



Living Lent | March 27

I Am a Sheep of The Shepherd

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
He revives my soul
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Psalm 23 (NRSV)

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

David, the King of Israel writes “The Lord is my Shepherd.” WHAT?! Can you believe what he is saying? We should be shocked, perhaps even offended by this metaphor! Sheep are not known for their intelligence, quite the opposite. Sheep can barely survive on their own! Left untended, they will eat themselves to death, wander off a cliff, or grow so much wool that they will suffocate. Yet David, the greatest king Israel ever had, takes the place of a simple sheep, and calls the Lord his shepherd. That is shocking. It is offensive when I recognize that I too am being invited to see myself as a simple sheep. Perhaps, on some days, at my worst, when I really mess up, I may be the sheep. But certainly not on my best day, right?! I am

no sheep!

However, as I continue to read this ancient prayer, the thought of being a sheep to this Shepherd becomes more and more inviting. By being a sheep of the Lord, I will not lack, I will not thirst, I will be revived, led, protected, comforted, and enjoyed. Even when things seem completely hopeless, I can be confident that He is in control. I will never be without the company of the Shepherd. As I consider who this Shepherd is, suddenly, all the offense of being His sheep begins to wash away. I can plainly see and admit, even at my best, I am pretty good at screwing up. I say things I shouldn't. I think things that I am ashamed of. I hurt the people I love. Yet the Shepherd does not pull away. When I run away, He pursues me even more. When I am needy, He tends to me. He really leans in and listens! Who else does that? As I tell Him all the wrongs I have committed, He is not repulsed, but instead He is honored by my honesty. What freedom I find in His presence! He seems completely disinterested in what I can do for Him and only focused on being in relationship with me. Almost instinctively I begin to say over and over, "The Lord is my shepherd, and I will dwell with him forever."

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ

Brooks Hanson is the Coastal Wesley Director at The Chapel Ministry in Brunswick, Georgia. The Chapel is a place founded in a desire to cultivate relationships that help people encounter God, hear His voice, and respond in appropriate ways. The Chapel is a Christ centered, Biblically based, Spirit empowered, prayer guided, board directed, staff led, partner implemented, and community focused, including the Children of Morningstar.

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