**He’s All I Want**

**Introduction:**

Many people in our world have fear and anxiety about the world in which they live. They are anxious about their health, their job, their safety. What can we tell them? What advice does God’s Word give?

**Text:** Psalm 23

**Body:**

1. **The Shepherd Provides** Psalm 23:1-3 “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want, He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.” NKJV

* Shepherding was a common occupation throughout ancient Palestine. Shepherds tended their flocks even at risk to themselves. They fed, protected and watched over the sheep.
* The psalmist, David, refers to Jehovah as “his” shepherd. This shows closeness and intimacy.
* David says he does not “want” for anything. He did not lack for anything. He did not need any necessary thing. This word is used in the account of God providing for Israel in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:18) “So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one’s need.” NKJV This provision is based upon our following the Shepherd. (Psalm 34:10) “The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.” NKJV
* The shepherd provides a place to rest. The sheep get tired and very much need it. (Ezekiel 34:14) “I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.” NKJV “Green pastures” – the tender first shoots of vegetation. Today Jesus is the source of our green pastures. (John 6:35) “And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” NKJV
* The shepherd leads and guides the sheep. They don’t know where they need to go. God led His people to the Promised Land.

(Exodus 15:13) “You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength To Your holy habitation.” NKJV We are led by the light of God’s Word. (Psalm 119:105) “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” NKJV “Still waters” – Sheep do not like rushing water. These are waters of rest and quietness that refresh us. Life can get hectic; so we need to go to God in prayer and to His Word. (Revelation 7:16-17) “They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” NKJV

* The shepherd “restores, returns to its original state. “Soul” is a person’s being, what makes a person a person, the essence of being in the image of God, the qualities of intellect, emotion, and will. Note Psalm 19:7. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;” NKJV
* Sheep tend to wander off the path and get lost. God’s people can do the same. They follow strange doctrines and false teaching. (Hebrews 13:9a) “Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.” NKJV We must let God’s Word lead us along the paths that are right and correct. (Psalm 17:5) “Uphold my steps in Your paths That my footsteps may not slip.” (Proverbs 4:26-27) “Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.” NKJV

1. **The Shepherd Protects** Psalm 23:4-5 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.” NKJV

* The shepherd provides peace in the face of peril. The psalmist paints a picture of a dark, narrow gorge that hides dangers around every corner. The slightest danger causes sheep to run. So the shepherd reassures the sheep. He walks with them and regardless of the perils; the sheep follow because they trust him.
* We can feel alone, scared, helpless. There are paths of sadness and sorrow, paths of trouble and darkness. The psalmist proclaims that he can walk, not run, through these times without fear of any evil. (Isaiah 43:2) “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.” NKJV The shepherd’s tools are a rod and a staff. These protect and rescue us from these perils. Knowing they are there comforts us. (Psalm 119:49-50) “Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.” Note also Romans 15:4. “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” NKJV
* “Prepares a table” – He prepares a place to eat even as the battle rages on. Sheep have many natural enemies as do God’s people. There are times that are completely terrifying. Yet God prepares a table so we can sit in peace. (Psalm 3:6) “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.” (Psalm 27:1-3) “The Lord is my light and my salvation: Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident.” (Psalm 36:7-8) “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.” NKJV
* “Anoints with oil” – As the sheep would file into the fold each evening, the good shepherd would examine each one for cuts or other injuries. He would then apply soothing oil for pain and for healing. Our God knows every little thing about us, every cut, bruise or injury. We endure weariness, discouragement, anxiety, and all manner of suffering. (Psalm 45:7) “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” NKJV God comforts us by His sacred word.
* The shepherd filled a cup of water to the brim. The sheep would stick its mouth in and the water would overflow. The shepherd abundantly provided for the sheep. Notice how much God provides for us.

(Ephesians 3:20) “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” NKJV “Immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” Our cup overflows!

1. **The Shepherd Preserves** Acts 23:6 “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.” NKJV

* “Goodness and mercy shall follow me” – things that are pleasant, beneficial, precious, delightful, right, proper, excellent. . .
* Note God’s goodness. (Psalm 145:9, 15-16) “The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works. 15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.” NKJV His goodness is also seen in His love and patience. (John 3:16) “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” NKJV (II Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” NKJV
* “House of the Lord” – God’s home where the faithful will have intimate fellowship with Him forever. (John 14:1-3) “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” NKJV We enjoy a small taste of this when we assemble with the saints on the Lord’s Day. (I Corinthians 5:4) “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

No wonder God is called the Good Shepherd. He provides, protects and preserves. Are you safe in His sheepfold? (John 10:3-4) “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” NKJV Bobby Stafford October 9, 2016 [Evening]