

“God Cares For Me”
Psalm 23:2, page 548

Introduction:

1. *Psalm 23* is about:
 - A. A shepherd.
 - B. Sheep.
 - C. Life.
2. We have discovered:
 - A. Jesus is our good shepherd.’
 - B. He provides for our needs, but not necessarily all our wants.
3. *Psalm 23:2* talks about:
 - A. Green pastures.
 - B. Leading.
 - C. Quiet waters.
4. I believe there are two key words in verse 2: “*He leads.*”
5. Impossible to lead someone who refuses to follow.

II. He leads.

- A. Our son, Rodney, and our daughter, Ronda, each had a black lab.
 1. They were the same age (puppy)
 2. They were both completely black.
 3. One was male, other female.
 4. They had very different personalities.
- B. Both were trained to lead – leash.
- C. The first few lessons, especially for Amigo, were not very successful.
 1. Skid marks in the driveway.
 2. All four legs were locked.
 3. Leading was really dragging.
 4. In time, Amigo got the idea, and she moved from one end of the spectrum to the other end.
 5. Amigo always wanted to go just a little faster than we were walking.
 6. Amigo kept constant tension on the leash.
- D. I think Shadow was different. Rodney trained him as a puppy, and I’m not sure about the first lessons.
 1. Rodney and family moved into an apartment. We inherited Shadow for several months.
 2. Almost daily we took Amigo and Shadow for a walk.
 3. Shadow walked between us.
 4. Every so often he would just touch one of us with his nose.
 5. Shadow was much more of an aggressive dog, but he was also more of a people dog, good follower.
- E. Difference in training – maybe, but I believe mostly difference in personality.
- F. What do black labs, good shepherd, and sheep have in common?
- G. A shepherd never attempts to drive his sheep; he leads them.
- H. Some sheep (black labs) never learn how to be good followers:
 1. Some dig in with all legs locked.
 2. Some are always running ahead.
 3. Some, however, are great followers; they stay close enough to touch the shepherd.

- I. I have discovered that all good leaders have also learned to be good followers.
 1. They know when to follow another person's leadership.
 2. They know when to lead.
- I. When we learn to be good followers, LIFE IS MUCH BETTER.
 1. Things go smoother.
 2. Less anxiety and worry.
 3. Moses: *Numbers 20:2-13*.
 4. Jonah: *Jonah 1 and 2*.

II. God leads in various ways.

- A. Bible:
 1. All the direction we need.
 2. Perfect blueprint for life.
 3. If we are violating a command recorded in the Bible, we are NOT FOLLOWING.
- B. Voice of Holy Spirit:
 1. Reveals the deep truths of the Bible to us.
 2. Guides us with a small inner voice.
- C. Circumstances:
 1. Closes doors that would not be the best for us. (church in Lansing).
 2. Opens doors of opportunity (church in Coleman)
 3. Sometimes the good shepherd leads us into difficult situations for the benefit of others.
 4. Sometimes the good shepherd leads us into dangerous situations to provide an open door for future ministries. ("Through Gates of Splendor")
- D. Counsel of other individuals:
 1. God has blessed each of us with mature, wise friends.
 2. Loving counsel and advice should always be welcome.
- E. Past experiences:
 1. Lessons learned from experience are often harsh, but usually we remember them for a lifetime.
 2. Sometimes God allows us to receive or do things that He knows will not be the best for us.
 3. The pain from these past experiences helps us mature and learn to be good followers.
 4. Often past experiences help us to remember how God has blessed and guided us.
- F. Our good shepherd uses all these methods to guide us through life.

III. The good shepherd leads us to "*green pastures and quiet waters.*"

- A. These represent the important needs of the sheep:
 1. Food.
 2. Water.
- B. Our good shepherd will supply our vital needs for living:
 1. If we allow Him to lead us.
 2. If we have learned to obey and follow.

Conclusion:

1. God will not force or drive us. "*He leads.*"
2. Our good shepherd has a dynamic life planned for us. "*He leads.*"
3. We must be willing to closely follow Him!
4. HE LEADS us to experience abundant living.