

## **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?” <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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 (1<sup>st</sup> 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

### **1<sup>st</sup> 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