

Psalm 23 – Lesson Plan Outline

I've been thinking about [Psalm 23](#).

It's a short Psalm, just 6 verses but it is packed with good stuff.

I thought today we would spend some time going over verse one.

[Psalm 23, verse 1](#) says,
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ([KJV](#))

The [NIV](#) says, *The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

Because the Lord is our shepherd, we won't want for anything. We will lack nothing.

Looking at the first part of this verse I think of:

[Isaiah 40:11](#) - *He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.* (NIV)

This is such a sweet, comforting picture of how God loves us, of how He takes care of us.

How He is aware of our situation and holds us close as He leads us.

It's not some distant, arms' length away that He holds us.

He holds us up close and personal, in His arms, close to His heart!

A shepherd's job is to look after the sheep entrusted to him, to make sure they are safe, well taken care of, and to know where they are at all times, keeping track of them.

This is what Jesus does with us.

He takes care of us and He looks out for us.

Turn to [John 10:11-18](#)

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

This passage tells us a lot about Christ.

Jesus is talking in this passage.

He tells us in [Verse 11](#) He is the Good Shepherd and that He lays down His life for His sheep.

In verses [12 and 13](#) He is contrasting Himself with regular men, men who don't own the sheep so they run when trouble comes, but not Him. He doesn't run from trouble. He stays with us through it.

He takes care of us through it like a good shepherd is supposed to.

In verse 14 Jesus tells us again He is the good Shepherd.

This time He tells us He knows His sheep and His sheep know Him.

He then compares it to how the Father knows Him and He knows the Father.

All through the gospels Jesus makes it clear He and the Father (God) have a close, intimate relationship.

He's setting the example and showing us how we can and should be with Him.

He's modeling and explaining the kind of relationship we can, and should, have with Him.

He then repeats that He is laying His life down for His sheep.

He goes on further and says He is going to lay down His life and take it up again.

He makes it clear no one is taking it from Him, He's doing it of His own accord and that He has the authority to both lay it down and pick it back up.

It was a command He received from God the Father.

This is important because this conversation took place before the crucifixion.

Jesus was letting them, and us, know He was *choosing* to be crucified.

It wasn't something being done to Him that He had no control over.

It wasn't being forced on Him.

It was something He chose.

It was planned ahead of time.

It was something The Shepherd was going to do to take care of us the best way possible, which is what a Good Shepherd does.

Jesus was going to pay the ultimate price so that if we accepted His gift, we could be okay once and for all.

I'd say that's a pretty Good Shepherd.

The other part of this verse is *I shall not want*.

Now, understand in this situation when it says I shall not want, it's not saying we will have everything we want, it's saying we will not be in want of anything we need.

The Lord is our provider. He is Yahweh Yireh, or as some say - Jehovah Jireh, the God Who Provides.

In [Philippians 4:19](#) Paul tells us, *And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus*.

This is a great comfort to me because it means whatever I need, mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally God will provide it.

A lot of times when people see this verse they think about the material needs - money for bills, clothes, car repairs, stuff like that. And He does, but it's sooo much more than that.

It is literally anything you need.

A big part of Him being our Shepherd is that He is responsible for our care.

He takes care of us.

Providing for us is an important part of that.

We do have our part to do - trusting Him and serving Him as our God.

We also have to trust and believe He will provide for us.

Notice, too, it says according to His riches, not ours.

It's not about what we do or don't have.

It's about what He has.

[Psalm 34:9-10](#) tells us to:

Fear the Lord, you His holy people, for those who fear Him lack nothing. ¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. (NIV)

That's not scaredy-cat fear of someone who's going to "get you".

It's extreme awe and reverence as you realize Who He really is.

It's knowing your place in the Universe is so small in comparison to His greatness.

It's knowing that He is THE GOD of the Universe, the One Who spoke this World into existence.

It's a fear of His greatness, power, and glory as you seek to honor, worship, and praise Him while also seeking not to disrespect Him.

It's knowing and acting accordingly as you recognize and acknowledge that as the one and only God He is due all our respect, honor, and praise and that He is a Mighty God.

[Verse 9](#) tells us that if we will fear Him we will lack nothing.

Fear the Lord, you His holy people, for those who fear Him lack nothing.

[Verse 10](#) tells us that if we will seek Him we will lack no good thing.

¹⁰*The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. (NIV)*

So, when we put all this together we see that because the Lord is our Shepherd, we will lack nothing.

He will supply all our needs according to His riches.

He will gather us in His arms and hold us close to His heart.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd will be there for us and won't run out on us in times of trouble.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd willingly laid down His life for us.

He wants us to have a relationship with Him like He does with the Father.

If we will fear and seek Him we will lack no good thing.

I want to encourage you, especially now when the world seems to be off-kilter because of this virus, to trust Him to Shepherd you and to provide for you in all ways.

Our God is able.

This Week's Homework -

Consider these things -

Are you trusting God to Shepherd you? Are you allowing Him to lead you and take care of you? Or, are you trying to shepherd yourself?

Do you have needs in your life that you haven't asked Him for help with?

Are there things in your life you are trying to provide for yourself?

What can/should you take to Him in prayer to ask Him to supply for you?

Memory Verse

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. [2 Corinthians 9:8](#) (NIV)