

Lord is my Shepherd

What does the Lord is my shepherd means? A shepherd is someone who looks after sheep. Shepherds usually take the sheep out into fields so that they can graze (eat the grass). A shepherd's primary responsibility is the safety and welfare of the flock. Spiritually shepherd means someone who watches over, looks after, or guides somebody. God always protects and provides. The psalm 23 relies on an extended comparison of God as a shepherd and the speaker as one of his sheep. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*; The speaker says that the Lord (God) is like a shepherd to him. This sets up an explicit in which humanity, or at least the community of believers, is a flock of sheep tended by God. Jesus used to illustrate that he was the shepherd who took care of the sheep at night; he was the protector and guardian of the flock. And no man could come into the fold without knowing the gospel and knowing his relationship to his Father in Heaven. We learn that the Lord is our Shepherd in two ways. First, as the Good Shepherd, He laid down His life for His sheep and, second, His sheep know His voice and follow Him. (JOH10:10,11,14) He describes Himself as "I am the good shepherd. These "I am" proclamations point to His unique, divine identity and purpose. It should be understood that He is unique in character. (ZAC13:7; HEB13:20; 1PE2:25; 5:4) "Yahweh Roi" is the Hebrew name for God meaning the Lord is my Shepherd. The word "good" describes an innate goodness. The phrase the good shepherd, is referencing His inherent goodness, His righteousness, His beauty. As shepherd of the sheep, He is the one who protects, guides, nurtures His flock. One of the promises to Christians: (Jesus) *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly*. and this life comes through his death.

In Psalm 23, God is using the analogy of sheep and their nature to describe us. Sheep have a natural tendency to wander off and get lost. As believers, we tend to do the same thing. It's as Isaiah has said: "*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*" (ISA53:6) When sheep go astray, they are in danger of getting lost, being attacked, even killing themselves by drowning or falling off steep. Likewise, within our own nature there is a strong tendency to go astray (ROM7:5:8:8), following the lusts of our flesh and eyes and pursuing the pride of life. (1JO2:16) As such, we are like sheep wandering away from the Shepherd through our own useless self-remedies, attempts at self-righteousness. It is our nature to drift away, to reject God, and to break His commandments. When we do this, we run the risk of getting lost. Furthermore, when we turn away from the Lord, we soon find ourselves confronting enemy after another who will attack us in numerous ways. Like sheep we have all turned to our own way rather than faithfully following our Shepherd. Because of that great deficiency, we have need of a Saviour, and in God's grace Christ pays the penalty for our sin.

Sheep are basically helpless creatures, defenceless who cannot survive long without a shepherd, upon whose care they are totally dependent the shepherd. Sheep are always subject to danger and must always be under the watchful eye of the shepherd as they graze. Rushing walls of water down the valleys from sudden, heavy rainfalls may sweep them away, robbers may steal them, and wolves may attack the flock. Likewise, like sheep, we are totally dependent upon the Lord to shepherd, protect, and care for us. Sheep are essentially dumb animals that do not learn well and are extremely difficult to train. They do not have good eyesight, nor do they hear well. They are very slow animals who cannot escape predators; they have no cover-up and no weapons for defence. Furthermore, sheep are easily frightened and become easily confused. In fact, they have been known to fall blindly off a face following one after another. Shepherds in O.T. times faced incredible dangers in caring for their sheep, putting their own lives at risk by battling wild animals such as wolves and lions who threatened the flock. David tells how he killed a lion and a bear while defending his father's flock as a shepherd boy. (1SA17:36) In fact, shepherds were frequently subjected to grave danger, even giving their lives to protect their sheep.

Jesus declared that He is our good Shepherd and demonstrated it by giving His life for us. In proclaiming, Jesus speaks of "laying down" His life for His sheep (JOH10:15, 17-18). Likewise, Jesus gave His life on the cross as "the Good Shepherd" for his own. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (MAT20:28) Through His willing sacrifice, the Lord made salvation possible for all who come to Him in faith. (JOH3:16) All we like sheep have gone astray, yet we have been forgiven so much. For this cause, we should rejoice in God's grace, thankful for His provision of forgiveness and righteousness. (COL3:15-17) Like a good shepherd, our Savior has loved us and given Himself for us so that we might live. Now that we have new life, we can recognize that our lives are not our own (GAL2:20), but we now belong to Him—we are now in Him and have every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. (EPH1:3)

But because of His love for His world, while we were all still dead in sin (EPH2:4-5), Christ died on our behalf (1CO15:3) to pay the penalty and endure the judgment for our sin so that we would not have to. We can receive that gift of His grace by faith (belief, and trust) in Him (EPH2:8-9), when we believe we are "born again" (JOH3:5-7)—we are made alive (EPH2:5), we are made new creatures in Christ (2CO5:17), and we created as new people for good works that He prepared for us. (EPH2:10) While "all we like sheep have gone astray," we don't have to continue on that path of walking in deadness, sin, and shame. God has provided a new path for us (2CO 5:17), and He has given us the tools and the strength to walk in newness of life. (ROM6:4) Furthermore, Jesus makes it clear that it wasn't just for the Jews that he laid down His life, but also for the "*other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd*" (JOH10:16) The "other sheep" refers to the Gentiles, (someone/nations of the world that were not a Jew) As a result, Jesus is the Good Shepherd over all, both Jew and Gentile, who come to believe upon Him.

Jesus the door of the sheep

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Then Jesus said to them again, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”*(JOH10:7) Jesus refers to himself as the door of the sheep, which is sometimes translated as the gate of the sheep. Sheep are totally incapable of finding their way to their sheepfold even when it is in plain sight. By nature, sheep are followers. If the lead sheep steps off a cliff, the others will follow. In fact, these descriptions of a door or gate, of gaining access to something else, and the idea of Jesus as a good shepherd watching over us. Greek word for “door” means literally “a door or opening,” it is a symbol for one who gives salvation, who opens the door to heaven. So, Jesus is True Shepherd who guards His sheep, the Good Shepherd who gives His life for them, and the Doorway to heaven for the sheep who know Him and are known by Him.

In John Chapter 9 where Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. Jesus spat on the ground and made a paste out of mud and his spit and rubbed it on the man’s eyes. Then He told him to wash his face in the Pool of Siloam. After the man did this, he was able to see. Naturally, he wanted to know who had healed him, so Jesus spoke to him. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Instead of rejoicing that the blind man had experienced God, Pharisees decided they would act as a block or obstacle to access God. Jesus is essentially saying “I am the door. I am the one who decides who comes in and who goes out, and who experiences God. When Jesus refers to himself as the door of the sheep, he’s using a familiar symbol for his listeners. At night, the shepherd would bring the sheep in there to allow them to rest securely. The sheep would enter one at a time, and when he had examined him, would let the sheep in. This was not only to prevent predators getting in but to prevent sheep getting out. Jesus is the door through whom we find pasture and life in all its fullness. In real life, we are often faced with different doors or choices. Some of these may lead to a better life or future, while others can lead to failure, defeat or even death. What kind of doors are we seeking instead of Jesus? Are there any ways in which we are trying to be a door for someone and blocking their path? Those who lead to the door of women at Babylon(unbiblical Mary) will be condemned.(EZE34:2) Jesus makes it clear that any religious leader who offers salvation other than the teachings of Christ is a “thief” and a “robber.”(v.9) Jesus is making a contrast between Himself and the religious leaders, Pharisees.(JOH10:12–13) He compares them to a “hired hand” who doesn’t really care about the sheep, who sought to enter the sheepfold sneakily. Here, in John 10:12, the hireling is contrasted with the true or faithful shepherd who willingly gives up his life for the sheep. He who is a “hireling” works for wages, which are his main consideration. His concern is not for the sheep but for himself. The shepherds were expected to exercise same care and concern the owners would. This was characteristic of a true shepherd. However, the hirelings thought only of themselves. As a result, when a wolf appeared—the most common threat to sheep—the hireling abandoned the flock and fled, leaves the sheep, The wolf snatches the sheep, and scatters them or killed.

Like sheep, we, too, need a shepherd. Men are spiritually blind and lost in their sin. In Luke 15:4–6, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep to show that the Kingdom of God is accessible to all, even those who were sinners or strayed from God’s path. Jesus stresses that when the shepherd finds the lost sheep he rejoices over it more than the 99 who did not go astray. He searches for us when we’re lost. The shepherd is anxious to recover the lost sheep—He leaves the ninety-nine immediately to go after the one who is lost. Notice the shepherd doesn’t give up until the sheep is found — He goes after the sheep “until he finds it”. He is joyful when he finds his sheep. In the same way, Jesus came to *“save us from sin by being that sacrifice for our sins.”*(MA 1:21) *He came to seek and to save what was lost.* and the way to eternal life.(LUK19:10)

We tend to be like sheep, disbursed with worry and fear, following after one another. By not following or listening to the Shepherd’s voice, we can be easily led astray by others to our own destruction. Jesus, warns those who do not believe and listen to Him: *“I did tell you, but you do not believe . . . you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand”*(JOH10:25–28) The Good Shepherd finds and carries the all the weight — The sheep is carried “on his shoulders”. the shepherd holds the sheep safe—The sheep are safe, held firmly in his grip. Because sheep tend to stray and will follow wherever they are led, shepherds often had to discipline lambs that would stray from their shepherd. After binding the wound, the shepherd would carry the lamb on his shoulders while the wound healed In the same way, Jesus carries the weight of sin for us, He holds our salvation safe and sure. He joyfully puts it on his shoulders and carries the sheep all the way home. The shepherd shares his joy of finding the sheep with friends. *“Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep!”* When a person comes to Christ *“there is rejoicing in heaven”* And Jesus leads us to Heaven.(JOH14:2-3)

The moral of this parable is that each person’s soul is precious to God. Jesus claimed that as the one and only door. The role of a Shepherd is to lead his sheep to green pastures to protect them from predators, to make sure that none get lost or go astray. One who believes the gospel and repents of sin is assured of being in “the fold” and of having entered by “the door.” As followers of Christ, Jesus is both our Shepherd and the Door to sheepfold who provides for all our needs. Knowing that world is full of predators whose sole intent is to destroy us(1PE5:8), but we are always under His protection. Finally, Shepherd cares for the sheep because he loves them and wants to maintain as a faithful shepherd. We are confident of the hope, *“and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”*(1PE5:4)

Is the Lord Jesus Christ *your* Good Shepherd?

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The Good Shepherd expresses leadership or lordship of the flock role by saying, “My sheep hear My voice.” These sheep have heard the call of Christ to enter the sheepfold. Christ's sheep know how to hear, what to ignore, and whom to follow. Only the Lord's true sheep follow and obey Him because they know and recognize His voice. Jesus said, “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me*”.(JOH10:27) True sheep know, listen to, and obey the Good Shepherd's voice. “After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice” Christ leads by example. His life illustrates how we ought to live. He doesn't have to push or prod us to follow Him but guides us by walking ahead of us. And His sheep hear His voice, that is, we know His voice and recognize Him as our leader.

Do you hear His voice? The statement My sheep hear My voice expresses personal intimacy between the shepherd and his sheep. Knowing the Lord's voice indicates experiential knowledge through a relationship with Him. It highlights the call of Jesus Christ that brings believers into a new and abundant life of fellowship with Him.(ROM8:28–30) Jesus as the Shepherd calls us by name, and He knows us by name.(EXO33:17) My sheep hear My voice speaks of those who listen with obedient attention—this kind of listening results in faith. We get to know Him, and knowing Him produces faith, and that faith causes us to follow and obey. 1John 2:3–6 explains that to know God is to obey Him: True sheep know the Lord's voice and prove it by obeying His commands. Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. We belong to our Good Shepherd.(JOH17:6) By grace, the Good Shepherd has saved them through faith, and now they belong to the family of God forever.(EPH2:1–10) Those who belong to the Good Shepherd belong to God the Father. They are His forever. Jesus laid down His life on the cross to give His followers eternal life, and they are safe in His sheepfold for all eternity.

Christ alone is the true, good, great Shepherd.(HEB13:20) He is the Chief Shepherd: So as your fellow-elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed.(1PE5:1-4) If we truly love our Lord, then we will devote ourselves to the passion of our Lord—shepherding His flock: The basic meaning of which is “to shepherd,” as in, care for sheep, descriptions of pastoring. Peter's love for his Master, Jesus three times gave the mandate to Peter to feed His sheep — to tend the flock. Pastors are to act like shepherds by caring for the flock, and this care includes teaching. God's people need feeding and tending and guiding and protecting. Pastors re-gathered people will lead the people by feeding the people the knowledge and understanding of God's ways and Word. God will gather his people and will raise up many faithful pastors/elders to care for his people. *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*(ACT20:28)

King David expressing confidence and trust in the Lord. At every turn, it reveals close relationship David shares with his God. *Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*(PSA100:3) The song be one that resound with praise and thanksgiving to the triune God, from Whom all blessings flow. Are you a child of God? Then you can read/meditate 23rd Psalm and know that it is yours. *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.* The shepherd meets the sheep's every need: food, water, rest, safety, and direction. When we as believers follow our Shepherd, we, too, know that we will have all we need. We will not lack the necessities of life, for He knows exactly what we need. It is wilderness food—the manna of His promise, and water out of the Rock. We eat it as the Israelites did in haste, staff in hand, and ready to march on.

In Psalm 23, analogy of the Lord as the Good Shepherd was also applied by Jesus in John 10. In declaring that He is the shepherd of the sheep, Jesus is confirming that He is Lord. That's relationship. Provision--for I shall not want, to meets all our needs and we will receive His grace and help in a time of need. Rest--for He makes me to lie down in green pastures; Peace--for He leads me beside the still waters; Healing--for He restores my soul; Guidance--for He leads me in the paths of righteousness; Protection--for I will fear no evil; Faithfulness--for you are with me; Discipline--for Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me; Hope--for You prepare a table before me; Joy--You anoint my head with oil and my cup runs over; Blessings--Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me; In eternity--we shall dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

However, we may come to deepest, darkest valley of all—valley of the shadow of death. But even there, God is with us and we need fear no evil. Day is coming when Good Shepherd will call us to supper in His kingdom. Then we shall put on royal robe and sit down with Him. Rev.7 describes an innumerable multitude standing before throne and the Lamb. They ascribe glory to God and the Lamb, affirming that salvation belongs to God. When these believers enter Messiah's kingdom, their hunger/thirst will end, they will no longer experience scorching heat. “*for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.*”(REV7:16-17) for the purpose of His name's sake.

We do not naturally belong to the Lord's flock. We need to be brought into the fold of the True Shepherd. Can you hear His voice, calling you to believe in Him? Have you acknowledged your sin, and trusted in Him alone who can forgive sins? Jesus is inviting everyone – Jesus promises all those entering through him will be saved. Jesu says “*I am the way, the truth and the life.*” It's through Jesus alone that our salvation comes. He is the door of life. All other ways, all other doors ultimately lead to death/hell. God's promise to His flock, His own people. God will seek out God's sheep and become their true shepherd. *For thus says the Lord GOD: Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.*(EZE34:11-31)