

I Am Your Shepherd

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Preacher: Kenny Heinzel

[0 : 00] How many's enjoying this nice crisp weather. I got three or four friends here and that's it. Beautiful weather to me. I'm so glad the humidity and heat is gone. It actually feels like winter for a change. Feels like falls. We're just enjoying that and the beautiful weather Lord has given us. Thank you for being with us today. I don't see any first time visitors, but I see something good to have you back with us.

Let's see, choir practice Friday at 700.

Children's practice will be during children's church. So if you have children want to be involved in the Christmas play or something, have them here. And during the children's church, they're going to practice some as they do their lessons and then places practice some of their parts. So keep that in mind. But choir practice Friday at 07:00 for our special Operation Christmas child There are some boxes right here.

[1 : 06] Ms. Paula is so thoughtful and so helpful. She's already folded them up or boxed them up for you. So if you want to, there's about six boxes here you can grab, or there's some in the back corner up there still unfolded, so whatever you like. But they are due next Sunday.

The Operation Christmas Child will be done and they'll box those up during our morning service and then we'll have a prayer over them as we send them off next Sunday. So operation Christmas Child don't forget your box. And there's information on the back table of a boy or girl and how to do it and all that stuff if you need. There's also information online. Let's see, the children's Christmas celebration will be Wednesday, December the 21st.

So if you have any children, know some children want to have a Christmas party celebration they call it. That'll be the 21 December, so keep that in mind. The next meeting for the youth will be Wednesday, December the 14th because of the holidays and all that coming up, so just keep that in mind. What? Am I missing something?

What am I missing? Darryl's not here to tell me what I'm missing. What's that Luthersville parade they have every year, I guess. But they've invited us to be in that this year. So we'd like to do a float or whatever if you're interested in that.

After the service day at 05:00 or about not at 05:00. That's not the day after the service. It's not going to be that long a message. Y'all just don't leave.

[3 : 20] About five maybe or so. Whoever wants to get involved with that, that would be great. There are many out of town. I know the McKinneys are floating on the ocean right now, enjoying themselves and David's driving. And so we got many of us out of town and doing different things.

Some are sick, so keep their many prayers. And Tiffany is going to fill in for us again this morning. And we're just going to worship the Lord in song and as we study his word. Is there anything else announcements wise or anything I'm missing? Ms.

Tony is floating around with a card here for Ms. Eleanor. If you'd like to sign that, get with her. And I know that'd mean a lot to her, she's getting settled out in Texas and just keep her in your prayers. Anything else, everybody?

Good? Every week? Okay, you can't speak? Okay, good. Alright, let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for this day and for your blessings to us, Father, and the opportunity and privilege to come to your house to worship. Lord, we just pray that you'd bless this time as we have together, that you'd be glorified in all that we say and do. And we pray, Fathers, for the ones that are traveling or out of town on vacation, Lord, that you'd watch over and protect them and bring them home safely. And some of us that are not feeling well or sick, we ask for healing and recovery. Father, we just thank you for the ones that were able to come today and to be with us, that you would just bless them.

[4 : 53] And as we worship together, Lord, just help us to focus on you in these next few minutes, Lord. Just leading Goddess and all that you'd have us to say and do. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

All right, good morning everybody. We are going to start off on page 107 with Lord I Lift Your Name on High. We'll sing it through twice and then that last little part of Lord I Lift Your Name on High, we'll repeat twice at the end. So if you'll stand and sing, please.

And then if you'll turn to page 626, we'll sing all three verses at the time when we come to take up the offer, we want to take it up using we are approaching and Thanksgiving season right around the corner. And as I sing parts of these two songs, think about what God has done for you, what's all around you and what you have so much to praise God for in your life. For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from my birth over and around us lies lord of all to Thee we raise this our Him of grateful praise. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation o my soul, praise Him, for he is my health and salvation.

Are you here now? Distant rough dear, join me the England adoration.

Praise to the Lord who DOST prosper thy work and even Thee surely his goodness and mercy here do daily a tiny ponder what your body can do if with his wife he be friendly.

[14 : 53] Praise to the Lord. And let all that is in me adore Him. All that hath life and breath come now with praises before Him. Let the oven sound from his people again gladly, forever adore Him. Lord, of all to Thee we raise this our Him of grace I don't know if you have ever tried to sing in public before.

It's hard enough with a piano, but to do it acapulco, as I call it, great job to stay on key and start out. Our children going out with Miss Paula and they're going to have a good time there. Some have to be drugged or carried.

I want you to turn to probably the most familiar passage of Scripture other than John 316. What would you think that would be? What would you think would be the most familiar? Pastor, everybody knows that. Everybody's heard it.

Most people have memorized it. Old Testament? Genesis. Genesis, maybe. How about Psalms 23?

Turn to Psalm 23. You have heard this passage. You've heard it, priest. You've heard it most of the time. You hear it at a funeral.

[16 : 57] I'd like to talk to you about what does the 23rd Song mean to me now, I say you've heard it at a funeral, so that doesn't mean it's going to be depressing. What I want you to see in the 23rd Song today, that is very encouraging. It is very uplifting. And to be quite honest with you, it's not about death at all. It's a very encouraging passage that we can look through and we'll just read through it quickly.

There's only six verses. Some of you may memorize it or know it, but just to share it. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake. 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. Thou prepares to table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runt over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Father, as we study Your Word this morning, I ask that you would give me every word to speak that I'd speak clearly and boldly the truth of Your Word that would cause us to understand with our minds and our hearts and to be doers of Your Word. Lord. Just give us refreshing this morning and encouragement to know that you are our shepherd, father, we just praise you for that this morning.

Just be with us in these next few minutes as we look into Your Word to seek your truth, to seek your faith. In Jesus name I pray. Amen. There are many references in Scripture, I would almost say in the hundreds of us being compared to as sheep. And before you get really excited about that, that's not all that great a thing.

[19 : 15] If you really consider sheep. If you look at what sheep are, and Jesus talks about sheep and flocks and pastures, and Paul talks about it, david talks about it, isaiah talks about it. There's references all through scripture about sheep. And a lot of this is because they understood taking care of sheep back in those days. They understood what it meant and what it cost and what the responsibilities were.

And it was something that was very relatable to the people of that time. Now, not many of us, anybody in here, ever kept sheep before you kept sheep. So you'll know some of the things, and maybe you can correct me some on some of these things, but I've never kept them. But I tried to do a lot of research on them. I actually was watching a lot of videos of a sheep farmer in, I think, the Netherlands, and he was given some pretty good advice about the characteristics of sheep and how they act.

And as you look at the 23rd Psalm, I want you to consider that these are some of the things that I learned, that that people that sheep are probably the most helpless animals in the world. And some would consider them even dumb, maybe not dumb so much, but they are easily led everywhere. They're going to follow the leader, whoever that may be, whoever they feel comfortable with, that's who they're going to follow. What does that sound familiar about us, that we just follow anything, whether it's off a cliff or whatever? He told a story, this man from the Netherlands, that a farmer once took a rope and the sheep were in the barn and he took a rope and put it across the opening of the barn. Well, the first few sheep jumped over the rope as they went out.

When they took the rope and just dropped it down on the ground, the rest of the sheep still jumped over the rope. I mean, they're going to imitate and mimic whoever their leader is. Am I pretty right with it so far? So he told these interesting stories and he says that sheep are easy prey. They don't really have a defense mechanism other than running or staying together in a flock or kicking, maybe.

[21 : 33] Now, some of the male sheep might have horns. And I know he was saying that there was probably a thousand different breeds of sheep and some all have horns now. But I think of the time, of biblical time, most of the sheep didn't even have horns. And these horns aren't really for protection as much as they are to prove to one another that they're the dominant one sort of stupid. And I've never understood how Ram would go out there and butt heads with another ram and knock them silly when they couldn't see straight.

It's just like, couldn't you find a better way to show who's dominant? You know, it just don't seem like that would be very much fun to do, but this is how they would respond and this is what they do with their horns. I find it very interesting that when sheep get on their back, get all the way out, they may lie down, and you never seen an old dog just lay down back and then just wiggle and scratch his back or something. Sheep sometimes will get on their back, but there's a problem. They can't get back up.

It's called being cast or being cast down. He says, and I thought that was very interesting. If they get on their back, they can't get back up. The shepherd has to watch them constantly and carefully. He says, if you're going down the road and you see a sheet with his feet all up, stop and help it back up because it's going to die if it's not paid attention to quickly.

So they get what they call cast and they can't get up. They need help to get back up. And he showed a video of that. Like I said, I watched several videos of farmers and what they do, and he showed how the sheep got back up. And I thought it was interesting as he got him back up on his feet, it took him a while to get where he could walk again.

He certainly couldn't run. And I thought, well, that's very interesting of us. We may get down and our shepherd has to pick us up. We just want to think, I ought to get right back to it, right? I ought to bounce right back to where I was.

[23 : 42] Sometimes when we get in a difficult spot and the Lord has to help us, sometimes it takes time to get back to where we were. And I just saw that as I watched this video. Sheep are very sensitive and that they recognize their shepherd's voice. They recognize one another's voice. A lamb will hear its mama to use voice.

They're very sensitive to this. They're very much a herd type creature. And they have a shepherd, and they get used and accustomed to his voice. They'll come to him and calmly. But if you speak to him and you're not the shepherd, they're not so friendly.

They don't come so easily if they don't know who you are. So they're sensitive to that. Sheep are not meant to carry burdens. You ever seen a saddle on a sheep? If you hit somebody was abusing that sheep.

You don't put backpackers. They're not made to carry anything. But if you look at them and you cut all that wool off, they're a frail looking critter. Very little supporting how you talk about people that don't have very big legs. And I called my son, he's going to get mad at me about this, but I called

my son got chicken legs.

I mean, he's a pretty good sized guy, but he's got legs about that big around. You need to sue somebody for mouth support. That's the way a sheep is. They don't have much strength in their legs and they're not intended to carry burdens. What does that sound very familiar?

[25 : 26] Sheep will settle for less. What do I mean by that? He would explain in his videos how sheep, they would eat the grass till it was just gone. If you didn't move them, if you didn't watch them, they would destroy a pasture. And even if the pasture's grass got dry and withered up, they'd still try to eat it.

If they found a muddy water hole, they were going to drink out of that muddy waterhole. Maybe it was stagnant water and it makes them sick and they'll eat or drink anything.

They just settle for whatever they can find. I don't know, they're scavengers, but they just pretty content just to eat whatever, whenever. Doesn't it just sound like people? Are you seeing why the Lord may refer to us as sheep, but we settle for a lot of things that God has so much more for us? Let me go on.

Where they cannot connect. Sheep cannot care for themselves when wounded. They have no I mean like a dog, he gets what? He'll lick it. Lick it and lick it.

And in his saliva, his healing. Sheep don't have that ability, from what I understand, if they could even get to their wound, they don't have the ability to ward off parasites and infections and all that in their system, so they need help. The shepherd regularly has to examine the sheep to see if there's problems, to see if there's wounds, if anything needs addressing or taken care of. So as sheep, you say, oh, I'm a sheep. God compares me as a cute little lamb.

[27 : 14] He's so cute and cuddly and that's what I'm compared to. You don't look too pretty now, does it? Yeah, little lambs are cute, but they grew up to be pretty stupid and pretty helpless, pretty defenseless, and they just don't have a brain that don't seem like now, if you worked with sheep, maybe you'd tell me different. But from what she said, no, they don't. I've had a few dogs like that.

A dumb dog ever walked through the earth, so maybe that's much like sheep. So don't get so excited that we're called sheep, but then you can get excited that we have a shepherd. See, sheep are good, sheep are healthy. Sheep are worth a lot of money, the hair, the milk, they make cheese and Lord forbid that we take one too and have lamb good for eating. They're good for a lot of things if they're cared for properly, but they can't care for themselves.

So they need a good shepherd to care for them. They need a good shepherd that will manage the flock, that will make sure they have green pastures and make sure they have good water, that they make sure they have the medications and the ointments they need and the things to protect them. So now, in light of all that, let's look at the 23rd song. David, I believe, is the one who wrote this. It says, the Lord is my shepherd.

Now, as this gentleman was explaining and talking about over there, that some farmers, sheep farmers, are well known for their prize winning sheep, beautiful sheep, beautiful pastures, and they're recognized throughout the land for their ability to raise prized sheep. And these other little farmers that are going to get into that, they look up to these farmers and they say, wow, I could learn a lot from Him. I could gain a lot from him because he takes so well care of his sheep and his pastors and all that. And David says, the Lord is my shepherd. Wow.

Now, who is he talking about? Well, first of all, he's talking about the God of Israel. We may know Him as the God of all creation is my shepherd, the everlasting Father of all nations, the Bible calls him. How about the great I am? He is my shepherd.

[29 : 50] Now, that's a pretty good reputation, isn't it? That's pretty secure in understanding who owns you, who cares for you, who guides you, who's going to protect you, who's going to nourish you, who's going to make sure you're okay as little sheep? It's the Lord. He is my shepherd. And because he is such a great shepherd, because he cares for me so much, he says in the next verse, I shall not want.

I have no need of want. Why? Because I'm falling under the discipline of the shepherd, and I know I shouldn't ask for anything that he, you know, he hadn't already given me, and I better be obedient. If he wants me to have it, I'll have it. Right?

Well, I think the idea is here, I shall not want because of everything that I need, everything that makes me flourish, that feeds me, he's already cared for, he's already brought to me. I'm perfectly content is what I think that says I shall not want. It means I'm content where I'm at. I am so well taken care of. I am so provided for and protected.

I don't have any need of want because the great shepherd takes care of my wants, takes care of my needs. So the Lord is my shepherd. I have no needle vault. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. Now, getting back to sheep and not being very smart, why do you got to think you got to make them lay down?

Why do you think that's? Sheep needs rest, right. And they need to lay down properly. And the shepherd is always providing, and he's making them to lay down. But also, look at this a little bit different.

[31 : 51] He provides the best care for me, and I'm satisfied and content. He makes me it's almost like saying that what am I trying to say? It's like saying what I made a good meal. My belly is full. I'm satisfied with it.

It's a beautiful, crisp, 37 degrees outside. It's time for a nap. I could rest here. My soul is satisfied. It makes me want to just rest in him, rest.

And he said he makes me to lay down. I'm satisfied and content now. She don't want to lay down unless some requirements are met. They got to be free from fear. They can be worried and agitated that something may get them, or they'll never rest.

They're constantly moving around, maybe scattered, but if they're perfectly content and no fear, they have no problem laying down and resting. He says they're free from the friction in the flock. If you've got a couple of rams over there fussing and fighting and carrying on, the whole flock is going to be scattered and up and in an uproar. But if everybody's at one with one another, they have no problem resting. What does that sound like?

The church? See how you can apply a lot of this to it? No matter how much we can praise the Lord and how much there's oneness and unity in the body of Christ, when we're not doing this, when we're understanding he's my shepherd, he's provided all my needs, and I love you, you love me, and we're all in unity together. Let's just rest in the Lord. Let's rest in Christ our Savior.

[33 : 44] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. When they're free from pests, the flies aren't irritating them. They'll lay down. They're free from when their bellies are full. They're not hungry anymore.

They'll lay down. They've just fed in green, flush pastures. It's time to dress. They'll do this if these are satisfied. And it's a lot like us when we have the same thing.

There's no friction, there's no fear, there's no agitation from the outside. We're not hungry. We can lay down in his green pastures. I wonder as David wrote this now, he knew a thing or two about being a shepherd because he was a shepherd boy. Remember how he killed the lion?

He killed the bear. He protected and watched over the sheep. That was often the job of the youngest of the family. It was his job to take care of the sheep. And it's interesting to me that God was preparing David out there with Him sheep to be the king of Israel.

And as David would lead them to green pastures, their bellies were fueled. They knew the shepherd was watching over and protecting and providing them. I believe that maybe that's where David learned to play his harp. And he played his harp, and maybe he would even sing to his sheep to calm them, to calm their attitude. We see that when Samuel 16, about the last verse of 23, I think is the verse that he would see to solve.

[35 : 24] And when he sang to Saul, it calmed his nerve. It called attitude. I believe david learned that out in the fields with the sheep. I believe that maybe David just might have played for the sheep as he calmed them and made them to lie down and rest perfectly in the green pastures. He leadeth me beside the steel waters.

Did you notice something about the last verse in this verse? And the next verse, he leadeth me he maketh me to lie down in green vesters. The next verse, he restores my soul. And the next part, he leads me in the press, all the satisfied sheep. To be satisfied and content depends on the shepherd. He okay. So it's all about he leadeth me. Besides the steel waters, it's the shepherds doing, not the sheep. The steel waters. They say that sheep don't really like or really shouldn't drink steel water. As far as not moving, it becomes stagnant, it comes muddy. They need water that's gently flowing. If it's rushing water, it scares them and they get nervous and they have a hard time drinking because the water is too rough and too loud and they're not going to feed. They want steel flowing waters. A good shepherd knows that and finds those kind of waters and takes them to it.

He leadeth me beside the still waters. It's peacefully. He restores my soul. As I said earlier, the shepherd is always watching his sheep, always conscious of constant of animals to attack them, to predators coming, of problems within them, of flies. They say these flies that land on them and lay

their larvae and that can cause problems.

[37 : 29] And the shepherds always got to be watching that. If they get turned up to cast upside down, the shepherd's got to always be on guard watching that and make sure it's not going on to protect them, to watch over them and to restore them to their feet. The shepherd is always watching those to do that, to bring them and keep them in good health.

He's restoring my soul. He's putting me back on my feet. He restored me and restored the relationship between God and me through his shed blood on the cross. But daily, as a Christian, he restores me and lifts me up and encouraged me and sets me my feet on the ground. As David said. He puts my feet upon the rock on solid ground to help me to walk. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. As I said, this farmer was talking about these great farmers that were known through all out the land that they cared for their sheep. The shepherd would lead them in the right way because his reputation depended on it. It's who he was as a farmer, who he was as a shepherd.

Everybody knew he was going to take care of his sheep. If God is your shepherd, you know he's going to take care of you. Others know he's going to take care of you. He's going to lead you he's going to guide you. This is not a thing for death, I don't think.

I think this is a thing for everyday living, for the Christian. As we walk our days and have our lives, we walk as knowing that our shepherd cares for us, loves for us, protects us.

[39 : 22] A good shepherd that leadeth in the path of righteousness. He understands that this pasture, the sheep would just eat it down to nothing if I don't move them to another pasture, if I don't need them to. So he brings them in a flock and he leads them. He doesn't drive them. You can't drive sheep.

What happens if you try to drive sheep? They scatter. They got to be led. And so our shepherd gently leads us in the past, in the right path, in the past of righteousness, the way they'd have us to go, that is best for us.

This must be done. He talked about how the shepherd would go in from one pasture. Especially back in ancient times, they weren't like today where we have 1000 acres and three or 400 acres is fenced off here for a pasture and three or 400 acres over here. They would have to actually move from this area to a whole another area because grass was sparse. Remember, in David's time, they're in pretty much a desert land and finding grass can be difficult.

So it meant that the shepherd had to go ahead of them before them and scout out the path, scout out the pastures. We'll get to that in just a minute. To look for grazing ground and to know the right way to lead his sheep. The shepherd knows this. The shepherd is already prepared for this.

And he says that as he has planned that out and he begins to lead me to these greener pastures, we come to verse four. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Now, a lot of times people use this in a funeral because we think of death being the shadow of death, death being the time, the valley that I'm going through. You can be going through any kind of valley in your life. Then you may feel like, oh my goodness, am I ever going to get out of there's?

[41 : 30] Nothing green here. There's not much fresh water here. This is not a very good place for me to be. I'm not enjoying my place here. But, you know, as he leads you through the valley of the shadow, it's not death.

It may appear death, but Jesus has took away this thing of death. Death is not a terrible thing for the believer. Death is the beginning of life for the believer. But in this world, it's a shadow of it's not going to take you, it's just a reflection of it. It's not going to hurt you.

And in these times of this shadow of death, it's interesting to me how when the shepherd would lead them, he's leading, and what's happening with the flock, they're close by his side. They're right there with the shepherd because they know that's where their comfort is. They know that's where their protection is. That's when they're closest to the shepherd, is when they're going through these dark valleys. That's when they don't scatter, they don't roam, they're not really at peace.

But they're close by, the shepherd walking right beside him as he leads them through this area. See these shadows, these dark valleys that we go through, I believe, is the time that God draws us closer to himself, gently nudging us, keeping us right there, close, protecting us as we go through these difficult times. See, the shepherd knows that he must go through this valley to reach higher ground, to reach greener pastures, to reach purer waters. The shepherd already knows this, but he also knows he's got to take you through this to get there. And he's going to keep you close, he's

going to protect you.

He never leaves his sheep during this time. He never leaves them unprotected. But he leads them gently and carefully through these times. He says, during these times, the sheep know thy rod and thy staff. They comfort me.

[43 : 52] Now, we all know a shepherd, and we see the shepherd at Christmas, and they've got this staff with a crook in it. That's the staff, but that's not the rod. See, the rod David is talking about here are the tools of the shepherd of that day. Nowadays, the rod would be a pistol, probably something to protect the sheep from wild animals, from predators that would get them. But in that day, the rod was a club, and they often had big rocks or maybe spikes sticking out of it.

And this club was used to kill animals that were trying to hurt his sheep. David had a slingshot. He was more modern than maybe some of them. He was good. Wasn't a slingshot, it was a slingshot. But this ride is a way of protection. This ride protects, and the sheep know this, that he has this rod hanging, rod hanging on his belt, so to speak. And it's always there to protect the sheep. But the staff is not used for protection. The staff is used to nudge, gently nudge, and to keep them close, to keep them together.

It's just a thin, small rod with a hook on it. Sometimes with all their wool stuff, they get in a briar patch. You ever got in a briar patch and didn't think you'd ever get it out? All your clothes, that's the way sheep are. They get all tangled up and the shepherd could reach in there with that hook and pull them out.

It was a tool to keep the sheep together, to keep them in the flock. It was a thing that the sheep would consider to be something good for them. As he kept him close and kept him in line. But then he had to ride to protect them from evil. Thy rod and thy staff, they're a comfort to me, thou anointed let's see now I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

[45 : 57] Verse five. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Now, how many seen sheep sitting at a table? I haven't. Maybe you got some talented sheep, but that's not what he's talking about here.

I did some research on that and it's interesting. In the ancient times and stuff as they would go up these mesas and stuff and there would be dry valleys and stuff and they'd have to get up to higher land. And out in Colorado, Ken, you'd understand that we call them basins. At the top of the mountain there was these basins where the water would flow into and boy, it was just lush and green, dirty. Those were called tables of that time up in the higher plains.

There was a table there with lush green pastures. And he says, Thou prepare us the table. Why you got it prepared? It's already there. No, the shepherd would go ahead of the sheep and make sure that there was no wild animals close by.

He would make sure there was no poisonous weeds that the sheep could eat. He would make sure that there was no stagnant water build up that they would drink and get sick. He prepared that area for his sheep to come and to feed and to drink and to have protection and comfort. Thou prepares to table before me even in the presence of my enemies. Yeah, there's the enemies lurking.

But you don't have to worry. The shepherd's already taking care of this area and you're safe within that area. You are protected in that area that he's provided for you.

[47 : 40] I think of the verses the eyes of the Lord are always watching and listening for danger. See, in these tables, or what we would call basins, wide open fields at the top of a mountain somewhere. Oftentimes there was a cliff on the other side or a cliff coming up and the sheep were safe there. And you could hear the sound of the sheep as they would feed and they would make noises. And I can just picture the shepherd sitting up on a rock.

I actually were out in a plate, and you probably were, too. And those of you ever been out in the Rockies and hunted? I just sit on a big rock and just watched an area like this. And you could hear the sounds bouncing off the mountains as these little squirrel things, they got to make an awful racket, but it echo all off the mountains. And I could just imagine a shepherd sitting there on that rock, david maybe playing his heart, listening to his sheep.

Just so content, so peaceful. But if a predator came, what does sheep do? He start stirring around. He could see that if he got too close, they would start calling out to Him, calling out for help, calling out for warning to the rest of the flock. There's danger in the area.

David could hear that. The shepherd could hear that. And as I think of that, and I think of the Psalm 30 415, the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. That's our shepherd. He hears us when we cry.

He knows when danger is coming. As he's lit us through these lush green pastures, as he prepared a way before us proverbs 521 for the ways of man or before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. You think of a shepherd that just always watching his sheep and what satisfaction I and I like I said, I've never raised sheep and done that with sheep, but I've had a garden. He couldn't talk to me. But I think I've shared with you before.

[49 : 51] After I'd get out, work in the garden and pull the weeds and stuff, I'd have a five gallon bucket and I'd just sit there for hours and look at my garden. So satisfying of the work that I put into it and to see it growing and know what it's going to produce. I can imagine a shepherd being the same way with his sheep. My sheep are content. They're satisfied with what I've provided for them.

They're healthy, they're well fed, they're well watered. They have all their need because I am a good shepherd. What a beautiful story we see as he prepares the table before me in the presence of my enemies. And he bring these sheep down, and a lot of times they say they bring them into the fold, they bring them into this area that they would keep them off. And they were just little short fences that they had one way in and one way out.

Usually no gate. That's interesting. But as they went in and out, ezekiel talked about passing under the rod. I believe as they went in and out, the shepherd would look at each one and examine each one and see if there was any wounds, if there was any parasites, if there was, it says, he said, thou anoint my head with oil, my cup runth over. They say they take olive oil and I think sofa, and they would smear on their head and make the flies stay away and the larvae wouldn't stick to them.

This guy was talking about a mixture of brandy and something else they would give him when it was cold. You ever done that? Wow, these sheep are okay. It's supposed to help them to stay warm, I guess, but they would take care of these sheep. And he said, you anoint my head with oil.

That means that you're caring for my wounds. You're caring for those things that frustrate me.

You're keeping those things away. As you anoint me with oil, as I'm anointed with your Holy Spirit, I have no worries. I have no concerns because he cares for me and my cup is running over.

[52 : 11] See, the shepherd had to have a keen eye to know the problems with the sheep, to care for the sheep. 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 is David as a sheep talking to his great shepherd as he would see his sheep that he tended to just so satisfied, so content. And if a sheep could talk, say, you know what, David? You're a pretty good old guy.

You play a heart pretty good. You feed me really well, you take care of me really good. I've always got good drinking water, and boy, you protect me. I don't want to go anywhere. I want to stay in your house forever.

I want to dwell because you are a good shepherd. And David, it says this surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Lord, for I'm very satisfied away. My shepherd cares for me, and one day I know that I will dwell in his presence forever. Now, we were referred to as a lot of sheep throughout Scripture, and I hope maybe, as I've explained some of Psalms 23, maybe next time you read it, you'll read it in a whole different way. It's God of all creation who cares me, he's my shepherd.

He's going to protect me. He's going to guide me, he's going to lead me. You said, well, where do you get that from, Brother Kenny? Jesus says he is the great shepherd. Now, for time's sake, I don't have time, but you can read it in John Ten 716.

I'll read just a few verses, then said Jesus unto them, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. You remember me telling you a while ago they had an area, the low fence that the sheep would go into, and the shepherd that he'd keep him in, and it had no door. Do you know why? Because the shepherd was the door. Nothing went out at night, and nothing came in that the shepherd didn't know.

[54 : 28] And Jesus says, I am that door. You are the sheep of my flock, and I am the door to this fold. No man comes to the Father except by me. I'm the only way. He said, those who might try to climb over the wall and do it, they're thieves, and they're come to steal and kill and destroy.

Only those who have been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ come through him, through the door, have access to God the Father. And no one comes in and no one goes out. That the good shepherd doesn't know it. He says in john Ten, verse eight. And all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, as I said, and the sheep.

But the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. By me, if any man enter, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pastures. Let me skip on down to verse 14. I am the good shepherd and

know my sheep, and am known of mine as the Father knows me.

Even so, I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. David knew a lot about this. You think he was thinking he was taking his life in his own hands with a lion to protect his sheep, with a bear. With the many, I'm sure there was a whole lot more predators that come along. But we know of those few the David protected.

Jesus said he laid down his life for us, for his sheep. To protect his sheep and other sheep. He says, I have of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Now, this is talking about he's talking to Israel at this time, right?

[56 : 28] This is John. He's talking to the disciples, and he says, you are my fold. Israel is my fold. But I've got the Gentiles, and I'm going to bring them into my fold. And we'll be one fold, and I will be their one shepherd, whoever comes by the blood of the Lamb.

Interesting things, as Jesus talks about, he is the great shepherd. He is the one who cares and protects and provides because he loves us, because his reputation depends upon it. I heard a while ago an interesting way to look at Psalm 23. Look at it as a promise from God. Not as a plea from David to his shepherd, but maybe a promise for God.

And I tried to put it in words, and I'm not a great orator, I understand that, but just you put it in your own words, but as if God is talking to you. I am your shepherd. I will supply your needs. I will make you rest in green pastures. I will lead you gently to gently flowing strings.

I will restore your soul. I will lead you in the right way. My reputation proves it.

Do not fear. I will protect you with my rod. And I will guide you with my staff as when we go through the valleys of darkness. I will bring you to tables of plenty. I will anoint you with oil so that you have all that you need.

[58 : 23] Not want, but need.

My goodness and my mercy shall be with you all the days of your life. And you will dwell in my presence forever. My question today is, do you know the Great Shepherd is Hebrews? I meant to read that and I put it up. Hebrews.

What do I do with it? I'm sorry. They're not very good, right? It's a very closing statement. Is it? Hebrews 11:13-20. Now, the God of peace that bought you again from the dead. Our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, through his own blood, he died for us. He gave his life for us, to provide a wave for us to be a part of his fold. He is our Great Shepherd.

Do you know that, Great Shepherd? First of all, I hope you do. Each and every one of you. I feel pretty confident that you all do here sitting today. But now I want to ask you, do you know the Great Shepherd provides all of your needs?

[59 : 53] Not just at death, not just at a funeral service, but in your everyday life constantly caring, constantly protecting, constantly guiding, constantly leading. That's our Great Shepherd. That's what the 23rd Psalm is about. What a mighty God we serve. Father.

We thank you for your word. We thank you that you do care for us and love us unconditionally, lord, we don't deserve Your grace and Your mercy. The Lord, we praise you for it. We praise you that we have that hope and that peace and the comfort that you can only give. Lord, as we go through our daily lives, I pray that we've just always looked to you for our guidance as you lead us through our lives and take us through difficult times.

The Lord help us to enjoy and be thankful for the good times for the tables of plenty that you have prepared for us. But know also that you're going to be there with us in the valley. Lord, just help us to do Your will. We just thank you for Your Word and all that it means to us. In Jesus name I pray. Amen. If you'll turn to page 596, I surrender. All amen. Good to have you with us today and I hope it's helped you. Have you ever looked at the 23rd Psalm that way before?

I hope you do now. Just go and look at it and just say what a great shepherd, what a mighty God we serve that cares for us so much. Anything else? All hearts of mind clear. We're a lot out of town.

[62 : 40] Just keep them in your prayers. And I know Bobby is saying he's got some kind of sinus something going on to keep him in your prayers. And the others. Don't forget Miss Eleanor's Card. Don't forget the boxes.

Don't forget choir practice. We've got Bible study Wednesday night. What else we're not forgetting? Don't forget about the parade meeting up here. The parade meeting with Clint up here.

Just a few minutes, if you're interested in that. And doing a parade in Luther's villain and maybe putting together some kind of little floater. It's just basically Lutherville is only that long. It's just a short parade. Throw out some candy, maybe some information about the church or whatever. He'll put that together. Anything else? All heart and mind clear. Good to have you Wednesday, brother. Jack, would you close some printer, please?