

He Leadeth Me

#0303

Study Given by W D. Frazee—March 4, 1977

Now turn please to Psalm 23, which has inspired God's people for 3,000 years. Perhaps you'd like to read it with me tonight. You remember that some weeks ago, we studied some of the earlier verses in this Psalm with particular emphasis on the expressions "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He's my Shepherd I shall not want."

We're going to study another expression tonight, but let's read the Psalm together:

"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. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" Psalm 23.

Please look in the Psalm for an expression that is repeated. There's a pronoun and a verb and another pronoun following it, the object of the verb. Do you find it? What is it? "He leadeth me."

He leadeth me, o blessed thought,
O words with heavenly comfort fraught,
What'er I do, where'er I be,
Still tis God's hand that leadeth me.

The human heart longs for guidance. "Even though," as the song says, "perverse and foolish oft I stray, yet deep down in our hearts we know that we need to be led."

I imagine that wandering sheep out on the mountainside did some bleating, wishing that the shepherd would show up. What do you think? All over this world as never before, distraught minds, weary hearts are longing for guidance. Recently there was a Gallop poll conducted concerning this matter of astrology. It was found that as many as 32 million Americans take astrology seriously. And 22 percent of adult Americans said they believed in astrology. More than 90 percent of those under the age of 30 can identify their sign.

A group of 186 eminent American scientists recently published a statement on this. They consider it a serious threat in this way. That people instead of using their brain, using their heads to make decisions in a sensible way, are looking to astrology to guide them.

Now I've said all that, to read you what the scientists said in this statement published to the nation:

"In these uncertain times, many long for the comfort of having guidance in making decisions."

The sad part is that, to the scientists, the only guidance we have is human guidance. But, thank God, you and I have a third choice. We're not looking to the astrologists, and we're not looking to the evolutionary scientific theories. We're looking to the Creator of the Heaven and the earth, who is our Friend, our Shepherd. Each of us can say, "He leadeth me."

Now, tonight as we ponder these three words from the 23rd Psalm, twice repeated, I pray that God will indeed guide our minds. You remember that in ancient Babylon, Daniel and his three friends were exposed to the influence of these astrologers, but they took no stock in all that nonsense. When the king of Babylon had his dream, the astrologers fell down on their job of claiming to reveal hidden things. They admitted they couldn't do it. And that which the astrologers failed in, Daniel succeeded in.

Do you know why? He was in touch with God. The astrologers said that the gods only could reveal the secret, and their dwelling isn't with flesh. But thank God, the One we worship dwells with flesh.

"...I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit..." Isaiah 57:15.

Thank God. If we tune in, we can get directions from headquarters.

The 25th Psalm just across the page from the 23rd Psalm, the 9th verse: Who's going to get guidance and direction—who will be led?

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way" Psalm 25:9.

What does it mean to be meek? Humble, teachable, willing to be directed. God does not undertake to teach the proud—those who have a lot of confidence in themselves, those who have their own ideas. Most of them don't even trouble to ask Him for guidance anyway. If they do, like Balaam, they're simply going through a ritual, hoping that God will approve their plan. But the meek are those who humbly seek to find out God's will.

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way" Psalm 25:9.

Do you want to be guided, my friend? Do you really want to be led like the sheep led by the shepherd? Do you? Thank God, you can. “The Lord is my Shepherd,” each one can say, “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.” We don’t deserve it. He does it for His name’s sake.

Turn to another wonderful promise in Proverbs:

“Trust in the LORD with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” Proverbs 3:5.

Don’t even lean in the direction of following your own ideas, your own way, your own will.

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” Proverbs 3:6.

Will He do it? If we meet the conditions—in all thy ways acknowledge Him. I wonder what that means to acknowledge Him? Well first, it means to recognize that He’s in the guiding business. He’s the wonderful counselor. But to acknowledge Him means more than to recognize that He’s in the counseling business. It means to turn our case over to Him as a client with a lawyer, as a patient with a physician. We’re to place ourselves in His hand. We’re to watch for His guidance in advance, choosing to accept His direction as fast as we understand it.

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” Proverbs 3:6.

Years ago, someone told me of a woman whose method of getting guidance was when she came to a place where the road forked she’d throw down a stick, and whichever way the stick pointed, that’s the way she would go. But she said that sometimes she had to throw down the stick several times. What was her problem? She had her own ideas, didn’t she? Not that I would recommend throwing down a stick.

But oh, my dear friend, to get guidance from God, to be meek, to be humble, to acknowledge Him means that we pray until there is just one thing that we want supremely, and that is God’s will. As long as our object in prayer is to, could I use the expression, twist His arm, God is not in the business of guiding us on that basis. He longs to have us come to Him with full surrender, with fervent desire to know His will that we may accept it, and then with the assurance that He will do it. For faith is part of the process.

“...he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”
Hebrews 11:6.

In the *SDA Bible Commentary*, I read this inspired comment on our Proverbs text that we’ve just been reading:

“Has not God said He would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? And is not this spirit a real, true actual guide?” *SDA Bible Commentary*, Volume 3, page 1155.

Who’s our guide? The Spirit.

“Some men seem afraid to take God at His word as though it would be presumption in them. They pray for the Lord to teach us and yet are afraid to credit the pledged word of God and believe we have been taught of Him. So long as we come to our heavenly Father humbly and with a spirit to be taught, willing and anxious to learn, why should we doubt God’s fulfillment of His own promise? You must not for a moment doubt Him and dishonor Him thereby. When you have sought to know His will, your part in the operation with God is to believe that you will be led and guided and blessed in the doing of His will” *Ibid.*, pages 1155–1156.

Isn’t that precious? And isn’t it simple? Childlike.

“When you have sought to know His will, your part in the operation with God is to believe that you will be led and guided and blessed in the doing of His will. We may mistrust ourselves lest we misinterpret His teachings, but make even this a subject of prayer, and trust Him, still trust Him to the uttermost, that His Holy Spirit will lead you to interpret aright His plans and the working of His providence” *Ibid.*

I think that’s wonderful, friends. Do you know, I’m convinced that God is doing a great deal more in this line than we give Him credit for. Turn to Isaiah 42, and you’ll see what I mean.

“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not;
I will lead them in paths that they have not known...”
Isaiah 42:16.

Notice the way that’s worded. “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known.” Did you ever have some experience in your life that you couldn’t understand at all when you were going through it? But after you were through it, you look back and say, why look at the way that worked out? Now, much of this awaits the future life. In Heaven, God has promised to make everything perfectly plain. But even in this world, thank God, He sometimes lets us see *after* a thing has happened how He was leading us through it.

And so in this text, He’s promised to lead even the blind by a way that they knew not. They didn’t know it, but He was leading them.

You remember that matchless statement in *Ministry of Healing*:

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see...” *Ministry of Healing*, page 479.

Well, if we can't see, what are we? Blind. Well, does God have guidance for blind people? Certainly He has. God's program of guidance does not depend upon our foresight. We may be blind as we look into the future; we may not know what tomorrow is going to bring. We don't know, but God says, give me your hand. Have you ever seen a blind person being led by somebody? Jesus is in the business of leading the blind.

Now back to my sentence:

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as coworkers with Him” *Ibid*.

Oh friends, we have a wonderful Shepherd! He leadeth me. And even if I'm a blind sheep, He can keep me, take care of me, and lead me in paths that I have not known. Therefore—watch this point—to be guided by God does not mean that through some marvelous revelation, we get a clear view of how everything is going to work out for the future, and what's going to happen if we put our feet in a certain path. No. No.

Our confidence is not in the plan; it's in the Shepherd. It is not in our understanding of how everything is going to dovetail together; it's in the assurance that God will not forsake us.

Look at Isaiah 41:

“Fear thou now...”

Why not?

“...for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”
Isaiah 41:10.

And even if we feel so small that we feel like a worm, the 14th verse says:

“Fear not, thou worm Jacob... I will help thee...”
Isaiah 41:14.

Praise God, friends, He's in the helping business, the guiding business. Aren't you thankful? Praise God!

Back to that statement in *Ministry of Healing*, it says:

“As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps”
Ministry of Healing, page 479.

What does it mean to “commit”? Turn over to Him, surrender to Him. Turn to Him the responsibility.

Now I would like to be very practical about this. I’m sure that sometimes you have the same experience that I do, and that’s this: You ask God for guidance, and yet, some things just don’t clear up. I found in the *Review and Herald* the most wonderful instruction dealing with that problem. It tells exactly what to do and what not to do when you pray for Guidance and some things aren’t clear. I’m reading this inspired instruction:

“Into the daily life there come many perplexing problems that we cannot solve. There are those who wish to adjust every difficulty, and to settle every question before they begin to work. Such will surely fail. In the end, the future will be just as indistinct, and the problems just as perplexing, as when they began to speculate about them. It is in following light given that we receive greater light. Those who go forward in faith will find the solution of the problems that perplex them”
Review and Herald, December 29, 1910.

Isn’t that wonderful, friends? Suppose here are a dozen things that I think I need to know clearly before I do anything. And I pray, and I study, and I counsel, but still so many of them seem vague. Do you know what God is saying to me? He’s saying, “Is there any of these dozen things that you are perplexed about, is there even one of them that you have light on?” Oh yes, I believe God wants me to do *this*. But then I don’t know what’s going to happen if I do it?

God says, “Never mind, if you’re clear on even *one* thing than go ahead and do it.”

I’m not talking about leaping in the dark, friends. God never asks anybody to leap in the dark. We sometimes have to wait in the dark. But we don’t have to wait until we can see a mile up the road. No, no. God’s Word is a light unto our feet.

Did you ever see that picture of the little light that some of the old pilgrims used to carry, strapped around there ankle as a foot light? How much light would it give? A mile up the road? Oh, no. But light enough to take what? The next step. This is the way God usually guides my friends.

Somebody says, “That makes me nervous.”

Well, you’ll be nervous, then. You might get an ulcer. You might get high blood pressure, coronary attack. What is God after? To make you nervous? Oh, no; to get you to trust Him.

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee...” Isaiah 41:10.

He is the light, and He will give you light enough for one step.

Back to the *Review*:

“Questions will arise that cannot be settled by any amount of thinking. Do not spend time trying to settle them. Take up the work waiting to be done, trusting in God. His righteousness will go before you, and the questions that have troubled you will answer themselves” *Review and Herald*, December 29, 1910.

Isn't that wonderful? Thank God.

I remember many years ago when I was a teenager. We were traveling across the great desert in California from Mohave to Barstow in a little model T Ford. In those days, there weren't any of these interstate highways. In many places there weren't even paved roads.

So, we were driving along on a gravel road, and we came to the bed of an old lake that was dry. It was just as level as could be. We were driving across there and we could see where the cars had driven a little this way and some that way because the road was as wide as you wanted to make it there on that dry lake. And we looked ahead, and we could see where the waters of the lake had receded, and we could see the lake there in the distance, and the trees along the bank of the lake.

We kept driving toward it, and we wondered how we were going to get across that lake because we didn't see any bridge. We kept driving, and kept wondering how were going to get across the lake. By and by, we looked back and there it was back of us. It was a mirage, you understand. Yes.

That's the way some of our problems are. Not all of them, but some of them are. You see, if we'd have sat there and waited until we could see the bridge across, we would have been there yet. How did we find the solution? Just going ahead.

Now it wouldn't have been the thing to just drive right out into actual water, would it? No. But it was all right to keep moving in the direction of the road even though we couldn't see how we were going to get across.

May I read this paragraph again? It's helped me so much:

“Questions will arise that cannot be settled by any amount of thinking. Do not spend time trying to settle them. Take up the work waiting to be done, trusting in God. His righteousness will go before you, and the questions that have troubled you will answer themselves” *Ibid*.

Here is something to enter into an experiment with God over, isn't it friends? Say, “All right Lord, I'm going to do what you said. I'm going to ask for your guidance. I'm going to be meek and humble, and commit my life to you. And I'm going to settle in advance that I'll do whatever You make clear. And if there are a

dozen things that I think I need to know, and You make clear one of them, I'm going to start to do that even though it seems that it would be better if I knew all the others."

My dear friends, I have found, and oh, I hoped that I've learned the lesson, that sometimes I can do what God wants me to do better if I don't know all the answers. I have found that sometimes I can accomplish the little part in a total program that God wants me to do if He limits my understanding of a lot of things.

Do you remember that when the Lord told Peter something about his work, a desire came to him to know about John's work? Had Peter and John worked closely together? Did they work closely together after that? Oh, yes. And I presume Peter could have reasoned, Lord, I can do my job better if I know what John is going to be.

"...Lord, and what shall this man do?" John 21:21.

What did Jesus tell him?

"...What is that to thee? Follow thou Me" John 21:22.

He leads one step at a time.

Now, I'm going to read you a beautiful little poem that conveys this thought of confidence in the companionship of God as He leads and guides us.

I go, God goeth too.
I do not go alone.

He knows the way, the mists before Him fly.
He loves me, e'er He all things will supply.

Will meet all foes, will guide at every turn.
I walk with Him, and as I walk, I learn.

For as we journey He has much to say,
and talking sweetly cheers the pilgrim way.

I go, God goeth too.
He walks with me, I do not go alone.

He walks with me and says I am His own.
I go, God goeth too.

I do not go alone, and so I need not trouble where he leads,
Nor seek to meet the oft recurring needs.

He has been with me every passing year.
He will be with me ever near and dear,

My long proved Friend.

So in His hand I place my little hand,

And looking in His face, I go.
God goeth too.

I do not go alone,
My weakness goes with the Almighty One.

Ah, remember that hand that we reach up to clasp is the nail-pierced hand. The Shepherd has given His life to make possible our salvation, and our fellowship with Him.

He leadeth me, O blessed thought,
O words with heavenly comfort fraught.
What'er I do, where'er I be,
Still tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Is that your response?

[Audience sings "He Leadeth Me" and a testimony service follows.]

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