

The Shepherd

Scripture Reading — Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. Psalm 23:1 —

We've seen idyllic pictures of a shepherd and his sheep. He sits on a knoll in a lush meadow, a bird chirps in a tree, a gentle stream flows by, the sun shines, and here and there some sheep calmly graze and rest. But such a picture can be misleading. Most of the great sheep countries of the world are semi-desert. The ground around Bethlehem, for example, is brown and sunburned. It is neither easy nor common to find green pastures and running water. Instead there are ravines and treacherously narrow mountain passes. And everywhere lurks the danger of a wolf or a lion. We are like sheep in a thirsty land, so our need for a strong, devoted shepherd is great. Being called sheep is not flattering. Sheep are helpless, timid animals. They have neither cunning nor speed. Without the shepherd they are at the mercy of every enemy. We are like sheep--this isn't flattering, but it's accurate. We might think we're strong and cunning, and if armed with technology, we might put up an impressive fight. Still, we are powerless. Every doctor who helps with healing knows she is only postponing the inevitable, and we all know the sin that lurks at our door. Only the shepherd is stronger than the roaring lion that seeks to devour us. Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). Follow him.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we are no match for sin and the devil. But with you as our guide, we are strong; in your power we are more than conquerors. Strengthen us today, we pray. Amen.

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