the same intimate relationship.
            1. The name changes in the OT of…

Abram to Abraham

Jacob to Israel

To show that they are set apart.

* + - 1. Now these men know the holy God in an intimate way.
         1. Illustration: Someone shared with me that the project they had been working on for months was finally shared…. And when it was presented… one person was there in the audience.

Charles Barkley… the night was holy… it was set apart… it was not like any other.

* + - * 1. Another person shared how they went to a sporting event in another state… they went for one purpose to see Messi… and that night… the lights were operational… the chairs were still riveted in their seats… only issue… no Messi.

The night was not holy… it was not set apart… it was like any other night.

* + 1. These men were changed because they were brought into a relationship with the holy ONE… the HOLY GOD… THE LORD.
  1. The same God who changed the name of the Father of the faith revealed himself by his name to Moses at the burning bush.
     1. ***3****And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”* ***4****When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”* ***5****Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”* ***6****And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. [[2]](#footnote-2)*
        1. The presence of the Holy LORD made dirt sacred.
           1. And it made limited creatures… and dirty sinners into patriarchs.

Moses rightly understood that he was in the presence of the one who emanated brilliance and radiated power.

* + 1. *13Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ”[[3]](#footnote-3)*
       1. This name communicates…
          1. Personal

This last week… 2,000 people at General Assembly… less than 100 people know me as “Jere Scott”… most call me “Jere”

This name “The LORD” is the most intimate name for God in the Bible until we say the words “Our Father” (Matt. 6).

* + - * 1. Relationship

Genesis starts by using a different name for the Holy One…

Genesis 1:1 – *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*

David Calhoun notes…

That name reflects his eternity and power… *THE LORD* reflects his love and care.

* + - 1. *Psalm 86:5 - For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,*

*abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. [[4]](#footnote-4)*

* 1. Application: Is God qualified for your trust?
     1. YES.
        1. From Abraham… He is faithful in every generation.
        2. From Moses… He is holy in every moment.
           1. Alexander Maclaren – “God lives forevermore. A flame that does not burn out; therefore, his resources are inexhaustible, his power unwearied. He needs no rest for recuperation of wasted energy. His gifts diminish not the store which he has to bestow. He gives and is none the poorer. He works and is never weary. He operates unspent; he loves and he loves forever. And through the ages, the fire burns on, unconsumed and undecayed.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. …is…
   1. Not a future… “will be”
      1. Nor a pious self-putdown…. “might be if I merit it…”
         1. BUT a confident declaration…
            1. This IS MY GOD.
   2. Bonhoeffer – “We must never forget that every word of the Holy Scripture is a quite personal message of love for us.”[[6]](#footnote-6)
      1. How do you know if this is where you are today?
         1. Matthew Henry – “The greatest abundance is but a dry pasture to a wicked man, who relishes in it only what pleases the senses; but to a godly man, who by faith tastes the goodness of God in all his enjoyments, though he has but little in the world, it is a green pasture. The Lord gives quiet and contentment in the mind, whatever the lot is.”
      2. Application: Is God trustworthy NOW?
         1. YES!
            1. Today… He is granting grace to live well under his rule and blessing this very moment.

The contentment only comes in a relationship expressed by…

1. …Shepherd.
   1. God is…
      1. Creator… he knows how you work best
      2. Potter… he can do with you what he wants
      3. Shepherd is a curious role…
         1. It is one that communicates… I will get my hands dirty.
            1. A shepherd wrote a book about Psalm 23 and expressed the idea this way…[[7]](#footnote-7)

Our mass mind (or mob instincts), our fears and timidity, our stubbornness and stupidity, our perverse habits are all parallels of profound importance.

Yet despite these adverse characteristics Christ chooses us, buys us, calls us by name, makes us His own and delights to care for us.

* + - 1. Application: What does it mean to trust GOD?
         1. It looks like being a part of HIS flock….

He knows you…

HE feeds you…

He leads you…

HE protects you.

* 1. One of the clearest pictures of pairing God’s revelation to Abraham, Moses, and David is when Jesus Christ says…
     1. ***10****The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.* ***11****I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.[[8]](#footnote-8)*
        1. Jesus is the LORD God Almighty.
           1. He is the One sent from the Father so that you could not just hear that a famous passage, but in light of the cross be able to say…

Not only is “The LORD is a Shepherd…”

But even more directly…

“The LORD is MY Shepherd.”

1. … my…
   1. In caring for sheep, the shepherd will do something to the sheep to mark it as belonging to his fold.
      1. He will take a knife and cut the ear in a distinct way with his knife (Phillip Keller).
         1. It is a permanent sign and an indelible mark.
            1. This sheep belongs to this Shepherd.

In Exodus and Deuteronomy, slaves could be set free from their service, but if they chose to say under their master there was a ceremony.

Deut. 15:17 – they would have a nail put through their ear and the relationship shifted from “slave” to “bond-servant”.

* + - 1. “Bond-servant” means it is better to live under this master than anywhere else.
    1. The mark on the sheep means it is better to live under this shepherd than anywhere else.
       1. Is God qualified for your trust?
       2. Is God trustworthy now?
       3. What does it mean to trust God?
       4. What does that mean for us?
  1. POINT: The sweetest sound in any language is…
     1. A man’s own name.
  2. Beloved, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who had your names inscribed on his nail-pierced hands.
     1. We, as his flock, then boldly say…
        1. God has revealed his name to us…
           1. And put his name on us in baptism.
     2. Therefore, we boast now and evermore…
        1. THE LORD is MY SHEPHERD.

1. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ps23.title&off=24&ctx=Lord+Is+My+Shepherd%0a~23%C2%A0A+Psalm+of+David.) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 23:title–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ex3.3&off=0&ctx=t+was+not+consumed.+~3%C2%A0And+Moses+said%2c+%E2%80%9CI) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 3:3–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ex3.13&off=0&ctx=+%E2%80%A2this+%E2%80%A2mountain.%E2%80%9D+%0a~13%C2%A0Then+Moses+said+t) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ex 3:13–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Ps86.5&off=1&ctx=+lift+up+my+soul.+%0a+~5%C2%A0+For+you%2c+O+%E2%80%A2Lord%2c) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 86:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As quoted in *The Lord of Psalm 23* by David Gibson. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. As quote in *A Sheep Remembers* by Calhoun [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Jn10.10&off=0&ctx=and+d%EF%BB%BFfind+pasture.+~10%C2%A0The+thief+comes+o) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 10:10–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)