

# FAR ABOVE RUBIES:

*Insights on living the Christian life  
– from a female perspective*

## A BUNCH OF SWEET PEAS

– THOUGHTS ON PSALM 23



### **Possession: *The Lord is my Shepherd (v.1)***

David understood what it meant to be a shepherd - to own, protect and care for his sheep, and so he could proudly state "The Lord is my Shepherd." He knew that there was no-one who could understand or care for him better than the One who created him, the Lord God himself! Jesus states in John 10 that He is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. He knows them by name and they know Him. It never ceases to amaze me that Almighty God knows us and cares for us personally.

### **Provision: *I shall not want (v.1)***

A good shepherd looks after his sheep and keeps his flock well fed. They don't have to go out foraging for food themselves. He searches out the best pastures for the sheep and leads them there. In his later years David could write in Psalm 37:25 "*I have been young and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" We can trust Jesus to meet all of our needs whatever they may be.

### **Position: *He maketh me to lie down (v.2)***

Sheep can rest and be content when they know their shepherd is watching over them. Sheep will not lie down and put themselves in a place of vulnerability unless they are content. Just like sheep we should be able to rest contented knowing that we are in the hands of the Good Shepherd. In Philippians 4:11 Paul wrote that he had learned that whatever state he was in to be content. This truly is a lesson we all need to learn. Real contentment can only be found when our trust is in God.

### **Privilege: *In green pastures (v. 2)***

Green pastures weren't easy to find in Israel in those days. The good shepherd would search out the best, lushest green pastures he could find. We are such a privileged people, as our Good Shepherd wants to provide the best for us, if we will let Him. Ephesians 3:20 states that He is able to do "*exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think.*" Why not take Him at His word today.

### **Preservation: *He restoreth my soul (v.3)***

I'm sure we can all remember a time when we were far from God and slaves to sin. Sin entered our world when Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, and because of this Paul could write in Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." I thank God that He restored us to that original position with

Him when we were saved and born again! We are no longer afar off. He saves us and He keeps us.

**Progress: *He leadeth me in paths of righteousness (v.3)***

Sheep will only make progress if they allow the shepherd to lead them. He will lead them in the right paths and the right way. John 10 tells us that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy the sheep. The sheep need to follow the shepherd and stay with the flock. Some sheep think that the grass is greener on the other side or they can go it alone, and that is when they get into trouble. I know several Christians who thought they could go it alone and didn't need fellowship. Sadly most of them are nowhere with God today. We need to choose to follow Jesus along the paths of righteousness, knowing that He will never lead us contrary to His word.

**Peace: *I will fear no evil (v.4)***

When the sheep are under the protection of the shepherd they have nothing to fear. They know he is always watching over them. David understood this better than anyone when he wrote "*Yea through I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil*". There were many times when David, as shepherd and King, found himself fighting for his life, but he trusted God to deliver him. After facing down and slaying the lion and the bear, David had no problem when it came to Goliath. His trust was in God. Fear can be crippling and, if we give in to it, fear can make us ineffective. God tells us to cast all our cares upon Him for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. We may go through trying situations but must remember that we have nothing to fear when God is with us.

**Presence: *Thou art with me (v.4)***

There is nothing that reassures sheep as much as seeing the shepherd in the field. It has been said that when the shepherd isn't in the field the sheep behave differently. They become edgy, disobedient and restless – just like ourselves when we don't allow Jesus room to work in our lives. It's such a comfort to know that Jesus has promised never to leave us, nor forsake us.

**Preparation: *Thou preparest a table before me (v.5)***

We have already said that the shepherd searches out the best pastures and leads His sheep to them. So God has a table prepared with every good thing for those who love Him. I get so excited when I read the end of the verse which states that God prepares a table before me "*in the presence of my enemies.*" Our enemies can stand in awe and look at what God is doing in our lives.

**Plenty: *My cup runneth over (v.5)***

A good shepherd will not stint on anything but will make sure his sheep have the best. Just like this cup which is not only full to the brim, but running over! This tells me that the abundant life God has promised us is not just for when we get to heaven, but for here and now. If we could only grasp how much God wants to bless us.

**Pursuit: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me (v.6)***

The welfare of the sheep is the shepherd's first priority. To know that everything the shepherd does is for their good, even in the tough times, and that He will be merciful to them, gives them great reassurance. We also need to understand that goodness and mercy flow continuously to us from our Good Shepherd, even when we don't deserve it. God's love for us never changes and we can rest assured that goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives.