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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Give thanks to Jesus! He knows your name and your needs

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:
In John 10, we can sense the warmth and care Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has for us when we read that He "calls his own sheep by name"

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out

(John 10:3 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", June 30, 2016)

Series: The Love of God

UNIT: The Work of God's Love

NEXT WEEK

Saving Love

(John 3:1-16)

Shepherding Love Ps 23:1-6

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reveals a clearer picture of God as our Shepherd and His **Shepherding Love**. The study's aim is to note the ways God demonstrates His loving care for us in life and in death. The study's application is to relate Psalm 23 to a current challenge or difficulty in life.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

As a child, one of my favorite games was follow-the-leader. Whenever someone suggested playing it, I was ready to participate. I enjoyed the challenge of doing whatever the leader asked of the others playing the game. However, I learned that there were certain times I did not enjoy playing as much. Why? It was because of who the leader was. Some of my friends asked us to do things that were difficult, while others were easy to follow. I soon realized that I did not want to play when certain children were appointed the leader for the game. In our passage David was talking about God as a leader, However, David was not just calling God any leader; he was putting God into the role of shepherd, one whose leadership is unquestioned by those following Him. Take a look at the opening lines of Psalm 23. All of us have no doubt read this before, and probably most of us have it memorized. Look at what David was saying, though. What did he mean when he said, "I shall not want"? Our first thought might be that David meant he had every physical provision that he needed. But is that really what he was saying in the passage? Keep in mind that David may have written this passage sometime before he became king. He had not yet been blessed with the wealth and power that would come in his later years. I propose a different interpretation. I believe that David was not making a statement about material desires here. Instead, he was boldly stating who he chose to follow. He is saying to us, "God is my Shepherd, my Leader. I do not want any other leader. I am giving Him my unflinching loyalty and devotion." When interpreted that way, the words become a daring and forthright statement of faith. David had many influences around him. He could have chosen to follow so many different people or ideals. He could have chosen to curry favor with King Saul or even gain favor with his father over his older brothers. Instead, David tells us that he served God alone. There are so many people or things to follow these days. People chase after money, power, or prestige. Some people hang on every word of their favorite celebrity, taking it as absolute truth. Like David, we are surrounded by countless influences. Who or what we follow is a choice. Christ tells us that we can have only one master (Luke 16:13). If we choose the wrong leader, we will be led astray (cf. Jer. 50:6) and beguiled into sinful actions. When we do this, we place ourselves outside of God's protection. False shepherds lead us into places of barrenness. We find ourselves desperately trying to do what we cannot, just like playing follow-the-leader with someone doing things too difficult to mimic. We are content and happy only when we allow Christ to be our Shepherd. He is the only one who knows every minute thing about each of us. He leads us down the right path, satisfying every need. Under His graceful guidance, our souls can find rest (cf. Matt. 11:28). Who is your Shepherd today? Before you give an automatic response, stop and ponder the question. Can you, like David, honestly say that you are not following anyone or anything else? Or has a false shepherd edged its way into His place? If so, is it not time to return to His flock?

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Shepherd Satisfies (Ps 23:1-2)

Satisfied by being our Shepherd (Ps 23:1)

A Shepherd that is the great Shepherd (Heb 13:20)

A Shepherd that is the Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25)

A Shepherd that we belong to (John 10:14-16)

A Shepherd whose sheep are of His pasture (Ps 100:3)

Satisfied by meeting needs (Ps 23:2)

God meets needs according to His riches (Phil 4:19)

God meets needs because He knows them better than I do (Luke 12:29-31)

God meets needs because He is able (2 Cor 9:8)

God meets needs through spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3)

God meets needs through the power of Grace (Titus 2:11-12)

The Shepherd Comforts (Ps 23:3-4)

Comforts by restoring (Ps 23:3)

God restores the soul (Ps 19:7)

God restores faith (Luke 22:32)

God restores from suffering (1 Peter 5:10)

God restores into righteousness (Job 33:26)

God restores the joy of His salvation (Psalm 51:12)

God restores from backsliding (Jeremiah 3:22)

Comforts by protecting (Ps 23:4)

God protects from perishing (Luke 21:18-19)

God protects like a shield (Ps 84:11)

God protects through His word (Prov 30:5)

God protects if we listen to Him (Prov 1:33)

God protects if we trust in Him (Prov 29:25)

The Shepherd Protects (Ps 23:5-6)

Protects by anointing (Ps 23:5)

God anoints with oil of joy (Ps 45:7)

God anoints as part of His ownership (2 Cor 1:21-22)

God anoints through the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20)

God anoints so He can teach us (1 John 2:27)

Protects by providing a safe refuge (Ps 23:6)

God is a refuge for the oppressed and those in trouble (Ps 9:9)

God is a refuge because He is our fortress and shield (Ps 18:2)

God is a refuge because He is all powerful (Ps 46:1)

God is a refuge for the righteous (Prov 10:29)

God is a refuge through His word (Prov 30:5)