**"He Restores My Soul"**Psalm 23:3

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* Horatius Bonar described himself as “an unhappy sheep wandering from God’s fold”[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + 1 I was a wand'ring sheep,[[2]](#footnote-2)  
    I did not love the fold;  
    I did not love my Shepherd's voice,  
    I would not be controlled.  
    I was a wayward child,  
    I did not love my home;  
    I did not love my Father's voice,  
    I loved afar to roam.
  + 2 The Shepherd sought his sheep,  
    the Father sought his child;  
    they followed me o'er vale and hill,  
    o'er deserts waste and wild:  
    they found me nigh to death,  
    famished and faint and lone;  
    they bound me with the bands of love,  
    they saved the wand'ring one.
  + 3 Jesus my Shepherd is;  
    'twas he that loved my soul,  
    'twas he that washed me in his blood,  
    'twas he that made me whole;  
    'twas he that sought the lost,  
    that found the wand'ring sheep,  
    'twas he that brought me to the fold,  
    'tis he that still doth keep.

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. [[3]](#footnote-3)*

**Preaching God’s Word**

1. …Restores…
   1. The word is a simple word that means “turn” or “return”, but it is an idea that shepherds immediately understand.[[4]](#footnote-4)
      1. When you are talking about restoring sheep it is the same thought as in Psalm 42:11 (the deer psalm panting by streams psalm).
         1. *Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
                and why are you in turmoil within me?*
      2. A “cast down” sheep is an industry term.
         1. It is when the sheep lying down in green pastures shifts its weight and rolls over on its side.
            1. Then if it kicks… it only makes the situation worse.

Now flat on its back… and absolutely unable to right itself…

The internal gases shift in the rumen making the center of gravity different internally in the sheep.

* + - 1. Often in this position… there is no strength in the limbs of even the heaviest, strongest, and most experienced sheep as the blood drains away from their extremities.
         1. Last week, we noted that sheep… by their nature tend NOT to lie down….

Why?[[5]](#footnote-5)

#1 – timidity by nature

#2 – the friction with the flock

#3 – flies and parasites

#4 – need food

* + - * 1. A “cast down” sheep now…

Has good reason to fret… internally dying

The other sheep in the flock are absolutely powerless to change the situation

Can’t eat or drink in that position…

Shepherds not that sheep in this position are not necessarily “bleating” in agony…

Because there are always those watching to see a sheep close to death or in this position…

Buzzards… vultures… dogs… coyotes… and cougars…

David describes his job to king Saul as defending a flock from a lion and a bear (1 Sam. 17:34).

* 1. There are a few reasons sheep find themselves in that position…
     1. #1 - Love of comfort
        1. Ironically… it is in the provision of a good shepherd that the sheep amid “green pastures” that the sheep can become cast.
     2. #2 – too much wool
        1. The external wool of the sheep can be covered in dirt… manure… ticks… burrs… lop-sided weight
     3. #3 – too much weight
        1. It could be the very reason the sheep is heavy is why the sheep is so well regarded… meaning… she is carrying ewes… she is pregnant.
           1. The ewes throw off the internal center of balance…

And if this sheep dies… it is a much greater lose.

* 1. Application:
     1. Human sheep can become “cast down”.
        1. But what is wonderful about this verse is how it is stated…
           1. In Psalm 42:11, we read…

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
    and why are you in turmoil within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
    my salvation and my God.*

In that verse… there is good “self-talk” (Lloyd-Jones)

* + - * 1. Tell yourself the right things.

Or to say it another way… here are the things I should do… I should “Hope in GOD”.

* + - 1. Here the tense of the verse is stating a FACT.
         1. It is not just that there is a NEED to be restored…

Even more… there is a declaration… that

He restores (ESV, NRSV)… or refreshes (NIV)

He is actively doing it now.

* + 1. POINT: God’s sheep say… I can’t restore myself…
  1. Transition… this the something that the sheep can’t do for itself.

1. He…
   1. The vultures are circling… the sky looks like the predators are about to descend…
      1. BUT there is also another one looking for the “cast” sheep.
         1. The Good Shepherd goes looking for his lost one and leave the 99…. Until he finds it.
            1. What will the shepherd do when he finds his sheep in that positon?

Slowly roll it back as the gases in the rumen have time to adjust.

Then… stand the sheep up… but due to poor circulation… the shepherd will have to position the sheep between his legs… bend over and massage the blood flow back down so that the sheep can balance.

* + - 1. When sheep are pregnant… this can be a daily… daily… occurrence.
         1. As the shepherd restores the sheep… he speaks.

What is his tone?

Jesus said in Luke 15…

***5****And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.****6****And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’*

* 1. The LORD in this passage (psalm 23) is revealed as the Good Shepherd who shows constant care.
     1. One summary…
        1. He seeks out…
        2. He sets right…
        3. And he speaks.
           1. Jesus said…

John 10 - ***27****My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.****28****I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.****29****My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.****30****I and the Father are one.”*

* + 1. Spurgeon[[6]](#footnote-6) -
       1. For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. (Ezekiel 34:11)
       2. This He does at the first when His elect are like wandering sheep that know not the Shepherd or the fold. How wonderfully doth the Lord find out His chosen! Jesus is great as a seeking Shepherd as well as a saving Shepherd. Though many of those His Father gave Him have gone as near to hell-gate as they well can, yet the Lord by searching and seeking discovers them and draws nigh to them in grace. He has sought out us: let us have good hope for those who are laid upon our hearts in prayer, for He will find them out also.
       3. The Lord repeats this process when any of His flock stray from the pastures of truth and holiness. They may fall into gross error, sad sin, and grievous hardness; but yet the Lord, who has become a surety for them to His Father, will not suffer one of them to go so far as to perish. He will by providence and grace pursue them into foreign lands, into abodes of poverty, into dens of obscurity, into depths of despair; He will not lose one of all that the Father has given Him. It is a point of honor with Jesus to seek and to save all the flock, without a single exception. What a promise to plead, if at this hour I am compelled to cry, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep!"
  1. POINT: God’s sheep say… The LORD knows what he is doing with me… even within me.

1. … my soul.
   1. He restores could mean…[[7]](#footnote-7)
      1. #1 – he brings me back in line… the straying sheep is brought back in line
         1. Isaiah 49:5 - *And now the Lord says,  
                he who formed me from the womb to be his servant,  
            to bring Jacob back to him;  
                and that Israel might be gathered to him—  
            for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord,  
                and my God has become my strength—*
            1. MEANING - He retrieved me.
      2. #2 – he did more than refreshment… he spiritually renewed me… the sheep is brought back to life
         1. Psalm 19:7 - *The law of the Lord is perfect,  
                reviving the soul;*
            1. MEANING – He revived me.
   2. By using the word “soul” (נֶפֶשׁ) it is referring to the inner part of man.
      1. For instance,… the way a shepherd often restores a shepherd is by seeking it out… setting it up right… speaking to it... THEN…
         1. Sheering it…
            1. Trimming the wool… removing the external dirt… burrs… pests…

Difficult process for both sheep and shepherd.

* + 1. But by saying “he restores my soul”… the Word of God reveals…
       1. The depth of man’s need
       2. And the deep grace of the LORD’s care.[[8]](#footnote-8)
  1. Our Shepherd changes our heart to believe upon him
     1. Fretting sheep
        1. We were dark in our understanding… he enlightened
     2. Frustrated sheep
        1. We had hearts of stone… he gave us hearts of flesh.
     3. Forlorn sheep
        1. We had stubborn wills… he determined to do us good
     4. Forgotten sheep
        1. We could not help ourselves and no other person, nor distraction… nor hobby could have helped… He effectually draws.
  2. Pause: Beloved, if you are “cast down” don’t listen to the voices of the Evil One…
     1. He wants you to think that you are not a sheep… he wants you to consider yourself as a “goat” (Matt. 25).
     2. TODAY… your Good Shepherd is seeking you out in love.
        1. Today, your Shepherd is protecting you from predators.
           1. Today, your Shepherd is setting you on the path to his home.
  3. Beloved… your Good Shepherd laid down his life for us when we were lost sinners…
     1. And He sends for his Holy Spirit to restore us when we are wandering Christians.
        1. While a sheep may be sheered of his heavy coat…
           1. The Beloved of God remember to

Eph. 4:22ff - ***22****to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,****23****and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,****24****and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

* 1. For our Good Shepherd constantly cares for His Flock…
     1. Therefore, we say…
        1. *He restores my soul.*

1. As noted in *The Lord of Psalm 23* by David Gibson. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://hymnary.org/text/i\_was\_a\_wandering\_sheep [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [*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-3)
4. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23, 35.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/a-time-of-finding-for-lost-sheep/#flipbook/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Derek Kinder, *Psalm 1-72*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. WCF X.1. - All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)