

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Get With the Good Shepherd” Psalm 23 Mar 4/5

Guest speaker: Pastor Jason Cook

Getting Started

Go around your group and have each person read a verse of this most famous Psalm.

Going Deeper

1. The Good Shepherd Leads. (vs. 1-2)

In the culture of their day, shepherds lived with their sheep and thoroughly knew every single sheep in their flock. Green pastures and quiet waters speak of abundance and blessing in the presence of one who would give his life for the sheep.

How would you explain the connection between ‘The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want’ and ‘He restores my soul’?

How does a good understanding of the first make the second a reality in your life? (*possible answer*: when I stop wanting the wrong things, He can restore my soul to desire the right things)

2. The Good Shepherd Guides. (v. 3)

God guides us in paths that are right in His eyes and that will be in agreement with His holy character. (Our name represents our character).

When someone says your name, what do they think of you?

Or, if your group has been meeting for a while, you may choose to go around the room and ask the group to say some affirming things about each person, based on what you have come to know about them.

3. The Good Shepherd Provides. (v. 5)

Several years ago, Capital One credit card company had a commercial that depicted Vikings rushing to attack a hapless person who was about to use their high-interest credit card to make a purchase. But, right at the moment the Vikings arrived, the person would say, "Don't worry, I used my low-interest Capital One card," at which point the disappointed Vikings would have to walk away and leave the person alone.

This silly commercial is a good illustration for the Good Shepherd who provides for us in the presence of our enemies. Our lives often seem to be under attack and we can see the enemies approaching. Yet, in the midst of these attacks, we are told that God wants to sit down with us, enjoy a meal with us, and remind us that He is here to provide for our real needs.

Based on this verse, what do you think your greatest need is?
(possible answer: relationship with God)

4. The Good Shepherd Protects. (v. 4)

Sheep are known as being among the dumbest of animals, prone to wandering off, becoming separated from the shepherd and the flock, and being killed by predators. In this verse, we see the Good Shepherd carrying a rod and a staff. The rod was used to fight off wolves and bears. The staff was used to groom and rein in the sheep.

What does it mean to you that God fights your battles for you?

Share with us about a time when your life was out of control, or scary, and yet you felt the calming presence of God right beside you.

5. The Good Shepherd Delights in His sheep. (v. 6)

'The house of the Lord' is the place where God is. The Bible promises us that we will live with Him forever. But even while we are still Earth-bound in these bodies, we can experience God's goodness and lovingkindness. That word lovingkindness is the Hebrew word '*hesed*' and it is the word used most often (250 times) to describe God in the Old Testament. It has a rich meaning: loyal, steadfast, faithful love. It stresses the idea of belonging together with someone. It is the basis of communion, deliverance, enabling, enlightenment, guidance, forgiveness, hope, praise, and preservation.

As you consider the description of God's *hesed* love for you, how does that change your understanding of God?

Will He ever give up on you?

Can you ever do anything so bad that He will turn away from you?

Does this kind of love overwhelm you? (it should!)

How does this kind of love inspire you to let Jesus live in and through you so you can show this kind of love to others?

Prayer Requests

Pray that all those who heard this message will feel closer to the Good Shepherd.

Pray for Pastor Ed's next message series, which will take us through several of Jesus' "I AM" statements from the Gospel of John.