

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Hebrews 13:7, 8, 17-21

July 23, 2017

If you love Psalm 23, you long to be shepherded.

What is it about Psalm 23 that makes it a treasure, even for people who rarely flock to the Word on Sunday? There's an indoor mausoleum not far from here with a big stained glass window of Jesus the Good Shepherd on one end. People go on and on about Ps. 23 and this image - its beauty and comfort. Why? I get the impression this line is key: *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...* It's a pretty stone they pick up, look at, caress, and add to their collection, but rarely consider the implications.

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The end of our text shows us what God wants for us and offers to us:

²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- ❖ God's peace comes under the care of Jesus, the great Shepherd.
 - God's peace (*shalom*) is the wholeness - restored fellowship with God
 - It comes through Jesus' blood and resurrection.
 - ♦ full payment for our sins
 - ♦ Risen to **new life** - freed from sin's mastery, controls, and terrors
 - Only under the great Shepherd, our Lord (not sin) are we equipped with all the good things God is eager to work in us and give us.
 - ♦ ¹² *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.* Philippians 2
 - ♦ Not only is our faith, eternal life - living with the God of peace, our great Lord and Shepherd - free gifts of God's grace
 - ♦ God's undeserved love equips us for the whole life under our Lord.
 - ♦ Do you see the key? **There is no life - no full life - without being under the care/the authority of the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd.**
 - **Only** when the Lord is my shepherd **do I lack nothing!**
 - Satan's **lie** is that *you are only fulfilled when you are free of the Lord.*
 - This falsehood feeds the American ego - life is independence.
 - Fact: it is **not good** for sheep to be *as independent as hogs on ice.*
 - Disciples of Jesus call him Lord. If he is not your 24/7/365 authority, you're on your own. He can't be your Savior saving you from old self.

- ❖ Jesus shepherds us by providing pastors.
 - ¹⁷ *Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their **authority**, because they **keep watch** over you as those who must give an account.*
 - *submit to their authority* = authority comes from God
 - ♦ **Keep watch** over yourselves and all the flock of which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.** Acts 20:28
 - ♦ Pastors - given a charge & are answerable to God. Not a *career choice.*
 - Leaders - lead, to teach Jesus' disciples to follow Jesus.
 - ♦ Jesus provides pastors to enrich his peoples' lives as followers of Jesus.
 - ♦ *Leaders who spoke the word of God to you....*
 - Authority in the word & office
 - ¹⁶ *"Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."* Luke 10
- ❖ Let the Lord shepherd you through his shepherds.
 - Pastor's purpose: *keep watch over you (your souls)*
 - *...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* Ephesians 4 - lives serving our Lord vs. sin
 - Making the most of your pastor
 - ♦ Regular worship - Word and Sacrament - feed & trained
 - ♦ Instruction - lay foundation, but who stops with foundation & frame?
 - ♦ Of course call when sick, hurting, or in crisis
 - Wise to practice preventive care - seek help at *first sign of sickness*
 - ♦ Keeping your pastor in the dark - controlling what he knows - not good!
 - ♦ Let him instruct in the word and model what life in Christ looks like.
 - ♦ Continuous action verbs: *remember, consider, imitate, have confidence, submit* = experience having life under *The Lord is my shepherd*

Recognize - consider

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