



31 January 2025

## On being a sheep

God's people are frequently called His sheep, His flock in the Bible, and so then, He is our Shepherd.

When God spoke through Ezekiel about the restoration of Israel He said,

“Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and look after them. As a shepherd cares for his flock on a day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day” (34:11-12).



The Psalm writer sang to God “we are His people and the sheep of His pasture” (100:3). And so king David sang “The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1). Jesus declared

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep ... I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice; and they will become one flock, with one shepherd” (John 10:11, 14-16).

Let's take a few moments to reflect on being sheep, on being God's sheep through Jesus Christ. In particular, let's consider very briefly some of the many benefits of being God's sheep.

First of all, remember that Jesus is the *good* Shepherd. All that He does is both good for and to us. His will for us is good, acceptable and perfect, as the apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapter 12. As well He is the *great* Shepherd who provided for our salvation (Hebrews 13:20). Jesus also is the *chief* Shepherd who will give believers “the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4.)

Then take note of the benefits that king David stated in Psalm 23.

- First, God as our Shepherd provides for our needs. He gives us nourishment, rest, refreshing, restoration and guidance (verses 1-2). So, as His sheep we are, as David wrote in Psalm 34, to “Taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

(8). As we do this God says through David we “will not lack any good thing” (10). Our Shepherd will give us all the good things He has in store for us, even in the driest desert experiences of our life as He keeps us on the right, the righteous path. The apostle Paul understood this, experienced this, and wrote, “God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

- Then, God protects us in danger as He goes with us in the darkest and most dangerous times, frees us from fear and gives us victory over our enemies (verses 4-5). King David testified of God being with him even in the “valley of the shadow of death.” The *darkest darkness* he speaks of is not just death. For example, I cannot imagine what it is like to live in the darkness of Alzheimer’s, not being able to recognize anyone, not being able to communicate, not being able to remember. Even in the darkest darkness our Shepherd is with us. Our Shepherd gives us victory over our enemies, victory over “the world forces of this darkness, ... the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).
- As well, God pours out His love to us always, forever. He pursues us with goodness and lovingkindness and promises His presence and fellowship forever (verse 6). Don’t you love the closing lines of this Psalm, “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”?

We are God’s sheep. He is our Shepherd. Are you glad to be a sheep? We know that some children are not that excited to play a sheep in a Christmas program. They would much rather be a shepherd, wise man, Joseph or Mary. At times we may not be happy about being sheep. But when we get even a glimpse at the benefits of being God’s sheep we should shout with joy. We should join the chorus of Psalm 100,

“Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the LORD Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”

Pastor Lyle