

John Wolf

Psalms 23

Title: Following the Lord

7.5 Hours

FCF: We are often worried about the uncertain directions in life.

Proposition: Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him.

- I. Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him as your leader. (1-4)
 - A. God desires that your attention and contentment be in his care. (1)
 - 1. God must be the shepherd and driver of your life. (1a)
 - 2. You must not crave or desire anything more than God's will. (1b)
 - B. God desires that you receive blessings by following him. (2-3)
 - 1. The first blessing that God promises you when you follow him is spiritual nourishment. (2a)
 - 2. The second blessing that God promises you when you follow him is spiritual restoration. (2b-3a)
 - 3. The third blessing that God promises you when you follow him is spiritual guidance. (3b)
 - C. God promises to protect you when who follow him. (4)
 - 1. You will not fear danger and death when you fear the Lord. (4a)
 - 2. You who meditate on God's word will find comfort in a day of endless religions & philosophies. (4b)
 - 3. You who follow God will be assured that he will guide you into all truth and out of harm. (4c)

- II. Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him as your provider. (5-6)
 - A. God has prepared a way of abundant fulfillment for you. (5)
 - 1. Your focus must be on God if you are to live a healthy God focused life (5a)
 - 2. God's gracious spirit can provide you calmness and peace. (5b)
 - B. God provided goodness and love for you to emulate. (6)
 - 1. You are to be content in the Lord in all seasons showing God's goodness. (6a)
 - 2. Your are to show mercy & love to all people. (6a)
 - C. You are to live being a citizen of God's house. (6b)
 - 1. You are to boast about the Lord the good shepherd. (6b)
 - 2. You are to live your life aware of God's presence and your eternal destiny. (6b)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Phillip Keller [A Shepherd Looks at Psalms 23](#)

Albert Barnes [Notes on the Old Testament](#)

John Phillips [Exploring Psalms](#)

Scripture Introduction- When David wrote this psalm, he reflected on the many benefits that the Lord had given him during the many dangers of his life. Most of you from birth have desired for leaders to lead you somewhere or teach you something and providers that would buy things for you or give you something. Often in school would you follow those that you thought was “cool” and those that you felt had your best interests at heart and can provide you all the satisfaction and contentment that you ever needed. This psalm will help you understand the identity of the best ever leader and provider that anyone could ever know.

Sermon Introduction- There were two men in a certain church, one was rich and the other was poor. The rich man had much, wealth. He had many cars, buildings, he owned a casino, had millions in the bank, and he had power among the leadership in his city and church. But the poor man had nothing. He worked at a nickel and dime job, rarely could buy new clothes, only owned 1 car and lived in a small apartment. Yet, the difference between him and the rich man was their trust in God. Although the rich man attended church and claimed to be a disciple of the Lord, he loved wealth so much that he had no desire for anything in life but that. The poor man on the other hand trusted God in all his ways, and relied upon him to be the sole provider in his life. The poor man regularly gave to God what little he had to offer in money, and served him every day by his life. As a result, the poor man was richly blessed in the Lord because he trusted in God to be his leader and provider. Who are you the rich man or the poor man? This story is a reminder about trusting in God and a warning about trusting in other things more than God and how easy it is to do so. [FCF]We are *often worried about the uncertain directions in life*. God’s word in this psalm will teach you who you need to trust. [Prop] Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him.

I. Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him as your leader. (1-4)

Who or what is the leader and driver of your life? Is it money? A new career? The passion to succeed? Or what?

ILL- There was a woman named Katie and she lived and worked in London. Katie had a strong church, and was able to serve the Lord to the full there. So often in the city where her church resides would she bump into Mormon missionaries. Katie never intended to be rude to them, but was saved and had no interest in what the Mormons had to say. Then one day she met a Mormon man that was very attractive and Katie fell for him. After some conversations and lunches together Katie strongly felt that this was the man she was destined to marry. Katie thought it was God’s will to marry this Mormon and so she considered doing so. But as she spent time with God one day, the Holy Spirit tugged at her heart and she felt convicted because she had desired this man, more than God. God had promised to protect Katie and for her to be content in God in a day and age of endless religions, cults and philosophies. God had also promised to

protect Katie from harm if she put her trust in him. Katie realized her mistake, repented for falling for this Mormon man and told him that she was calling the wedding off as God had convicted her for placing her trust in her flesh instead of him. The Mormon male pleased with her to reconsider, but Katie could not because she trusted God and was content only with Him. She admitted she was wrong and apologized to this man for her sin, but told him in love that she could never marry someone of another religion. Like Katie you must trust in God and follow his leadership at all costs. God is your leader and you must trust in him to lead you in life. Nothing else can satisfy like God.

APP- God loves you and desires to be first place in your life. He can be the leader and driver of your life if you put him there. Your treasure must be with God and following his will and word. I know a man named Ray and he loves the Lord with all his heart. Ray lives in an area of the country plagued with consumerism, materialism, endless philosophies and religious viewpoints. Ray loves God and desires to carry out his masters will all the days of his life. Ray is not easily persuaded by persuasive speech or money, since God is whom he trusts and the driver of his life. Ray made a choice long ago to not get over carried away with the culture, and so limits his exposure and strives to spend far more time carrying out the Lord's will and reading his word. I am amazed at the peace that God has given Ray. Ray is rarely anxious because his trust and dependence is on God completely, and God has given him peace. Just like Ray you too can trust in God to be your leader and he will take you places you never dreamed of. He will give you contentment, restore you, and take away your anxiety if you will let him. If you will follow God in your life and allow him to be your leader, he can give you peace and restoration in all areas of your life. Whether it would be switching jobs, marrying a spouse, going through surgery, seeing the dentist, or even flying on that dreadful airplane. In all these things, God can grant peace and restoration for you that follow him.

II. Because the Lord is the good shepherd, you must trust Him as your provider. (5-6)

To have an assurance of a strong relationship with God by abundant blessings and peace, you must believe that God alone is the sole leader and provider of your life.

ILL- There was a man named Allen whom deeply loved the Lord. Allen was born with a heart condition making it difficult for him to breathe. Allen worked at a job in Information Technologies but often found it difficult because of his heart condition. Then one day while Allen was visiting with his parents at Walmart and his heart started acting up and Allen got real dizzy and thought he was going to die. Allen prayed and prayed for God to take him home, as he could not bare the deep pain. Allen was driven to the emergency room and had a heart operation. That night as Allen laid in his bed he began to worry about how he was going to pay his hospital bill, and being a dirt poor college student his worry grew by the hour. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart and

calmed his heart. Allen no longer worried as he trusted that God would help him and provide for him. Allen had memorized Psalms 23 and thought of it often in his mind and trusted in God to provide for his needs. The day came for Allen to be released from the hospital and to his surprise someone had paid a large amount to his bill and Allen had only a small amount of this expensive surgery to pay. God did provide for Allen and he was thankful. So like Allen you must learn to trust that God will provide for you, just like how God provided for Allen.

APP- If you want to live a fulfilled life then you will trust in God and allow him to be your provider in all things. The way this can be accomplished is to spend time in the word and in prayer every single day. This is very important as then your focus will be on God and not things of this world. You cannot find fulfillment in earthly things, only in God. My friend Chris is an example of a man whom trusts in the Lord to provide for him to the full. Chris developed some very serious eye disease that has virtually removed all his eyesight in one eye. It amazes and encourages me to talk with Chris and hear about how much he is trusting in the Lord to provide for him, and to hear of all the praises that he has for God even amidst his eye problem. Chris is an excellent example of a man that fully trusts in God to provide for him no matter what happens. You can have Chris's faith in God if you will only trust in him like he does. You are to live your life knowing that you are a kingdom citizen and that God will provide for you. God will provide for you not only if you have an eye infection, but in all facets of your life (food, clothing, water) that he desires.

Conclusion- The Lord in this passage has laid down for you the instructions on living a life that both trusts in him as your leader and trusts in him as your provider. The Lord desires so much to provide for you, yet you so often insist on your way instead of God's way and are miserable and not completely fulfilled. However God's words provides the answers that are needed for you to live both trusting him as your sole leader and provider.

There was a preacher named Alexander whom was born with learning disabilities and also suffered from high blood pressure. Alexander was haunted by failure all his life and suffered from stage fright. Alexander sometimes felt that he would collapse as he preached prior to and sometimes during his sermons. But regardless Alexander had a deep trust in God and felt that God was calling him to preach and all he had to do was remain faithful to his calling and God would do the rest. People often would say to Alexander that if he has such strong weaknesses then God obviously had not called him to preach. But Alexander did not listen because he trusted in God as his leader and knew that God had called him to preach and would obviously provide for his needs. As life went on Alexander remained faithful to preaching the word and fulfilling what God had called him to do. His church never grew more than 50 people, but Alexander was faithful to his flock. God did bless and provide for all of Alexander's needs and he was richly blessed in his word. Alexander loved others and was known for his goodness

among his congregation. Alexander lived in peace and often was spiritually restored by spending time in the word. You can certainly trust in God as your leader and provider in your life just as Alexander did. He was not harbored by human weakness but trusted that God would provide for his every need. Although many do not trust in God as their sole leader and provider, you can be different and rise above the negative deviation by trusting in God to be your leader and provider. So do not hesitate, to go out and do it!