

I Shall Not Want

Ponder: What do you lack?

Scripture: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1, NKJV).

Do you have everything you want? Nowadays when we speak of wanting something, we generally mean we wish for it or would like to have it. When King David said “I shall not want,” however, he didn’t mean he had every single thing his heart could possibly desire. He simply didn’t lack anything necessary, particularly in his relationship with God. In another Psalm he wrote, “Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing” (34:9, 10).

A good shepherd provides everything his sheep need to thrive – pasture, water, protection from predators, etc. As David’s shepherd, the Lord took care of him, just as He had taken care of David’s ancestors. At the conclusion of their wandering in the wilderness, Moses told the Israelites, “These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have lacked nothing” (Deuteronomy 2:7). Some of them had whined and complained, to be sure! But God had always taken care of them. “Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness; They lacked nothing; Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell” (Nehemiah 9:21).

When Israel became unfaithful, however, conditions deteriorated. Time and again Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and God allowed their enemies to oppress them. God’s wayward people suffered famine and paid exorbitant taxes to foreign rulers (see the entire books of Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles).

The Lord is our Shepherd, too. He “gives us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). Paul assured the Philippians (and, by extension, assures us), “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). There is no guarantee that we will have everything we desire; but we will have what God knows we need. Most importantly, as we walk in the light of His truth, our relationship with Him will be secure as Jesus’ blood continually cleanses us from our sins (1 John 1:7).