

“The Lord is My Shepherd” – Sheep – Psalm 23

Welcome:

Today is the fourth Sunday of Easter. It is often known as “Shepherd Sunday.” In the lesson you will hear about a Shepherd and his sheep. The shepherd uses a staff with a crook on the end to help guide their sheep back to safety when they wander away. A staff with a crook is like a stick that has a bend/hook on the end. Looks like the shape of a candy cane.

Today’s lesson comes from Psalm 23. It is a popular part of the book of Psalms and one you may hear often. It explains God’s presence in someone’s life and teaches us to trust in God’s good presence and gracious blessings throughout our life.

Story Time:

The story today is about a shepherd and his sheep. Psalms is in the Old Testament of the bible and almost exactly in the middle of the whole bible. The book of Psalms is sometimes referred to as the Bible’s singing prayer book. Each chapter is a song about God is with us no matter what is going on in our lives.

Psalm 23 touches on many different feelings we may have. When you read it, you can hear about fear, comfort, and the need for some rest. You can even read it as a bedtime prayer. It also reminds us that we are always loved and accepted by God. It is often read with other scripture readings that talk about shepherds and even when Jesus talks about himself as the good shepherd. Psalm 23 is a poem that tells us that no matter if we are having a good day or a bad day, we can trust that God is present with us. God cares for us like a shepherd cares for sheep. Helping them find food and water and keeping them safe.

Shepherds have a big responsibility to care for and protect their sheep. And not to let any of the sheep get lost. The shepherd protects and gives the sheep everything they need. Just as God cares for us and gives us what we need.

Reading:

Find your favorite Bible and turn to **Psalm 23** and begin reading.

As someone reads to you (or you read to yourself) try to listen to words you do not recognize. Write down important words and places you heard. You can draw what you hear or draw a picture when you are finished.

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 23 (New International Reader's Version (NIRV))

A psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not want.

² He lets me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name’s sake.

⁴ Even though I walk

through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;
Your rod and your staff -
they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
My cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.

And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Questions to ponder:

As you read Psalm 23, what words did you hear that sound like comfort and protection?

This story says that God cares for us like a shepherd cares for _____.

Have you ever had something not go your way or make you sad? What have you experienced that you might describe as a “dark valley”?

How does a shepherd take care of his sheep?

Who takes care of you? When do you feel safe and protected?

What does it feel like to be a sheep in God’s flock?

God is not actually a shepherd, and we are not really sheep. What does the description “The Lord is My Shepherd” tell you about our relationship with God?

We cannot see God, but we know that God cares for us, watches over us, and loves us. Where do you see or feel God’s presence in your life? How does Jesus lead you and guide you?

Review:

Shepherds were not thought to be important to many people. But Psalm 23 shows us that they were very caring and protective of their sheep.

Verse 5 says “My cup overflows”. Because of God’s love for us, we are overfilled with joy, happiness and love.

Verse 6 says “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me”. In Hebrew, the verb follow means to “pursue”. Pursue means to follow in order to catch them, to go after. God pursues us wherever we go.

It continues to say that “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord” which means you will live with God forever and ever.

Ponder about the story:

God promises to care for us like the shepherd cares for the sheep. What things does God give us?

What are some things you must take care of yourself? How does it make you feel? Is it hard to do? Is it your favorite thing to do?

Has anything ever gone wrong when you are caring for something?

What does it mean to you that God takes care of you? How do you feel?

See the story:

Draw a picture of a sheep. On your sheep write a prayer of thanks to God. Thank Him for loving you, caring for you, guiding you – because we are grateful for His love every day. Then you can hang it up for the week to remind you of His love for you.

Witness the Story:

During these times of uncertain and fearing of getting sick, having to stay at home, wearing mask when we must go out and now homeschooling for everyone. Psalm 23 is a great reminder that we should not fear because God is always with us. When you see a friend that seems to be scared you can share the story with them. Tell them they do not need to be afraid because “God is in control”.

Activity:

Play a game with the family. Make a sheep noise, *baaa*, is you think the statement is true. If you think the statement is false, just say “no waaaay”.

1. Psalms are the songs and hymns of God’s people. (true)
2. There are 100 Psalms in the Bible. (false – there are 150 psalms)
3. The most famous psalm is Psalm 23. (true)
4. Psalms are still our songs and hymns today. (true)

Now race to find Psalm 23:1 in the Bible and read it out loud.

we are the sheep to our Shepherd – Jesus.

Write a poem describing a place where you feel peaceful. What makes your place peaceful? What do you see in your place? Where is God in this peaceful place? Try to use a variety of senses in your own “psalm” poem. If you would like to share your poem with others in the church drop me an email at lea.webb@rlcary.org. I am sure others would love to read/hear your work.

Extra Readings for today:

Acts 2: 42-47

1 Peter 2: 19-25

John 10: 1-10

Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

You are our good shepherd.

You take care of us like we are the sheep.

Thank you for watching over us

when things are good, and when things are bad.

Comfort, and care for us all right now.

And Keep us safe.

Thank you for always being with us.

Thank you for always loving us.

Amen