

Sermon Notes

# Reflections

For His  
Name's Sake

*River Road  
Baptist Church  
5-24-09*



# Reflections

REFLECTIONS

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. <sup>6</sup> 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. (Psalm 23 KJV)*

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, probably the most memorized chapter in the entire Bible, contains the essential elements of the Lord's work in the life of His children. This Psalm, more than any other, finds its way into the hearts and minds of people as they try to make sense of the travails of this life. It is quoted in times of stress, times of great fear, and in times when life seems to be out of control. It is quoted at memorials, published in plaques to be hung on our walls, and is a source of comfort and piety for many, even those who claim no religious affiliations in their lives. It is appreciated for its poetic imagery, its simple yet very profound statement of being under the protection of God in all aspects of our lives. Sadly, however, its true depth is often left unplumbed.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse we find a key that unlocks the powerful set of reflections by the Psalmist as he contemplates his relationship with God. *<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup>* The key that opens our sense of understanding is the statement... *For His name's sake.* God has given His name in many forms that help establish His personal facets in the mind of His children. He is declared to be the Creator, the Supplier, The self existing One, God Almighty and Jesus. Because He has declared His essence by defining His nature with the names He gives for Himself, that which He does on behalf of His children is *For His Name's Sake.* The Psalmist illustrates his insights into the nature of God when he writes that the Lord is his shepherd. He reflects on what the Good Shepherd does as a picture of God's grace and care for him. Jesus also uses the analogy of being the Good Shepherd when

He declares in John's Gospel, ...*"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:9-11 NAS)*

When the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm declares that "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..." it demonstrates that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will supply all our needs and then goes on to explain that this Shepherd leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even when we walk the path that will take us through the valley of the shadow death we can walk without fear because God comforts and protects us, again, for His name's sake. He has, in Christ, laid down His life for His sheep. All of His care leading to sacrificing His life validates the traits of God illustrated in His names, God Almighty, the Great I AM, the God who supplies and many others.

It is this One of whom the Psalmist speaks when he says that the Lord is my shepherd. Too often we accept His blessing and then forget to be thankful. We receive spiritual gifts without gratitude. We enjoy salvation without praising the One who secured it for us. We walk in confidence but neglect to seek the One from whom all blessings flow. He loves us, provides for us, comforts us, even walks through the eventuality of our death with us, all for His name's sake. Can we even imagine the reality of the Great I AM caring for us in such fashion? It seems incomprehensible that the God of the Universe has chosen to be our personal savior, giver of eternal life and, soon to return, king of all, and yet He has done just that in Christ Jesus.

We must remember that the Word of God is indeed powerful and wondrous and that the declarations of His promises are to us yea and amen. Only then can we truly appreciate the Psalm that claims God as our shepherd. The One who makes us lie down in green pastures. The One who leads us beside still waters. The One who restores our soul and leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. In these difficult and often troubling times, is it not profoundly amazing that, by the grace of God, we can say with the Psalmist...*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. (Psalm 23 KJV)* Is He your shepherd today?

**Pastor Doug**