

Psalm 23

*Read Responsively; Congregation reads **highlighted words**.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

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.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 23:

- **Comfort**
- **Connection**
- **Confrontation**

Comfort → Not in the manner we expect or might prefer

Connection → Who God is (to us) has implications for who we are and how we end up.

Confrontation → Do I/we really know God (the real God)?

1) The **order** matters: start with the **real God**.

We start what **we** 'want' and then believe God's job is to help us get what **we** want.

What if ... we are believing in the wrong (unreal) g/God???

Symptoms Your God Might Not Be Real:

- If you and God **agree** on everything ...
- If God should **answer** every prayer you pray your way ...
- If God can be **controlled** ("religion"; my "beliefs") ...
- If God can never **surprise, overwhelm or astonish us** ...

2) God has **Name** (and it is not 'God') → **Yahweh**.

- What you call someone matters and says a lot about your relationship.

Exodus 3:13-14

Then 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?” ¹⁴ God 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.’”

Exodus 3:2-3

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”

I am Who I Am // Burning Bush:

- The fire does not need fuel → God is His own source
- God is independent, self-existent, & self-sufficient

God is a being Who cannot be.

→ We are always concerned about our ‘being’

God's being sustains His being

→ We need things to sustain our being.

God is Who He is (eternally)

→ We are who we have ... been born, become, etc.

Exodus 20:3 (1st Commandment)

You shall have no other gods before Me.

Wrong Approaches:

- a) Practical religion/faith (advice, help, effective)
→ *If God is not the fountain, do not trust the water!*

Wrong Approaches:

- b) Formula religion → *If I, then God will ...*
(Good person + Religious Stuff) – Sin = Blessing

3) Yahweh wants a personal and particular type of relationship with us:

- My
- Shepherd

1st of 3 Great Confessions in Psalm 23:

I SHALL NOT WANT

- Declaration: based on right knowledge of the real God
- Decision: find “no lack” with Yahweh alone

- NEW REALITY: *with the real God life* → His Kingdom!

Psalm 23:1-3

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.

The Paths of Psalm 23:

- It's not my path but God's
- It's not my name, but His

3 Steps Forward:

1. Choose **consent over control**.
2. Forsake **complaining**
3. Make **proximity** to Yahweh the **measure** of your life