

The Good Shepherd

Sermon #0161

Study by W. D. Frazee—January 14, 1977

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” Psalms 23:1–3.

As the result of these precious experiences, even though I am called to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, “I will fear no evil: for Thou are with me.” I

Let’s note a few of these expressions tonight. The first verse: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” In modern English, we usually think of the verb “want” as having to do with a long list of things that we desire that we wish we had. Basically, what the psalmist is saying is because God is my Shepherd, I shall not *lack* anything. This thought is beautifully expressed in the 34th Psalm.

“O fear the LORD, ye His saints: for there is no want...”

Here is the word again.

“...to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing” Psalms 34:9–10.

In other words, as the New Testament promise puts it:

“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:19.

Jesus teaches us to pray in the Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven” and then what? “Give us this day our daily bread.” Matthew 6:10–11. Does He do it? Have you had something to eat today? Did you have it yesterday? Is there something on hand for tomorrow? Thank God!

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” Psalm 23:1.

I would like to have you think tonight of this as including even more than, shall I say, the necessities of life. A man is more than a mere animal with cravings in his stomach for food and in his lungs for air. Read one of the most stupendous promises in all the Bible.

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass”

Psalm 37:4–5.

Isn't that a wonderful promise? He guarantees your necessities, but He holds out to you the ultimate in fulfillment: "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

"Every want He has implanted, He provides to satisfy"
Education, page 41.

Now God has given Himself quite a task, and He sets out to do that. I know He has with me, friends, it is hard to satisfy me. Oh, some things are easy. I was looking at a big stick of peppermint candy that somebody had just the other day, and I thought that 60 years or so ago that that would have certainly thrilled me if I could have got hold of one of those. But I will be honest with you, it takes more than that to satisfy me now. It takes something better than that.

In fact, I find as life goes on that as God fulfills this promise and satisfies many of my earlier desires, new ones sprout up. So I don't have all my desires satisfied yet. In fact, that is why God is letting me live a while longer. If I had seen everything, if like poor Solomon (the richest man the world ever saw, but poor Solomon), he had seen everything, he had it, and he said it was all vanity.

Bless the Lord, that is not my testimony, my friends. I can truthfully say the Lord is good. He has been showing me what great things He has for those that let Him fulfill His promise. True, I have been disappointed many times, but I found out later that was so I could get what I really wanted instead of what I thought I wanted.

Sometimes I have cried because I didn't have something. Sometimes I have cried because I got it. But all the way along, God has been working to do just what He said He would do—to grant me the desires of my heart. But as I said, they are multiplying as time goes on. The more I get, the more I want. That is all right if we want the good things, isn't it?

Do you know, the wonderful news is He is going to let me live forever because it is going to take that to fully satisfy me. That's right! There are so many things I want and so many things I am going to want that I haven't even heard of, seen, or even thought about yet that God is going to say every day, "It will take another day to satisfy him. So we will give him some more." He delights in doing that.

I will tell you a secret, friends, because it is going to last forever, all through eternity, there is no way to get any more of it by living longer. The only way to get any more is to start sooner. Have you started? Is the Lord your Shepherd? The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. I shall not lack anything. And oh, if I stick with Him, eventually, I will find that He gratifies every desire of the heart.

Oh, I thank God that He loves me enough to prune away the useless wishes, to cut away the carnal desires that would only bring pain to others and to myself, that the true shoots of love, and hope, and peace, and joy may grow and bring forth an abundant harvest of sweet fruit.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" Psalm 23:1.

Now notice that next expression in the 23rd Psalm.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul”
Psalms 23:2–3.

What a picture of refreshment, of peace, of contentment, of security.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures” Psalms 23:2.

I want to study this especially with you. This is the jet age as you may have heard. You may even have heard the jets. But my dear friends, it takes just as long, perhaps under the circumstances, a bit longer, but it takes at least as long to recharge the battery of the body as it did in the horse and buggy days. Or had you thought of that? It does. And strange to say, with all the time saving and labor saving inventions we have in this marvelous 20th century, people have less time than ever before. Or had you heard that?

Of course, by the clock and by the calendar, we have just as much time as we ever had, don't we? Yes. But really, isn't it strange that with all the devices there are to save time and labor, people have so little time for what we are studying about tonight? Isn't that strange?

It just depends upon whether we let these inventions be our masters or whether we use them as our servants. It just depends. I think what we need, friends, is a Shepherd, for we are all like sheep.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” Isaiah 53:6.

That's the way to have a good time, isn't it? That is what the lost sheep thought until it woke up to find it was lost. If you haven't found out you're lost and been having your own way, you may think it is quite a thing to do your own thing. But when you are caught in the brambles or your foot is wedged in a rock, or in some way you are down and out, oh, how thankful you are to hear the Shepherd calling and coming to rescue you!

“The LORD is my shepherd” “He restoreth my soul”
Psalms 23:1, 3.

We need a shepherd even to lie down. The man who wrote this Psalm, inspired by the Spirit, of course, was a shepherd. He knew that when sheep lie down it is because they feel secure and because nothing is bothering them. If anything is worrying them, if they are hungry, they won't lie down. If they are afraid, they won't lie down. If they have strife, one sheep trying to get ahead of the other, they won't lie down. But when the shepherd is there, and he has taken care of their needs, seeing that they are fed and watered, they are just content and happy, then they will lie down.

“The LORD is my shepherd” “He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures” Psalms 23:2.

Is He your Shepherd? Has He caused you to lie down in green pastures? Or do you have time for it? Oh dear ones, this is what I want to study, especially with you tonight—time to lie down. On the bed in sleep? Yes. But more than this. To have the experience of rest of mind and heart and communion that is represented by the sheep just lying down in the meadow, in the pasture surrounded by the fresh, tender grass, while the still waters are nearby. What a picture of peace and content!

“Ah, but,” somebody says, “Brother Frazee, life is a battle.”

Indeed.

“Life is a struggle.”

Yes. The more severe the battle, the harder the struggle, the more you and I need those times when we lie down because the Shepherd causes us to lie down. We need it.

We can’t spend all our time there. We don’t need to spend all our time there. If I may word it this way, it would get boring if we lay down all the time. Don’t worry, there are very few of us who are anywhere near getting bored with *that* part of the program. No.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures” Psalms 23:2.

The same beautiful picture, using different symbols, is found in the Song of Solomon. Here the same beautiful communion is pictured not as between sheep and shepherd but as between bride and bridegroom.

“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my
beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow
with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He
brought to the banqueting house, and his banner over me
was love” Song of Solomon 2:3–4.

What a picture of restful, relaxed, delightful communion! The sheep lies down. Here these in the deepest love that human hearts can know sit down together and eat together. And the fruit is sweet.

When I pass through the Chicago airport changing planes from time to time, I am impressed with the multitude of people on the run and even standing up eating. There they go and get a doughnut and some coffee, or a hotdog, or this or that, and stand up there eating. Eating on the run.

That is not exactly the picture in our verse here, is it? No.

“I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house ...” Song of Solomon 2:3–4.

That’s not the nightclub.

“...and his banner over me was love” Song of Solomon 2:4.

Now my dear friends, there are two classes of people here tonight, those that know at least something about what I am reading and those that don’t. I can’t divide you. That is not my purpose. But oh, the Holy Spirit is witnessing to hearts here tonight, and my dear friend, no matter how long you have borne the Christian name, no matter if you have been baptized and are a member of the church, if you have never known this experience or if you have known and lost it, I invite you tonight to let Jesus be your Shepherd and let Him cause you to lie down in green pastures.

Let Christ be the bridegroom of your soul. Let Him cause you to sit down at His table and enjoy with delight the sweet fruit that He provides.

Notice the comment on this beautiful text in this beautiful paragraph in the book *Education*.

“Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need. Happy will it be for the children of our homes and the students of our schools when parents and teachers shall learn in their own lives the precious experience pictured in these words from the Song of Songs: ‘As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, So is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, And His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, And His banner over me was love’” *Education*, page 261.

“Ah,” somebody is saying, “Brother Frazee, I wish I could. But where is the time?” May I tell you, something friends? How do you find money to pay your tithe? Where do you get the money to pay your tithe? Why, it is always there because you pay it, when? First. So if there are any problems, it isn’t a problem paying the tithe. That is the only way to pay tithe and be successful, isn’t it? Did you ever try the other way? Did it work? It wasn’t meant to.

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” Proverbs 3:9–10.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the

windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that
there shall not be room enough to receive it”
Malachi 3:10.

It works with time as well as money.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:33.

Dear friends, if we are taking a long trip, we see that the gas tank is full before we start out in the morning. Right? Oh yes. Every day we are taking a journey. Every day we are entering a battle. Every day we need to be sure before we start out that we have the energy, the strength (physical, mental, and spiritual) to cope with the problems, to meet the emergencies.

“Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving
the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too
great haste” *Education*, page 260.

What would you think of a man that drives into the service station, and the attendant says, “How many gallons?”

The man says, “Really, I need to fill it up, but I don’t have time. Put in two gallons. I have got to be off.”

“Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving
the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too
great haste” *Ibid*.

“But Lord, I am in a hurry. Can’t you see? Look at all I have got to do.” As one man put it, “My problem is that I am in a hurry, and God doesn’t seem to be.”

Now in a sense, God is intensely anxious for things to get finished up, but He knows enough about it to know that there is only one way to do it, friends, that is for you and me to get power and strength from Him. The power of love, the strength that comes from peace, from knowing that our sins are forgiven, from knowing that God’s promises are for us. This takes time.

Mere time will not accomplish it. Sitting at a gas station for an hour will not fill your tank. Sitting at the table for an hour will not fill your stomach. No. There is something to do, but it does take time.

“Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving
the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too
great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle
of Christ’s loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment
within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel.
They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With
their burdens they return to their work” *Ibid*.

Oh, what a sentence to ponder! What a picture to contemplate.

“With their burdens they return to their work” *Ibid.*

They came with what? Their burdens. They leave with...? Their burdens. Although they have been in the presence of One who invites them to cast *all* their cares on Him for He cares. But what is the problem? To great haste.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...”
Psalm 23:2

“I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” Song of Solomon 2:3.

I would like to make this very practical tonight, friends, because somebody right at this point is saying, “Brother Frazee, just how should I do it?” Well, there are at least a thousand different ways. In fact, more than that. Jesus is the Shepherd to you individually. Christ is your leader personally. You are different from anybody else, but there are some general guidelines that are helpful. One is, friends, whether you are lying like the sheep, or sitting down as the bride, or kneeling like the penitent worshiper. Whatever the picture you have, remember the One who is helping you is Christ the Shepherd, Christ the Bridegroom, Christ the lover of your soul. Your eyes must be fixed on Him.

Our tendency when we come to God in our periods of worship is to think of ourselves. “Lord, forgive me of my sins. Lord, help me today to hold my tongue. Lord, help me and give me the victory over tobacco, whiskey, overeating, or gossip, or this or that.” We may even pray a bit for others, members of our family, friends.

You say, “Brother Frazee, isn’t that good?” Yes, it is good. But that is not what I am studying about particularly. The strength we need comes not from talking about our burdens but from talking to our Burden-bearer about His strength. The victory we seek comes not from talking about our sins and temptations but about contemplating His glorious might and strength. This is where the power comes.

It is possible to kneel and pray, five minutes, ten minutes, or give it any time you want to say, and still leave with our minds focused primarily upon ourselves and our problems. That happens every day. Tonight I invite you to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd. He is looking after me. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He is watching over me. He is caring for me.”

I love Him. He loves me. He will see me through. Just how? That is His secret, but I know He will. He made me, so I am His. He came and gave His life for me upon the cross, so I am twice His. I have given myself to Him, so I am three times His. I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.

I invite you to enter into the practice of this experience. I do not mean practice such as the rehearsal or some formal affair. No, no. I mean to take your Bible, kneel down by your bed, or sit down in your chair and commune with God.

Close your eyes and say, “Dear Lord, let me this evening, or let me this morning hour, let me really have communion and fellowship with you.

“Let me not only tell You of my needs but of my longings to be like You. Let me not only speak to You but let me listen as You speak to me. Speak to me through Your Word. Speak to me by Your Spirit, and Lord, I will listen.”

Somebody may say, “Brother Frazee, I have tried to do that, but I don’t hear anything.” If you will keep that attitude of listening and look at what is on the page, and accept the Bible as the voice of God speaking to your soul, you will find as you go from line to line, quietly, slowly, masticating as it were, you will find you will come to some verse that will stand out on the page, some sentence that will become living, alive to meet your need today.

It isn’t just through some mystic voices that we might hear, a surer channel of communion is found in the Word itself. But this Bible is to be studied, not so much as history, not so much as theology in a sense, but as a personal message from Jesus to your heart and mine.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul” Psalms 23:1–3.

So:

“Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need” *Education*, page 260.

“I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love” Song of Solomon 2:3–4.

Do you remember that home that Jesus loved to visit there at Bethany? Do you remember those two sisters Mary and Martha? Jesus appreciated them both. You remember that picture of domestic life that Luke presents in the tenth chapter of his Gospel in those closing verses. There is Christ, He is seated there, and somebody is seated at His feet listening. Who is that? Mary.

And somebody is busy out in the kitchen. Who is that? Martha. Did Jesus appreciate them both? Oh yes. But you remember Martha got fussed up a bit. She had a great deal to do. In fact, Jesus indicated that she had more to do than she needed to do. He told her that she was taking too much time and too much energy devoted to just fixing things up for Him, that He would be very happy and satisfied with a more simple diet and program. That is what He told her.

Then He said, “Martha, while you are troubled and full of anxiety and trouble about many things, Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.”

The prophet to the remnant, commenting on it, points out how God appreciates the service of the faithful Marthas. There is a lot of them around here tonight, friends. They are not all feminine gender either. No. It takes a lot of Marthas and Johns to keep everything going, doesn't it? But the prophet says:

"But let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus"

Desire of Ages, page 525.

Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
Oh, what words I hear Him say,

Happy place, so near, so precious,
May it find me there each day.

Let's sing it. [Elder Frazee and the audience sing the above song.]

May I tell you the greatest reason for doing this? To make Him happy. To make Him happy. May I add this? To be with Him is worth missing anything else.

There are a lot of good classes here, but if you have to miss a class so that you don't miss what we are studying tonight, it is worth it, isn't it? Yes. There are a lot of good meetings around here, but nothing you can get in any meeting, nothing you can get here in this vesper service can take the place of that intimate communion of Jesus and you all by yourself, my friends. Nothing can take that place.

In a sense, all these classes and meetings are designed to teach you how to do that, and if they haven't taught you that, then they failed in their objective. Something like taking so many classes in nutrition that you don't have time to eat, you understand. It could happen, couldn't it?

Sometimes it is talking to other people that keeps us from talking with Jesus, chit-chatting, visiting, on the phone, or at the commissary, or at the mailbox, or over in the office, wherever.

"Oh, but Brother Frazee, we need to be sociable." Indeed, friends—first of all with Jesus. First of all with Jesus! You have heard the word "priorities," haven't you?

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you" Matthew 6:33.

[Elder Frazee and the audience again sing, "Sitting at the Feet of Jesus." A testimony service follows.]

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org