



The Way of the Cross: Caring for All

Psalm 23 (NKJV):

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

This comforting passage is of course one of the most familiar parts, not only of the psalms or the Old Testament, but of the whole Bible. And as good and right as it is for us to be familiar with Scripture, sometimes familiarity causes us to lose track of what is really there. As we pass the halfway point in the season of Lent, let's take a step back and revisit this sheep's testimony. Let's think together about what we might learn about the Shepherd, about ourselves, and about how to care for others in His name.

As we explore these topics, remember that there are no right or wrong answers here. These questions are meant to stir up thoughts and discussions, and my hope is that they ultimately lead you to prayer, alone and with others. God's peace to you as we wrestle with these ideas.

A Sheep's Testimony

1. Three weeks into Lent, how's it going for you? How has your journey on the Way of the Cross compared to your expectations so far? What have you learned about yourself? About God?
2. N.T. Wright says that Psalm 23 must have been written by a very good sheep. Do you usually feel as though you have everything you need? Does the testimony about the green pastures and still waters resonate with your experience, or do you long for those places?

The Turn Toward

1. Have there been moments in your life (particular events or seasons) that have abruptly turned you toward God? Or have you had the opposite experience — significant moments that have turned you away from him, with long seasons of turning back later on?
2. Today, in this season, do you feel near to God or distant? Are the promises and reminders of Scripture that God is with us comforting to you, or not? Which do you feel more keenly: the presence of God, or the presence of your enemies?

The Charge

1. Maybe you are someone who is actively engaged in intentionally caring for people in the context of church ministries. Maybe you aren't. Either way, have you thought deeply about the gravity of carrying Jesus' name as we care for people? What is the primary effect of considering this? Motivation? Humility? Something else?
2. Where do your gifts and your loves align with Christ's shepherding care that he extends and entrusts to his people? If you're not sure, then: What do you hear from mature brothers and sisters in Christ in your life about who you are? About the kind of care you might be wired for?

