

April 28, 2021

What the Shepherd Does

Read again **Psalm 23:1-6**. Verses 2 and 3 list three things the shepherd does. First, He makes me to lie down in green pastures. This is a picture of rest. As believers, we know that our eternal rest is future. Our time on earth is primarily given to labor, but if we are to be effective in our labor, it will be necessary that we take time to rest. In **Mark 6:7-13**, Jesus commissioned His disciples and sent them out in pairs to preach and to minister. In **Mark 6:30-32** they returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught. Jesus then instructed them to come apart and rest. It has been said that if we do not come apart, we will come apart. Everyone needs time to rest both physically and spiritually. This principle is seen in God's command to set apart one day for rest and worship. We refer to it as the Lord's day. There are six days in which ought to work, but the Lord's day is a day of rest. Not only has the Lord given us a day of rest, but He has also given us a place of rest. God's house is a sanctuary from the world, a place of quiet refuge. Respecting and honoring the Lord's day and the Lord's house is essential to the spiritual well-being of every Christian. We need the encouragement and refreshment they provide.

Second, He leads me beside still waters. This is a picture of provision. The Bible uses thirst to picture the need of the soul. In **John 7:37** Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." In **John 6:35** Jesus said, "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." Consider also, **Psalm 42:1-2; 63:1-2; 143:6**, and **Isaiah 55:1**. Now read Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar in **John 4:5-26**. What water did Jesus offer the woman? This water would quench her spiritual thirst and spring up into everlasting life. The answer is given in **Ephesians 5:26**, The water is the Word of God. In **John 3:1-8** Jesus told Nicodemus, to go to heaven, one must be born again by the water and the Spirit. The water is not referring to the water of baptism, but rather the water of God's Word. Every birth requires two parents. Physically every birth requires a father (man) and a mother (woman). Likewise, every new birth as two spiritual parents, the Spirit of God and the Word of God. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring a person to the point of salvation. No one is born again apart from the Spirit and Word of God. It is also important to note that these waters are calm waters. Troubled waters speak of the storms of life. Calm or still waters speak of the provision of God through His Word.

Third, He restores my soul. This is a picture of hope. The Hebrew word for restore means to turn back. How often are we wearied by sin and the circumstances of life? Sometimes to a point of despair and hopelessness, but God is able to bring us back to a place of strength and usefulness. He leads us in a right path. There are two paths in life, the path of the righteous and the path of the wicked. There are two ways in life, the narrow way that leads to life eternal and the broad way that leads to destruction. Read **Proverbs 4:10-19** and note the different "paths" and "ways" mentioned. Now read **Matthew 7:13-14**. What path are you on? Where does it lead to? If you are on the wrong path, you will never reach heaven. Make sure you are on the right path today.