

Wednesday Night Bible Study October 25, 2023 Lesson 6

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Rev. Dr. Will Butler, Pastor & Instructor

Queens Chapel

7410 Muirkirk Road * Beltsville, MD 20705

=====

Lesson 6

"God Protects and Directs Me"

25 October 2023

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4b (NIV)

Sheep are essentially defenseless animals

1. Sheep have no sense of direction
2. Sheep are defenseless—they cannot defend themselves very well.
3. Sheep cannot care for themselves when wounded
4. Their teeth are not very sharp
5. Sheep don't have any claws
6. Sheep have a tendency to stand on hillsides at 50- to 70-degree angles. They even wander over mountains, near cliffs, close to edges—and sometimes fall off or get stuck.

Therefore, a shepherd uses a few tools to care for and protect his sheep.

1. He uses a ***rod*** for guarding and protecting. This defensive tool is a foot or two long and is used to ward off predators, such as wolves.
2. He also uses a ***staff*** to guide and direct his sheep. A staff has a little crook in it. A shepherd can either poke a sheep with one end or pull a sheep away from danger with the curved end.

In the 23rd Psalm, David uses these tools as a metaphor that helps us understand the goodness of God. Put another way,

A rod represents the power
and authority of God.
A staff represents the care, mercy,
and compassion of God.

There are five ways Jesus protects and directs us:

1. If we bring our physical and emotional hurts to Him, we'll experience Jesus' compassion

- A. Sympathy means, I'm sorry you're hurting.
- B. Empathy means, I'm hurting with you
- C. Christ's Compassion means, I will do whatever it takes to stop your hurt, even if it means dying on the cross

Matthew 9:36 (NIV)

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

- D. Jesus' purpose for coming to the earth was to serve and to sacrifice for our benefit. In other words, Jesus came to earth just for "YOU." He suffered on the cross for you and he sacrificed for you.

Take some time to meditate on this question:

Q = Where in your life right now do you most need Jesus' compassion?

- *Take a moment (in silence) to share your personal need in prayer with Jesus.*

2. If we follow Jesus, he will lead us in the right direction

- A. The Good Shepherd always knows more than the sheep. He knows our purpose on earth even when we may not fully understand it.

- The Good Shepherd goes before us.
- The Good Shepherd leads by example.
- The Good Shepherd always leads from the front
- The Good Shepherd will never push you through life, He will say "Watch how I do it, follow Me, and look where I go."

Take some time to meditate on this question:

Q = What direction is Jesus leading you now in the different areas of your life?

- Take an opportunity later to write down those areas (family, marriage, friendship, business, finance, etc.) the Lord is speaking to you about.
- Ask the Lord to direct your path

B. If you're walking through life on your own, you might make a wrong decision. However, with Jesus guiding you, your path will be much easier.

Psalm 26:3 (Good News Translation GNT)

"Your constant love is my guide; your faithfulness always leads me"

3. If we get confused or wander away, Jesus will find us and bring us back

A. The Bible says every one of us has wandered away from God. And we have a tendency to wander from one thing to another in life, sometimes ending us in situations we shouldn't be in.

Isaiah 53:6 (NLT)

"All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all."

B. Jesus said that every person matters so much that he has gone on a rescue mission just to find YOU

Like 19:10 NLT

"For the Son of Man^[a] came to seek and save those who are lost."

- C. If you wandered off your prayer times, Bible readings, worshipping God, loving others, self-control, etc.
- D. God wants to rescue you if you're willing to catch hold of the rope of God's grace
- E. When God brings us back from wandering, he will correct us.

Psalm 119:67-68 (NLT)

"67 I used to wander off until you disciplined me, but now I closely follow your word.

68 You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees."

- F. God's discipline is not punishment.
 - Punishment imposes a penalty for the past
 - Discipline trains us for the future
- G. If a shepherd has a sheep that is prone to wander, he will often wrap and hold that sheep's legs so it can't move.

Hebrews 12:5-8 (NLT)

"5 And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.

6 For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."

7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?

8 If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?"

H. The more we rely on God's Word, the less we bring problems upon ourselves.

- That's why we should spend more time in the bible
- That's why we should read the Bible every day and talk to God in prayer
- That's why we should write down God's directives from the Word and prioritize our lives around them.
- That's why we pray and choose our steps in light of God's word

4. If we fail or fall, Jesus rescues us and sets us on the road to recovery

A. Like all sheep, we not only wander but we also stumble. We've all fallen flat on our faces

B. If we trust that God is going to restore us and rescue us when we fail, we'll faithfully run to Him every time we mess up.

C. On the other hand, if we think God will scold us for our failures or give us a long sermon and condemn us, then we're less likely to run to God.

Take some time to meditate on this question:

Q = **What's your tendency when you fail or mess up? Do you run to Jesus or to something or someone else?**

5. If we trust Jesus to save us, Jesus will keep His promise to do just that.

- A. It's not our job to save ourselves
- B. Our job is to simply put our hand in God's hand

John 10:29 (New Century Version NCV)

"My Father gave my sheep to me. He is greater than all, and no person can steal my sheep out of my Father's hand."

- C. The Bible teaches us that we cannot lose our salvation.
- D. Our salvation is based on the merits of Jesus Christ. If we confess our sins and place our trust in Christ's death and resurrection, nothing can take away our salvation.
- E. Satan can't steal it, sadness can't steal it, sorrow can't steal it, sickness can't steal it—it just can't be taken away—we're in God's hands forever.

Romans 8:38-39 (NLT)

"38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- F. The goodness of God means the Good Shepherd is going to guide us, guard us, protect us, direct us, and save us.
- G. No one else can offer us these five benefits.
- H. They only come from Jesus, our Good Shepherd

John 10:11-16 (NLT)

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock.

13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,

15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

