

Who is Your Shepherd? (#7)

Joe Slater

When the Lord Himself is shepherding you, adverse circumstances become less alarming. You know who has your back and who is supplying your every need. And you know He is totally worthy of your deepest trust.

In Psalm 23, David knew the Lord was shepherding him. He would lack nothing either materially or spiritually. God would lead him in the right direction, keeping him safe, secure, and well-supplied even when enemies sought his demise and circumstances seemed dark and dangerous.

With those comforting truths in mind, David ended the psalm with these words: *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”* (23:6).

By His very nature God is good. *“Good and upright is the Lord”* (Psalm 25:8). *“O taste and see that the Lord is good”* (Psalm 34:8).

Mercy also characterizes the Lord. *“To You, O Lord, belongs mercy”* (Psalm 62:12). *“For You, Lord, are good and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You”* (Psalm 86:5).

Knowing this, David was confident that God’s goodness and mercy would follow him every day of his life. And even when his earthly life was over, he would dwell *“in the house of the Lord forever.”* Some claim the ancient saints didn’t know much, if anything, about life after death, but David indicates otherwise. So do faithful patriarchs like Abraham who *“waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Hebrews 11:10).

We have this same confidence through Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who is preparing a place for us and will receive us so that we may be where He is (John 14:2-3).

Follow Me

“If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26 ESV).

Do you dream of doing great things for Jesus? Do you make plans as to what you will do for Jesus after retirement? Do you focus on what might be, rather than what is right in front of you? What does serving and following Jesus mean to you?

What are some of the deeds of service that Jesus expects from those who follow Him? In Matthew 25:34-40, as Jesus presents a judgement scene, He gives some important areas of service. These are providing food and drink, clothing, visiting the sick, and prisoners. His followers serve by meeting physical needs, helping, and encouraging the sick and those in prison.

“And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward” (Matthew 10:42). Ask yourself, “Have I missed small deeds of service because I am looking for great deeds?”

Jesus, the Lord and Teacher, washed the disciples’ feet. He made it plain that since He did such a lowly, menial task, we should be willing to serve others like He did.

Jesus calls us to follow Him. To follow is more than believing in Him, it is more than attending assembly, and more than studying His word. It is following His example of serving others. It is also seeking His lost sheep and those who haven’t been reconciled or who have turned their backs on Him.

Will you and I follow Christ Jesus?

--Ed Wittlif (Ft. Worth, TX)

THOUGHTS ON PREACHING

It is a long time since I preached a sermon that I was satisfied with. I scarcely recollect ever having done so. You do not know, for you cannot hear my groanings when I go home, Sunday after Sunday, and wish that I could learn to preach somehow or other; wish that I could discover the way to touch your hearts and your consciences, for I seem to myself to be just like a fire when it wants stirring; the coals have got black when I want them to flame forth.

If I could but say in the pulpit what I feel in my study, or if I could but get out of my mouth what I have tried to get into my own soul, then I should preach indeed, and move your souls, I think. Yet perhaps God will use our weakness, and we may use it with ourselves, to stir us up to greater strength.

--Charles Spurgeon

Worldliness

The world has a power that is not to be trifled with. We are not immune from its contagious invitations to join the countless millions who have given in to her ways. Christians don’t just jump into the sins of the world. They slowly fall prey to them and entangle themselves in them. We need to look around us to see if any of our cherished brothers and sisters are moving in the wrong direction. We also need to look within ourselves to test our own lives against God’s word. Have we shifted from where we once were? Are we losing the battle against worldliness? Only you and the Lord know where your heart is and the direction it is taking in your life. It may not be so obvious to the rest of us because we may have become so good at lying to others . . . and to ourselves.

--Guy Orbison, Jr. (via *Working in the Word*)