Psalm 23 (Part 3)

"I Shall Not Lack - Protection"

(God's Sheep Shall Not Lack Security)

4/24/2019



INTRODUCTION:



**** God's Sheep Shall Not Lack Protection!***
Our Shepherd meets our need for <u>security</u>.

(Because God is <u>with us</u>, we should not fear)
Our Shepherd meets our need for <u>security</u>, because He is our <u>Guard</u>.

I. GOD IS <u>WITH HIS SHEEP</u>.

II. GOD IS WITH YOU TO <u>PROTECT YOU</u> FROM DANGER *("ROD")*



III. GOD IS WITH YOU TO KEEP YOU <u>FROM STRAYING</u> INTO DANGER *("STAFF")*

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I. GOD IS <u>WITH HIS SHEEP</u>.

"Yea though I walk…" – Implied here is the fact that sometimes the sheep do face difficult situations and circumstances. It's not that the shepherd is unconcerned about the sheep, yea it is necessary that he lead them to greener pastures (as the summer months burn off the green foliage) or to their winter caves for protection from the approaching cold. This migration often leads through dark and danger-filled valleys.

Every mountain has its valleys!

"As Christians we will sooner or later discover that it is in the valleys of our lives that we find refreshment from God Himself. It is not until we have walked with Him through some very deep troubles that we discover He can lead us to find our refreshment in Him right there in the midst of our difficulty. We are thrilled beyond words when there comes restoration to our souls and spirits from His own gracious Spirit.
During my wife's illness and after her death I could not get over the strength, solace, and serene outlook imparted to me virtually hour after hour by the presence of God's gracious Spirit Himself." (Keller, p. 103).

"In fact, there are those who claim they could not face such a situation. But for the man or woman who walks with God through these valleys, such real and actual refreshment *is* available. The corollary to this is that only those who have been through such dark valleys can console, comfort, or encourage others in similar situations." (Keller, p. 104).

"Shadow of death" = death's darkness. The word is a compound of ( ) darkness and ( ) death.

We all go through deep, dark valleys (JOKE: In NY, you may go through some deep, dark alleys!)

In the land of Israel, the sheep were often led into some deep ravines (in search of water, etc.) and in those dark, tight areas lurked many wild beasts. The possibility of being suddenly attacked always existed.

EX: David protected his flock by killing a lion and a bear with his own hands (I Sam. 17:33-37).

"God's companionship is not conditioned by the nature of the road" (Jowett, p. 40). (EX. of some friends who will depart when the road gets tough).

God wants to show his presence all the more in those rough situations.

Remember, you are never alone! If you have Christ.

Sometimes it may appear in life that the Devil appears to be more powerful than God (when evil surrounds us), but God is there!
"The darkness and the light are both alike to God!" (Ps. 139). You are not hidden, you are not alone.

The LORD is with His Sheep!

As He said to Isaac:
Ge 26:24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

As He said to Jacob:
Ge 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

As He said to Israel through Isaiah:
Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
Isa 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

As He said to Jeremiah:
Jer 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.
Jer 1:19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Jer 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

As He said to the Apostle Paul:
Ac 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

In the Great Commission, our Lord promised His presence…
Mt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

"Conversation" - way of life; character and conduct; lifestyle.

"Coveteousness" = lit. without an affection for money; no love for money (cp. I Tim. 6:6-10, 17)

"Content" - satisfied; view what you have as enough (food and clothing are all you need!) (I Tim. 6:8)

A greed for money reveals insecurity in a person's life; people treasure wealth because it offers them a false sense of comfort and security for their future.

However, our trust ought to be in God; in the Giver rather than the gifts; in the Supplier rather than the supply; in the Provider rather than the provision!

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - A clause often taken out of context; its specific application is to provide a substantial reason why we can be content and free from a love for money.

The reason we don't need to worry about money is because the Provider is never going to leave us! Our security is in Him! He is not a Savior who is "here today and gone tomorrow"! He will never abandon or desert us!

Dt. 31:6 - *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."*

Psalm 37:28 - *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Psalm 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

"The Lord is my helper" - One who comes to the rescue in time of need.

Saying "the Lord is my helper" is to say:

--the Lord is my provider
--the Lord is my guide
--the Lord is my protector
--the Lord is my preserver
--the Lord is my job security
--the Lord is my mortgage payer
--the Lord is my bank account

etc.

***"I will not fear"* -** Faith in His abiding presence (v. 5) expels all fear (v. 6)

Footprints in the Sand Poem

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed
he was walking along the beach with the LORD.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene he noticed two sets of
footprints in the sand: one belonging
to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of
his life there was only one set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very
lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he
questioned the LORD about it:

"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow
you, you'd walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most
troublesome times in my life,
there is only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why when
I needed you most you would leave me."

The LORD replied:

"My son, my precious child,
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."

II. GOD IS WITH YOU TO PROTECT YOU FROM DANGER ("ROD")

"Each shepherd boy, from the time he first starts to tend his father's flock, takes special pride in the selection of a rod and staff exactly suited to his own size and strength. He goes into the bush and selects a young sap.ing which is dug from the ground. This is carved and whittled down with great care and patience. The enlarged base of the sapling where its trunk joins the roots is shaped into a smooth, rounded head of hard wood. The sapling itself is shaped to exactly fit the owners hand. After he completes it, the shepherd boy spends hours practicing with this club, learning how to throw it with amazing speed and accuracy. It becomes his main weapon of defense for both himself and his sheep." (Keller, p. 112)

In the Bible, the Shepherds "rod" had three major purposes:

A Defensive Weapon:

"Your rod" = a weapon of defense, a club with which to drive off the beasts of prey which attack the sheep.

"The skilled shepherd uses his rod to drive off predators like coyotes, wolves, cougars, or stray dogs. Often it is used to beat the brush, discouraging snakes and other creatures from disturbing the flock. In extreme cases, such as David recounted to Saul, the Psalmist no doubt used his rod to attack the lion and the bear that came to raid the flocks." (Keller, p. 117)

(cp. Ps. 2:9 - Jesus will destroy his enemies with a rod of iron when He comes back!).

- God defended Israel from the pursuing Egyptian army at the Red Sea
- God defended Sarah from Abimelech, King of Gerer.
- God defended Moses from the rebellion of Korah.
- God defended Esther, Mordechai, and all of Israel from Haman
- God defended Shadrach, Meshech, and Nabed-Nego from Nebuchadnezzar.
- God defended Daniel from the Lion den of Medo-Persia.
- God defended Paul at the Philippian Jail

A Tool for Discipline:

Pr 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

A Tool to count and care for the Sheep:

"Another interesting use of the rod in the Shepherd's hand was to examine and count the sheep. In the terminology of the Old Testament this was referred to as passing "under the rod" (see Ezekiel 20:37). This meant not only coming under the owner's control and authority, but also to be subject to his most careful, intimate, and firsthand examination. A sheep that passed "under the rod" was one which had been counted and looked over with great care to make sure all was well with it.

Because of their long wool, it is not always easy to detect disease, wounds, or defects in sheep. For example, at a sheep show an inferior animal can be clipped and shaped and shown so as to appear a perfect specimen. But the skilled judge will take his rod and part the sheep's wool to determine the condition of the skin, the cleanliness of the fleece, and the conformation of the body. In plain language, one just does not "pull the wool over his eyes" ." (Keller, p. 116)

III. GOD IS WITH YOU TO KEEP YOU <u>FROM STRAYING</u> INTO DANGER ("STAFF")

"There are three areas of sheep management in which the staff plays a most significant role. The first of these lies in drawing sheep together into an intimate relationship. The shepherd will use his staff to gently lift a newborn lamb and bring it to its mother if they become separated." (Keller, p. 120).

"The staff is also used for guiding sheep. Again and again I have seen a shepherd use his staff to guide some sheep gently into a new path or through some gate or along dangerous, difficult routes. He does not use it actually to beat the beast. Rather, the tip of the long, slender stick is laid gently against the animal's side, and the pressure applied guides the sheep in the way the owner wants it to go. Thus the sheep is reassured of its proper path. Sometimes I have been fascinated to see how a shepherd will actually hold his staff against the side of some sheep that is a special pet or favorite, simply so that they are 'in touch.' They will walk along this way almost as though it were 'hand-in-hand.' The sheep obviously enjoys this special attention from the shepherd and revels in the close, personal, intimate contact between them." (Keller, p. 122).

"Your staff" = a stick that the shepherd would lean on when resting, and would use to guide his sheep from straying away.

It is comforting to know that God will not allow His sheep to <u>permanently wander off</u> into devastating danger.

Song - "How Can I Fear?"

God is our protector from all forms of harm:

Especially from Spiritual harm!

Satan - the liar - is constantly trying to get men to doubt God. (cp. Gen. 3:1). Many real Christians are sometimes plagued by torment, fear, and doubt regarding their salvation. God seems so far away; they seem trapped.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE LACK ASSURANCE?

A. POSSIBLY THEY ARE UNSAVED

1. They don't have life (I Jn. 5:12) (This is why there is no change on their life)

2. They don't have spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14) (This is why they don't understand Scripture)

3. They are blind (II Cor. 4:3-4; cp. Jn. 12:40)

   **Examine yourselves to see whether you be in the faith - II Cor. 13:5)

B. POSSIBLY THEY HAVE LAPSES IN WHICH THEY DOUBT GOD'S TRUSTWORTHINESS

1. Because of man's untrustworthiness

   In a world where one's word is not trustworthy, many Christians unconsciously doubt God's Word. There was a day when you could trust a person when he said: "You have my word on it." We tend to unconsciously connect man's fraud, disloyalty and unfaithfulness to God.

2. Because of extreme introspection

   a. Seeking a certain feeling. Don't trust feelings; trust the facts of God's Word

   b. Feeling unworthy ("fear hath torment" - I Jn. 4:18)

C. POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF <u>FALSE TEACHING</u>

Note: warnings to beware of false teachers (II Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:9-10)

Examples of false teaching:

1. They say, "If you didn't repent enough - you are not saved."
   (The question is not did you repent enough; but rather did you genuinely repent--that is, have a <u>change of mind</u> regarding your sin and Christ's sufficiency.)

2. They say, "If there is illness, hardship or trouble in your life - you are not saved."

3. They say, "If you cannot give a <u>specific</u> date - you are not saved."
   What is important is <u>not</u> that you can remember the exact date but that there was one. If you presently believe that Christ died for your sins (I Cor. 15:3), there was a time when this belief began.

4. They say, "If you have committed the <u>unpardonable sin</u> - you are not saved."
   NOTE: In the context of Mt. 12:24-32, the unpardonable sin is: "the willful, continued denial of the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning the person and work of Christ."

5. They say, "The Bible teaches that a saved person can lose his salvation."

   Examples of their proof texts:

   Heb. 6:1-6 - This passage describes true Jewish believers, who were failing to go on to maturity because of attempts to <u>relay the foundation of repentance</u> (v.1) each time they sinned (v.6). God teaches that such a renewal is impossible (v.6) yea, unnecessary (note context - v. 9-ff) [Note: these Jewish believers had a tendency to go back into Judaism). Verse 6 teaches that such an attempt is futile. (The key word to understand this passage is the word "again" (v.1 & 6).

   II Pet. 2:19-22 - This passage does not describe believers but unbelievers -- people who were never saved.

   Gal. 5:1-4 ["fallen from grace"] - These were people who never had God's Grace, because they were trusting the Law and their works.

   I Cor. 9:26-27 ["cast away"] - Being a "cast away" literally means to be <u>disqualified</u> from receiving rewards.

D. POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF <u>UNCONFESSED SIN</u>

1. When you sin you break <u>fellowship</u> with God but <u>not</u> your <u>relationship</u> to God. See: I John 1

2. When you sin you <u>grieve</u> the Holy Spirit

   Note: Assurance is a <u>gift</u> of the Spirit ("His Spirit bears witness with our Spirit" Rom. 8) Assurance is a blessing like any other blessing. **Assurance can be <u>forfeited</u> by disobedience because the Spirit is grieved.** Assurance can then come under thee attack of "the accuser of the Brethren."

   NOTE: One who is genuinely born again cannot continually practice sin

   Why? 1) His "seed" (God's divine nature) will prevent it (I Jn. 3:9)

   2) God will chasten him (Heb. 12:5-11)

John Newton the Author of the old, great hymn "Amazing Grace" said:

"I am not what I <u>ought</u> to be,
I am not what I <u>want</u> to be,
I am not what I <u>hope</u> to be in another world;
but still (praise God)
I am not what I once <u>used to be</u>,
and by the grace of God I am what I am."

HOW CAN YOU KNOW ONCE YOU ARE SAVED, THAT YOU WILL <u>ALWAYS BE SAVED</u>?

Will the salvation of a genuine believer ever be lost?

1. THE **DEFINITION** OF SALVATION PROVES ETERNAL SECURITY.

If keeping our salvation depended on our works, we might lose it.

The Bible, however, declares that "salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). It is a work originated by God the Father, wrought through Christ the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit. The very definition of the word "salvation" argues for eternal security because it communicates a saving, rescuing, deliverance, and preservation from the bondage of Satan, sin, and sin's consequences (hell), and a permanent restoration and renewal unto God, making the believer a partaker of the infinite riches of God's grace.

The Apostle Paul gives a definite, clear description of how a sinner is saved by saying that salvation is "by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Salvation is not "by faith through grace," which would place the emphasis upon man's faith; rather, it is **by grace**, placing the emphasis upon God and not man.

2. THE **BENEFITS** OF SALVATION PROVE ETERNAL SECURITY

If full salvation was not a present possession we might lose it.

The Bible declares that a believer has already been saved (past tense); and Heaven's possession (with its blessings) are already ours.

1. We have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3)
2. We have already been accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6)
3. We presently possess redemption and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7)
4. We have already obtained an inheritance (Eph. 1:11)
5. We have already been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13)
6. We have already been quickened (made alive) with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
7. We have already been raised up and seated together with Christ (Eph. 2:6)

(NOTE: V. 8 - "are ye saved" = Greek "you have been saved and still are" (perfect, passive participle)

The Bible declares that a believer has already been saved from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13), from wrath (I Th. 5:9), from death (see II Cor. 1:10), and from destruction (II Th. 1:9). A sinner who trusts in Christ becomes: a child of God (Jn. 1:12-13), regenerated (Tit. 3:5), a new creature (II Cor. 5:17), a heavenly citizen (Phil. 3:20), an heir to God's grace and inheritance (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:18), and complete in Christ (Col. 2:9-10).

It is by an act of the immutable God that a believing sinner is "declared righteous" (Rom.

3:21-26), sanctified (I Cor. 6:11), perfected forever (Heb. 10:14), delivered from the powers of darkness (Acts 26:18), and placed on the solid Rock (I Cor. 3:9-15).

Therefore, believers can know that they are: of God (I Jn. 5:19), have passed from death (I Jn. 3:14), are "in Him" (I Jn. 2:5), possess eternal life (I Jn. 5:11).

In the future, believers shall be: raised (I Th. 4:16), changed (I Cor. 15:52), caught up (I Th. 4:17), be like Him (I Jn. 3:2), be with Him (I Th. 4:17), and be satisfied (Ps. 17:15).

3. THE **GOD** OF SALVATION PROVES ETERNAL SECURITY.

If our salvation was not resting in the unchanging character of God, we might lose it.

a. The Bible describes God as a God of trustworthiness.
"He abideth faithful" (II Tim. 2:13); "He cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2); and "His Word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Paul had confidence in the trustworthiness of God when he said to Timothy "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

b. Secondly, the Bible describes God as a God of love.

1) God's love is unconditional (Rom. 5:8). Paul states that if Christ was willing to die for men though they were sinners, how much more will He keep them once He has saved them -- "much more then being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him!" (Rom. 5:8-9)

2) God's love is undeserved. (I Jn.4:10)

A man having been saved for many years is no more worthy of God's saving grace (a manifestation of His love) than he was before salvation or at the time of salvation. Men are saved by unmerited grace and kept saved by unmerited grace! (Rom.4; Gal.3:2,3).

3) God's love is unending.

Paul in Romans 8:35, 38-39 states that absolutely nothing can separate one who is justified by God (Rom. 8:33) from "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

c. Thirdly, the Bible describes God as a God of power or ability.

A believer is saved by the power of God and is sustained by that same power. God "is able to save them to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25); He is able to keep a believer from falling, and to present him faultless before the presence of His glory (Jude 24). The Lord Jesus personally gave assurance of eternal salvation when He said, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (Jn. 10:28). The word "never" is extremely emphatic in the Greek; Jesus used a double negative (@Û :0). The word "eternal" means "everlasting" and is found in either form in Jn. 3:15, 5:24; 6:27, 40; 12:49-50; 17:2-3). The Apostle Peter states that the Christian has "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time" (I pet. 1:4, 5).

d. Fourthly, the Bible declares that God is a God of justice.

God, being a just Judge, has been fully and exclusively propitiated (satisfied) by the atoning, substitutionary work of His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24, 25). The justice of God makes the perseverance of the saints a necessity, because God cannot punish sin twice. It is impossible that the punishment be paid for once by Christ (Heb. 8:28; I Pet. 3:18) and a second time by the ones who have at one time received a pardon. The sentence of justification is pronounced by God Himself and none can reverse it. "...It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Ro. 8:34). Paul triumphantly declares that those who are justified will also be glorified (Rom. 8:30) and God's work will last forever (Ecc. 3:14; Phil. 1:6).

4. THE **GRACE** OF SALVATION PROVES ETERNAL SECURITY

If our salvation did not depend solely upon the grace of God, we might lose it.

The Bible teaches that eternal life is dependent totally upon the Life-giver. To make life dependent on the believer is to dishonor the Life-giver, and to make man his own preserver. Hence, works would play a part in man's salvation and would thus nullify grace (Rom. 4:4). While believers are not saved by works but by grace through faith, the Bible is explicit that saving faith will be followed by works (James 2). However, even in works after salvation, it is "God" that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10).

Paul, writing to the carnal Corinthians said that it is "our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also

confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful..." (I Cor. 1:8-9). The psalmist wrote, "For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance" (Ps. 94:14; cp. Heb. 13:5).

5. BEING **"IN CHRIST"** AT SALVATION PROVES ETERNAL SECURITY

If salvation did not unite us to Christ, we might lost it.

Every believer is inseparably united by the Holy Spirit into Christ's body (Rom. 6; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:23-32). "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30). Being "in Christ" is an extremely strong support for perseverance. "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). The phrase "in Christ" is found 12 times int he book of Ephesians alone! The believer being "in Christ" is a body part that will never be amputated.

6. THE **HOLY SPIRIT** OF SALVATION PROVES ETERNAL SECURITY

If salvation were not guaranteed, we might lose it.

Believers possess the Holy Spirit as a down-payment, promising that the Owner (God) will receive His possession (believers). Believers are both "sealed" (indicating security) and are given an "earnest" (a pledge being a guarantee) that God will fulfill His promises (II Cor. 1:22). "...Having also believed, you were sealed (past tense) in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view (future) to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).