



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 23 | John 10:11, 14, 27-30 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 34:9-10; 37:4 | Luke 15:3-7  
John 14:1-3 | 1 Corinthians 6:20 | Ephesians 1:4 | Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 13:5 | 1 John 1:9

### ► SUMMARY

**Some Christians have a difficult time believing that God loves and cares for them.**

They can't conceive how the Lord in all His glory and majesty could be interested in little things like their personal concerns. Sometimes guilt over past sins leads them to conclude that they're too unworthy of His love. Others may view the Lord as too busy to be bothered with their insignificant problems and needs. But all such thinking is flawed because it doesn't take into account that the Lord says He's our Shepherd and He tenderly cares for His sheep.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Psalm 23 is probably the best known and most loved passage of Scripture. David wrote it 3,000 years ago, but it's just as applicable today as it was then. It describes the Lord as our Shepherd, and in every verse there's a promise or an action of God showing how much He cares for us. There's nothing He's neglected or failed to provide for us as His beloved sheep.

#### What kind of Shepherd is the Lord?

He's a personal Shepherd. "The LORD is my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1). When David wrote this psalm, he didn't understand how the Messiah would one day fulfill this role, but today we have Jesus Christ as our Good Shepherd.

■ **John 10:11, 14.** "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep ... I am the

good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me."

■ **John 10:27-30.** "My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Lord is not a shepherd to everyone, but only to those who are His sheep. To be Christ's sheep means we have trusted Him as our Savior through faith and have a personal relationship with Him. We belong to Him because He chose us before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and purchased us with His own blood on the cross (1 Cor. 6:20). As His sheep we're characterized by knowing the Shepherd, listening to Him, and following wherever He leads.

Psalm 23 is often quoted by unbelievers as a source of comfort in times of loss or trouble, but the truth is they're not Christ's sheep, and this psalm doesn't apply to them. Only believers have this special, intimate relationship with God.

#### God is a providing Shepherd.

"The LORD is my shepherd, I will not be in need. He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters" (Ps. 23:1-2). It's the shepherd's responsibility to provide for the physical needs of the sheep, and so it is with our Shepherd. But He also supplies our spiritual and emotional needs. Other

passages of Scripture affirm His commitment to provide for His own.

- **Psalm 34:9-10.** “Fear the LORD, you His saints; for to those who fear Him there is no lack of anything. The young lions do without and suffer hunger; but they who seek the LORD will not lack any good thing.”
- **Psalm 37:4.** “Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.”
- **Philippians 4:19.** “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

If we ever think that the Lord is not providing what we need, the problem is not His faithfulness but our perception of our own needs. Unlike us, our Shepherd is wise and omniscient and knows exactly what’s best for us. We can always trust Him to know our true needs.

### The Lord is a pardoning Shepherd.

“He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His name” (Ps. 23:3). There are two ways He restores our souls.

- 1. He restores us when we wander.** We stray when we take our eyes off our loving Shepherd and think we’ve found a better pasture than He’s provided. But because we belong to Him, He comes to bring us back into the safety of His will as soon as we confess our sins and receive forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9).
- 2. He restores our souls when we’ve become weary with the busyness and burdens of life.** He does this whenever we draw near to Him for fellowship and intimacy. As we pray and read His Word, our spirits are lifted, our hearts are cheered, and we’re encouraged to persevere and trust Him no matter what’s going on in our lives. Anxiety and fear are replaced with Christ’s peace and joy.

Having restored our souls, He then leads us in paths of righteousness and obedience, which result in a lifestyle that glorifies Him.

### He is a protecting Shepherd.

“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” (Ps. 23:4). His rod and staff are symbols of His comforting protection and companionship even when the path becomes darkened. The shadow of death may refer to actual death, but it could also signify any dark times of difficulties, loss, and struggles. In either case, we have no need to fear evil because the Lord is always with us. He’s promised to never leave or forsake us (Heb. 13:5), and we can trust Him to safely guide us throughout our lives.

### God is a preparing Shepherd.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows. Certainly goodness and faithfulness will follow me all the days of my life, and my dwelling will be in the house of the LORD forever” (Ps. 23:5-6).

The Lord promises to prepare abundantly for us, even in the midst of all the things that are enemies of our peace. He invites us to come to His table and receive cleansing and refreshment in His presence. His goodness, mercy, and faithfulness will pursue us every day of our lives all the way to heaven, where Jesus has prepared a place for us in His Father’s house (John 14:1-3).

#### ► RESPONSE

- Are you one of Christ’s sheep? If so, you can claim every promise in Psalm 23. If you don’t yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord, it’s not too late to receive Him by faith and come into His flock.
- Are you confident that the Lord cares about your personal concerns? How have you seen Him shepherd you through life? How has He met your needs and led you in paths of righteousness?

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