

I SHALL NOT WANT

PSALM 23 • TV074B

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Psalm 23

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

My subject today is: **“I SHALL NOT WANT;”** and you know my text: **Psalm 23**, one of God’s people favorite passage of Scripture. I like to read it and I like to hear it read: *“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”*

Well, let’s look at it. Take your Bible and follow with me **Psalm 23!** *“The Lord is my shepherd.”*

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Now, we need to camp right here for a little while on the word Lord and for all that follows; *“He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness. He leadeth me beside the still waters. My cup runneth over.”*

All that follows depends upon the person who is our Shepherd. All that follows depends upon the power of the person who is our Shepherd. And all that follows depends upon the purpose and the promise of Him who is our Shepherd.

“The Lord is my shepherd.” Our Shepherd is Lord by the sovereign decree of the Heavenly Father. It says in **Philippians 2:9**; *“Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven, in earth, and under the earth. And every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

Who exalted Him? Who gave Him a name above every name? Who decreed that every tongue shall confess that He is Lord and every knee shall bow in adoration and reverence and worship before Him? The Heavenly Father; so the one who is our Shepherd is the one who is Lord by sovereign decree.

And then He is our Lord by suffering death. It tells us in **Romans 14:9**: *“For to this end (or for this cause) Jesus Christ both died and rose again that He might be Lord of the dead and the living.”* That’s why He came to the earth. That’s why He went to the cross. That’s why He suffered the shame and humiliation of Calvary’s cross, *“That He might be Lord of the dead and the living,”* of the saved, and of the lost, of the multitudes in heaven and the multitudes in hell. He is the sovereign, supreme, Lord, not only by divine decree, but by suffering death.

And then He’s our Lord, the Shepherd who is our Lord, is our Lord by created ownership. It says in **Colossians 3:16**; *“For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and earth. All things were created by Him and for Him.”*

His Lordship is based on His ownership. He is Lord of all things because all things are His. He is the ruler of all things because all things are His. Everything belongs to Christ.

One old preacher we recently heard on tape said that; “He doesn’t have to put His signature on the paintings of nature; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to build a fence around the meadows; He’s the owner.”

“He doesn’t have to carve His initials on the mountains; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to put a brand on the cattle on a thousand hills; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to get a copyright on the song that the birds sing; He’s the owner.”

“He doesn’t have to get a deed to the gold and silver mines of this world; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to raise a flag over the nations; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to stake a claim on the universe; He’s the owner.”

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“He doesn’t have to get a court order to open a grave; He’s the owner. He doesn’t have to get a building permit to make a new heaven and a new earth; He’s the owner. *“O man who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it: “Why hast thou made me thus? Cannot I do with my own what I will, saith the Lord?”*”

And our Saviour said; *“All authority is given unto me, over all flesh, that I should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given me.”* And before He sent His disciples to preach He said; *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth, (all authority; supreme power) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and preach the gospel to every creature.”*

So our Lord is Lord by sovereign decree. This one who is our Shepherd is Lord by sovereign decree, by suffering death. He’s our Lord by created ownership; it all belongs to Him because He made it. He spoke the worlds out of nothing by the word of His power.

And then, our Shepherd is Lord by crowning faith. Romans **10:9-10** says this: *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead; thou shalt be saved.”*

Yes; He is our Lord not only by sovereign decree and not only by suffering death and not only by creative ownership but by a willing, loving, crowning, faith. He said; *“You call me Lord and you say well, for so I am.”*

I like what Thomas said when he fell at His feet and he expressed his confidence and faith, *“My Lord and my God.”* I like what the thief said from the cross, *“Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.”*

And I’ll say this to you and I will say the same thing to myself and to all who will listen to me; If Christ is not your Lord He will not be your Saviour. The Scripture calls Him; *“The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

**“All hail the power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.**

**O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall
We’ll join that everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all.”**

So what we’ve got to say as we go on through this Psalm depends totally and completely upon whom this is that we say is our Shepherd. Who is our Shepherd? Well, the Lord is our Shepherd, our great Shepherd.

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Hebrews 13:20 says; “*Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead that great shepherd of the sheep;*” He is a great Shepherd. He’s not just an ordinary Shepherd; He is the great Shepherd, “*that brought again from the dead that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*”

And then He’s the chief Shepherd. **1 Peter 5:4** says: “*And when the chief shepherd shall appear; we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*” And then, He’s the good Shepherd. In **John 10:11** He said; “*I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.*”

David spoke positively about this, can you? I believe I can, the Lord is my Shepherd, not the Lord might be my Shepherd, or could be my Shepherd; He is my Shepherd. He is my Shepherd right now, not shall be, He is my Shepherd.

The Father made Him so and He chose Him to be so. And He purchased me and I’ve received Him as such. And because, “*The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.*” And that’s the only reason. It’s not because of my faithfulness, my integrity, my works, and my service.

I shall not want because He is my shepherd. That’s why I shall not want. I may be the weakest of the sheep but “*I shall not want.*” I may be the dumbest of the sheep, but “*I shall not want.*” I may not have all I wish, but “*I shall not want.*”

I may wonder and stray from the fold, but “*I shall not want.*” I may grow old and feeble but “*I shall not want.*” I may endure sickness and sorrow but “*I shall not want.*” I may walk the valley of the shadow of death, but “*I shall not want.*” I may someday stand in the Judgment, but “*I shall not want.*”

The Lord, the sovereign Lord, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord who created all things, the Lord who owns all things, the Lord is my Shepherd, my great Shepherd, my chief Shepherd, my Good shepherd, and my personal Shepherd. “*The Lord is my shepherd*” and therefore, I shall not want.

Now I want you to take your Bible there and let’s look through; let’s go line by line through this **23 Psalm** but remembering this; here’s the foundation, if the Lord is not your Shepherd; now you can’t claim these blessings.

I’m talking about the Lord of glory. I’m not just talking about any shepherd or any Saviour; I’m talking about the Lord. He is our Shepherd and because He is our Shepherd we shall not want!

I shall not want for rest. “*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” What are these green pastures? I shall not want for rest. “*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” What are these green pastures?

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I'll tell you what they are; these green pastures are the precious promises of God's Word. That's where God's people feed, is in His Word. That's right! It says: *"As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby."*

We eat the Word of God. We feed upon the Word of God. And it's the Word of God that gives rest to our troubled souls. It's the Word of God that gives joy to our troubled soul. We feed on His Word and we just lie down in His Word and we feed on it.

We receive the Word of God and we grow. *"Take heed to the word of God that you may grow thereby."* It's the Word of God that gives us growth.

"We cease from our labors and our works and we enter into His rest." I find rest in the Word of God. I find confidence in the Word of God. I find assurance in the Word of God. I find all of these things in His Word.

I shall not want for rest. *"He maketh me to lie down (peacefully) in green pastures."*

And I shall not want for peace: *"He leads me beside the still waters."*

The water of life quenches my spiritual thirst. The water of the Spirit cleanses and sanctifies me. The well of living water springs up within me and sustains me. And these are quiet and still waters, not troubled waters: *"He leadeth me beside the still waters."*

We use to sing a song and the chorus went something like this:

**"Blessed quietness, holy quietness
Blessed assurance to my soul
On the troubled sea Jesus speaks to me
And the water's waves cease to roll."**

It becomes peaceful waters. It becomes quiet waters. It becomes still waters. *"He leadeth me beside the still waters."* He gives me peace, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."* The supreme sovereign Lord is my Shepherd.

And I shall not want for rest because He leads me into the green pastures of His Word and there are my answers, and there's my comfort, and there's my joy, and there are the promises. And *"He leads me beside still waters."* He calms the troubled waters. He makes them still.

And then I shall not want for forgiveness; *"He restoreth my soul."* Oh yes: *"All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And He restoreth my soul."*

He restored to me everything that I lost in Adam. You look at that Scripture in **John 14:6** in which our Lord said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."*

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And you'll find in that everything we lost in Adam. What did we lose in the Garden of Eden? Well, we lost the way to God. Adam was put out of the Garden and the flaming swords barred his reentrance.

Adam lost not only the way to God; he lost the truth of God. He believed a lie. And because he believed that lie he was made a lie himself. He became subject to guilt, fear, weakness, hate, and all of these things.

His life became a lie and then he lost the way, the truth, and he lost his life. He died; he died spiritually. He lost all communion and fellowship with the God with whom he used to walk and talk. And now he lost his life spiritually and physically; he later died.

Now Christ, in Christ, we have all of this restored to us. I have restored the way to God. I now, as a child of God, as a redeemed sinner, as a forgiven sinner, I can come boldly into the presence of God. I can come back to Eden's Garden.

I can come back to fellowship with God. I can come back to a real, personal, communion with God because Christ is my way. He's opened for me into His presence by His death a new and living way. And the truth; Christ is the truth. *"I am the way and I am the truth."* He's the truth of God.

If you want to know how God can be just and justify the ungodly; you will find the answer in Christ. If you want to know how God can be merciful and yet be righteous, you will find the answer in Christ.

If you want to know how God saves sinners, you will find the answer in Christ. If you want to know how sinner's sins are forgiven, you will find the answer in Christ. It's all in Christ. He is God's wisdom. He is God's truth. That's where it is.

And life; we have restored to us eternal life. Christ said, *"He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* Oh, we may someday sleep and our bodies will be put in the grave. *"But to be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord."*

Someday even the body is going to be raised. We have that life that Adam lost in the Garden of Eden, restored in Christ. *"I'm the way, I'm the truth, and I'm the life."*

"He restoreth my soul." He restored me to son-ship. He restored me to fellowship. He restored me to the inheritance which I lost. Adam was a king of this world. God said; "It's all yours. Multiply and replenish the earth and subdue the earth; it's all yours."

And when Adam sinned, he lost it all, but I've regained it. All things are yours in Christ. He restoreth my soul. I shall not want for forgiveness. And I shall not want for holiness because, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*

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“He leadeth me in paths of righteousness.” Now my friends; it’s not in my nature to find the path of righteousness. Oh, I know there are all different kinds of standards and rules and ways that men point to today and say, “That’s the way of righteousness or this is the way of righteousness.” It’s their particular brand of righteousness but you will find a loop-hole in it somewhere. You’ll find a rat hole in it somewhere. You’ll find a frayed spot in it somewhere.

It’s not in our nature to find the way of righteousness. It’s not in our nature to know the way of righteousness and it’s not in our nature to walk the path of righteousness unless He leads us. *“He leadeth me in the path of righteousness.”*

Do you know how He can lead me in the path of righteousness? It’s because it’s His path. It’s His righteousness. And He’s already walked it. He made the path, He walked it perfectly, and He leads me there.

And without His constant presence, and without His constant supply of grace, and without His constant leadership, I would lose my way. I walk with Christ and I walk in Christ. He leads me.

Now notice all of this; *“The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.”* because the Lord is my Shepherd. But, *“He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness.”*

Do you see the absence of my works? Do you see the absence of my doing? Do you see the absence of my initiative? It is Christ that does this for me. *“I love Him because He first loved me.”*

This is what I’m saying to you. This is what I’m saying in a sentence: *“Salvation’s of the Lord,”* the whole of the work, whereby a poor, blackened, darkened, deadened sinner is brought from a spiritual grave to be an heir of God, is by the power of God, by the grace of God, through the blood of Christ, and by the work of the Holy Spirit. It’s a gift of God.

I shall not want for fellowship. *“Yea though I walk through a valley of the shadow of death, I’ll fear no evil. Thou art with me.”* Now that’s the reason I will fear no evil, not because I’m strong, not because I have courage, not because I can defeat my enemies, not because I’m stronger than those about me; *“I’ll fear no evil because thou art with me.”*

I’m a dependent creature. I’m a helpless creature. It’s He who hath restored my soul. It is He who leads me in paths of righteousness and I fear no evil because He’s with me.

So many people have confined this to the day of death. Now listen to me carefully; *“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”*

Now a lot of people confine this completely to the day of death but I say it’s the entire journey of life. This valley through which we are walking from the time we’re born until the time we die, *“Is a valley of the shadow of death.”*

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Everything about us has the mark of death on it. Look at those trees out there that are beginning to turn. They are dying. The grass is getting brown; it's dying. The tomato vines; they are dying.

How about you? Do you see those gray hairs and those wrinkles, those absent teeth, and those stooped shoulders? You are dying. Everything about us has got the mark of death, everything. This is the valley of death.

Here on earth, everything has the mark of death and I'm walking through it. I'm not in any hurry. You see, I'm walking through. I'm waiting on the Lord. I'll go when it comes time but I'm walking through.

This is not my home; I'm going through. We're not stopping here; we're not camping here. We're not driving down our stakes here. We don't prepare to stay here. We are sojourners. We are strangers and pilgrims passing through.

I'm walking through a valley of the shadow of death. Now death in its substance, in its substance, has been removed, only the shadow remains. That's right; death can't hurt the child of God.

"The sting of death is sin" and Christ has taken the sting out of death, so it's just a shadow of death, that's all. A shadow can't hurt you. A shadow of a gun can't kill you. The shadow of a dog can't bite you, but it looks vicious, doesn't it? It looks frightful.

"And I'll fear no evil." He doesn't say there won't be any evil; He says *"I won't be afraid of evil."* There will be plenty of evil about you. There will be evil around you and there will even be evil within you through this valley of the shadow of death.

But David says, "I'm not going to be afraid." And the reason I'm not going to be afraid is the Lord is my Shepherd and He's with me and I'm not afraid. I shall not want for fellowship even though I'm walking through a valley of the shadow of death.

I'm walking through a famine and infested land. I'm walking through a terrible, dry, and parched desert. I'm walking through a dark cave but He's with me through the sorrow and sickness, toil, trouble, and trials of life. He's with me; I'm not alone, I'm not alone.

I shall not want for comfort: *"Thy rod and thy staff; they comfort me."* I know some people call this "the rod of correction," and some call it "the rod of numbering," through which the sheep passed, you know, unto which the sheep passed and the shepherd numbered it.

But whatever it is; this rod is the rod of His sovereignty and His gracious care. The shepherd always carried the shepherd's rod. He had several uses for it. He'd reach out and pull the little sheep back into the fold. He would catch him by the leg and pull him back when they wondered away.

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Or he would use the rod and they would pass under it and he would number the sheep as they passed under the rod. He would give them a direction to look and all you know.

But he would ward off the wolves and the evil beasts with his rod. But this rod of sovereignty and gracious care and protection is the rod by which He rules the flock and defends the flock and provides for the flock.

But you know; His sovereignty is my chief comfort. He said: *“All things work together for good to them who love God (who are His sheep) who are the called according to His purpose,”* (everything; it doesn’t matter what it is) it is going to work together for our good and for God’s glory.

And that comforts me; that comforts me. I think I can say with Job: *“Thou He slay me I’ll trust Him.”* I’ll trust the Lord because He’s my Shepherd.

And then, I shall not want for daily bread. He said; *“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.”*

No, the believer’s not without enemies. He wouldn’t be like his Lord if he was. He said, *“Marvel not if the world hate you, it hated me before it hated you.”* But God provides our needs and He sets a table for us, even in the presence of our enemies.

A lot of times when I write to people who write to us I answer their letters and on the bottom I will put a verse of Scripture. One of my favorites that I put on letters occasionally is this, **Philippians 4:19:** *“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.”*

Don’t be overly anxious. He’ll supply your needs, not necessarily everything you think you ought to have, your needs, *“according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.”* You are not going to want. He’s not going to let you want.

He’s not going to let you want for daily bread. David said, *“I’ve been young and now I’m old and I’ve never seen God’s seed begging bread,”* not the seed of the Lord. He provides for His people. I shall not want for daily bread.

I shall not want for joy; *“My cup runneth over.”* I shall not want for anything in this life: *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”*

And then I shall not want for anything in the life to come, *“For I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”*

The Lord is my Shepherd. Is the Lord your Shepherd? Is the Lord of glory, the one who is Lord by sovereign decree, the one who is Lord by suffering death, the one who is Lord by creative power, the creative right, the one who is Lord by crowing faith, can you say, “He is my Shepherd?”

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Not have you had a religious experience, not have you joined the church, not have you walked the aisle, not having your name on some church roll book, but have you had a living encounter with the Lord of glory?

Is He your Shepherd? Have you trusted in Him and rested in Him. Have you, received Him as your Lord and as your Saviour? Have you received Him intelligently and willingly and lovingly?

You have embraced Him and said, “Lord; I’m yours, I’m yours, my family, my home, my job, everything, I belong to you. I surrender to you completely. I submit to your Lordship.”

One old Puritan preacher use to say that word (received) Christ means to (submit to Christ, submit to Christ). *“The Lord is my shepherd.”*

Well, I’ll tell you this: “If the Lord Jesus Christ is your shepherd, if you can honestly say He is my shepherd; I have submitted to Him, I have received Him, and He is the Lord of my life, then you shall never want.

You shall never want for rest. You shall never want for peace. You shall never want for comfort. You shall never want for fellowship. You shall never want for forgiveness. You shall never want for righteousness. You shall never want for anything in this life nor in the life to come.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will; no question about it, I will dwell in the House of the Lord!