

Greetings to you! Our theme for his morning is the “The Good Shepherd”. The metaphor of a shepherd may not be something which we will naturally understand as city dwellers. However, I am sure that most of us have our roots in some village or the other which we may visit from time to time. I am sure that we have all come across a flock of sheep being led by the shepherd. In the psalm that was recited by children to us this morning we see David penning this as a person who himself was a shepherd. His real life experiences out in the forest and the mountains made him write this beautiful psalm which many of us have memorized from childhood.

David opens this psalm on a note of a personal confidence and trust saying ‘the Lord is my shepherd’. We see his personal knowledge of Yahweh, when he says, ‘my shepherd’. This is the lynch pin for the entire psalm. Because Yahweh was the shepherd there were several things that he was able to affirm with confidence. We will be looking at the psalm under these five G’s: Giver; Grazes; Guides; Guards and finally Girds.

David affirms that because the Lord is the shepherd he did not lack any good thing. The shepherd is the **Giver** and He always provided for the sheep. In a similar way if we make the Lord our shepherd He will take care of all our needs and we will not be in want.

The second truth is that the shepherd **Grazes** His sheep and leads them along green pastures. The sheep need to be well fed, watered and given rest. In other words the shepherd knows what is essential for the sheep to be healthy and satisfied. Likewise, if we make Jesus our shepherd then He will grant us all our basic needs, feed us with His word, and satisfy our inner most desires.

The third truth about the shepherd is that he is one who **Guides**. David says, ‘that he leads me in rights paths for his name sake.’ In other words we see that the shepherd leads the sheep either by going ahead of them and allowing them to follow him, or goading them from behind and showing them the direction. Similarly, if we make the Lord as our shepherd he will guide us every time we come to cross-roads and need to make a decision. We are consistently faced with decisions about our jobs, our future life- partner, studies, business, and so on. When we commit our decisions to Him He will guide us. He will only guides us in the paths which are right because He has to stay true to His character.

Fourthly, David affirms that the shepherd is the one who **Guards**. He says that even though he walks through the valley of death or the darkest valley, he still would not be afraid because of the rod and the staff of the Lord which were with him. The rod and the staff were instruments used by the shepherds to protect, rescue and guide the sheep. Likewise, we too can exhibit confidence and trust, because Jesus as the good shepherd has laid down His life for us so that we might live.

Fifthly, the shepherd is the one who **Girds** us. David says 'you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies'. David shows that the Lord acts as a protective hedge preventing attacks which probably cannot be seen by us. He acts like a protective shield around us and when the evil one shoots his fiery arrows at us we will be saved from those attacks.

Finally, David declares, that 'goodness and mercy shall follow all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever'. At the end of the psalm David knows that the Lord is indeed the One who Gives, Grazes, Guides, Guards and Girds. This morning we too are called to affirm the Lord Jesus as our shepherd so that we too can put our trust and confidence in Him. If we already know Him as our personal Lord and Saviour we are called to bring in other sheep which do not know Him.

Shalom
Paul Swarup
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