

Yahweh Rohi

The Lord is My Shepherd

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I 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 have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

“I shall not want...” -- Because Jesus leads me, I have everything I need.

- Tranquil setting with vast green pastures and purple mountains in the background...
- Tall leafy trees sway in the gentle breeze...
- You can hear the water trickle over the rocks in the clear, fresh stream below...
- Fluffy, white, fat sheep graze, and nap under the sun while the Shepherd looks on from above...
- Pleasant, Peaceful, and Carefree...

But there's something wrong with this picture...

- This carefree, fantasy utopia looks nothing like my life...
- Take a look around at your life and the lives of your family, friends, and fellow-believers...
 - Is everyone at COTC and in our Life Groups at ease, kicked back, eating, drinking, carefree, happy, content, and peaceful??

What if David meant to convey something different than what our 21st Century minds assume about this beloved Psalm? What if we're missing the real point?

“He makes me lie down”

- Herding sheep is not easy

Ezekiel 34:4-6

“Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. ⁵ They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. ⁶ My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.””

¹¹ For thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day... I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord God. ¹⁶ “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick...”

Lost * Scattered * Broken * Bruised * Battered * Sick * Hurting * Wounded * Confused * Afraid * Disoriented *
Naïve * Alone * Exhausted * Abandoned * Defenseless * Starving * Weakened
Not the fat, fluffy, white sheep we envisioned on the utopian hillside...

The picture here is not one of a perfect, carefree, lavish life...
It's a gathering of the broken and beat-down of this world – in a place they have a chance -- maybe for the first time -- to rest, breathe, to eat, to begin the long road to recovery ...

The only reason this ragged herd of misfit sheep are there, is because of the tireless and unwavering will of a Shepherd who will not stop...who will not leave them out there, alone to be destroyed...

Luke 15:4-6

"What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ 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 which was lost!'

Isaiah 53:6 "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way..."

- **You** are only here because *Yahweh Rohi* stopped at nothing to find you, and bring you home...
- "He makes me lie down"
 - Sheep limp off again and again, and get lost...trying to figure out their own way...wondering "how did we get in this mess...we've got to find a way to lick our wounds... pull it together..."
 - **My Shepherd**, comes again and again to find me...He promised "I will never forsake you..."
 - Still, Yahweh Rohi comes for us; He knows the hurt and brokenness...He knows the healing we need...even when we resist it...even when we resist Him...

"He restores my soul"

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep..."

Psalms 103:14 "He knows how weak we are..."

Psalms 44:21 "He knows the secrets of every heart..."

Psalms 94:11 "He knows every thought..."

Psalms 56:8 "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book."

"I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...You are with me"

Psalms 119:176 "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant..."

Right now you may be losing a war...maybe you're battling a pornography addiction, or homosexuality, alcoholism, adultery, materialism or an unruly tongue...Maybe like David you have grown weary, and now you have come to the point where you feel absolutely helpless. The enemy is pounding you with despair, fear and lies. Perhaps you have entertained thoughts of suicide...Maybe you have been a devoted believer...experienced the deeper things of God...ministered to others mightily...yet right now, you are going through the *dark night of the soul* that no one could even imagine...Perhaps now is by far the most terrible trial you have ever experienced...I urge you: Do not give into despair! Every true follower of Jesus eventually goes through (a form) of what you are experiencing... The worst thing you can do right now is stop turning to the Lord...stop going to His House...stop having fellowship with other believers...Your Shepherd will always come for you..."

- David Wilkerson, *Knowing God by Name*