



Tracts from Kingdom-Word Ministries

THE LORD — IS MY — SHEPHERD

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If you were born of Christian parents or you grew up in a Christian environment, you most probably learnt Psalm 23 by heart as a child. But if for any reason you do not know it, I recommend you drop this tract for a moment while you check it out too.

“The Lord is my shepherd...”

There is a sense I believe the Lord wants us to get there that a lot of us have not yet grasped. That sense is illustrated by a story I read sometime ago from a book by R. W. Shambach. In it he told the story of a child that was told to recite the 23rd Psalm and she started it this way: “The Lord is my shepherd; that is all I want.”

The young girl missed the letters but got the spirit. Remember that Jesus said, “the words that I speak carry a spirit that impart life.”

That is all I want!

Why?

It is because the whole of that psalm is summed up in that first line. It is a complete package tagged "The Lord is my Shepherd". Everything else is contained in the box.

Once the Lord is your shepherd, then anything else that you may require in life is an automatic addition to you because it is already in the package you have acquired. Your striving in life therefore should be to ensure that the Lord is really your shepherd.

When He is your shepherd, you will not lack anything, all you will eat, drink and wear will be added unto you. You will, without your planning it, find yourself in the right place at the right time. You will find out that you are always at peace, no hypertension, no anxiety. Your soul will so continually be restored. Look, even when buildings are collapsing and robbers are raging and shots are flying, the protective arm of God will be over you. He has said 'as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so does the Lord surround His people' and 'the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them'.

Again, when the Lord is your shepherd, you will constantly make good progress no matter who

they are that are plotting against you. This is the meaning of "thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies".

All these and more are natural additions to your life when you can boldly and truthfully say "the Lord is my shepherd".

The Lord is my shepherd.

So, what does it really mean?

Now, let me give you a background gist: Most of us are familiar with the sight or pictures of shepherds driving their flock with long staves from behind, but in the context in which the Psalms were written and in which Jesus lived, it was not so. The shepherds there would go in front and the sheep would follow the sound of their voices. This is why Jesus said "My sheep know My voice... and they follow me." He did not say "My sheep know my staff and they respond to the cracking of it on their backs."

The Lord is my shepherd means I know His voice and I follow it. Having the Lord as your shepherd means doing only the will of God in your life, doing what is pleasing in the sight of

God continually. It is another way of saying Jesus is Lord in truth.

You see, a lot of people followed Jesus about and enjoyed calling him Lord, just like today in which it seems going to church is in vogue; a time came that He cautioned them that it was not a case of following Him about or the title by which they addressed Him but that the issue was in "doing the things that I say".

If the Lord is your shepherd, His word will not be mere religion to you, but you will take your life and build every aspect of it on that word: How you do your business, how you relate to your job, your relationship with your wife, your husband; in everything you will be careful to do only those things that are pleasing to him. He has said:

I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

You see, as I mentioned earlier, the whole of the blessings enumerated in Psalm 23 are in a single package and the introduction to it is called 'the Lord is my shepherd'. Now, if you think you can reach for just any one of the blessings in the package without the first line, you are making a big mistake. Do you understand now why a lot of people spend so much time attending churches,

crusades, miracle-explosion meetings, prayer meetings etc, looking for one miracle or another and not get it? Look, the Bible never said 'I attend many church services, I shall not want.' Neither does it say, 'I give a lot of offering, I shall not want!' Rather, it makes it abundantly clear that my abundant provisions are tied to the fact that the Lord is my shepherd and I do what is pleasing in His sight!

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you."

If you are a good student of the Bible, you will know that the sustenance that Jesus experienced during his days on the earth was based on this 23rd Psalm principle. This is why you frequently read such statements from his mouth as:

"I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

"I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught me."

"For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent me has given me commandment, what to say and what to speak."

"We must work the works of Him who sent me, as long as it is day..."

Hear this O Child of God! It is who you obey that will take the responsibility for your sustenance.

“Thou shall serve the Lord thy God and He shall bless your bread and your water.”

Running your business like an unbeliever and then anointing the premises with oil won't cut it; you are only trying to divide up this Psalm in question into various parts, and that will not happen.

What God has joined together, let no man (even attempt) to put asunder.

Among many things that we Christians have tried in this life, we have tried to join together what God has not. We have tried to join participation in church activities with blessings, or join large offerings with abundant prosperity. Sorry! It doesn't work that way. This is the reason why people get disappointed after many years of so called service to God; they have worked but got nothing. No, it wasn't God's fault; they were serving God their own way (or maybe their Pastor's way). God is not committed to rewarding that.

This is true service to God:

"...I do ALWAYS the things that are pleasing in His sight."

"...you shall diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments..."

Another thing; when you come to God, it must not be for the blessings, but so as to know Him and be subject to Him. It is after 'sheeping' yourself under His 'shepherdship' that blessings follow.

...he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

God does not sell His blessings. You cannot come to church to pray just to get them. You come to learn of Him, to know Him better, so that you may walk in a manner pleasing to Him. When you have so learnt and are so walking, then the blessings start to flow.

All the running up and down you do in search of prayer for breakthrough, job, money, health, etc is not the perfect plan of God for you. The assignment God has given you is this:

“...take My yoke upon you and learn of Me...”

You should labour to know God better, struggle to learn what is pleasing to Him, then all these things you have been struggling for years to get will drop into your laps when you least expect them.

The Lord is my shepherd.

You cannot follow the voice of your village traditions and expect the blessings reserved for God's sheep. Neither can you follow the voice of societal expectations and then experience His blessings. It is His sheep that are following His voice that will find green pastures; they are the ones that will find the banks of peaceful waters. God's word must be superior to all other competing forces in your life. All the other voices that you are following cannot provide for you, they cannot deliver you in the time of trouble. After you might have satisfied your tribal and village customs in the choice of a wife or husband, please remember to pray to them for the blessings of good children, peace in the home and enduring marital joy. Stop trying to mock God; He cannot bless a brazen disregard for His standards by those who claim to be His children.

Read this:

"I will destine you for the sword...because I called but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not hear, and you did evil in My sight, and chose that in which I did not delight." Is 65:12

Pleasing God must be your first objective in any choice you have to make. Stop making your choices with material benefits as the first consideration; choosing a carrier or a job must be first with a sense of destiny and divine calling. Do you not know that money is the major way that the Devil baits people away from the place God prepared for them? The place of destiny will usually not look initially as prosperous as the place of eventual destruction. Remember that Lot chose to go towards Sodom for this same reason and eventually left Sodom with nothing!

Let us leave the issue of blessing aside for a moment. Do you not realize that you have no right to do anything except what pleases the Lord? If you are a Christian, that means that you are a believer in Jesus, and you are not your own but you belong to Him! It is spiritual adultery to obey any other voice than the voice of God's word, and He has said that He is a jealous husband. We have been warned that "it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God". For your own safety, please obey Him.

In summary, my message to you today is that you need to be careful to do and to choose only the things that are pleasing to God in your life, and "all other things shall be added unto you".

For you who have been asking for God's blessings all this while but have not yet committed your life to obeying Him, I'll like to invite you at this time to make that absolutely necessary commitment. You have to give your whole life to Christ. He desires to forgive you of all your sins and to give you a new life that will be lived in obedience to Him. God indeed loves you and does not wish you to perish in your disobedience to Him. Repent today and be saved and blessed in Jesus' name.

If you are ready to make a commitment to obeying Jesus, please say this prayer with me:

"Lord Jesus, I come to you in total surrender to your sovereignty.

"I admit that I have been leaving a life of disobedience to you,

"I ask for your forgiveness today,

"Wash me and help me to stay clean and always in touch with you.

"Thank you Lord for saving me

"In Jesus name, Amen."