

## "THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE"

Psalm 100

**Intro:** In this Psalm I would call your attention to what the Psalmist, possibly David, said in verse 3 about the Lord and about himself and all of the people of God:

Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, **and the sheep of his pasture.**

The figure of a shepherd and his sheep was clearly a favorite with the people of God, as well as with the Lord. It is used many times in the Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments.

There is a very similar statement in Psalm 95, the first part of verse 7:

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Asaph, in Psalm 79, said,

So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations (Psa. 79:13).

And who is there who doesn't know that great psalm of David, Psalm 23? It is all about the Lord as our Shepherd, and we who are His sheep.

In Isaiah 40 we have that very tender and loving expression by Isaiah the prophet when he said,

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young (Isa. 40:11).

Isaiah even described our condition before we were saved with these words found in Isa. 53:6:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

When we get into the NT we read that our Lord Jesus Christ said, I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

A few verses later it is recorded that He said this:

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine (John 10:14).

We have this description in Matthew's Gospel of the way the Lord felt

about the multitudes as He looked upon them:

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd (Matt. 9:36).

That familiar benediction in Heb. 13:20, 21 emphasizes this same truth:

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,  
21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.  
Amen.

And then let me give you another reference, the first four verses of 1 Peter 5 where Peter likened the work of elders to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as "the chief shepherd" of the sheep:

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:  
2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;  
3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.  
4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Earlier in that same epistle the Apostle Peter had described our salvation with these words:

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Pet. 2:25).

When we combine the message of all of these passages we can see that this really was a favorite expression with the Lord, and that His people, instead of objecting to it, found also that it was delightful to their souls. Many people would not be happy about being compared with sheep, but believers, who know their own hearts as well as the greatness of their Savior, find it a source of great joy to be likened to sheep as long as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd.

The figure of a shepherd and his sheep was well-known to Abraham and his sons, to the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan,

and we will always remember that before David became the king of Israel, he was a shepherd. God took him from caring for sheep to caring for His people. And so David knew what it was to be a shepherd in the work that he did for his father, and then as a child of God he gladly recognized that he was one of the Lord's sheep.

One thing is certain as we look at Psalm 100:

### **I. THIS THEME WAS A THEME OF GREAT REJOICING TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD--AND ALSO OF PRAISE.**

One way we can tell if this truth means to us what it meant to the Psalmists (plural) will be that we will do with it what the Psalmists did.

Look at verses 1 and 2, and then at 4 and 5. (Read.) In verse 5 we see that the Psalmist here, probably David, would agree with the Lord that He was "the good shepherd." A literal translation of the Lord's words in John 10, both verses which I have read, would be, *I **am** the shepherd, the good (one).* There may be many shepherds (as elders in 1 Peter 5), but the Lord is the main shepherd, the One Who deserves above all others to be called, good. All shepherds have to be judged on the basis of what the Lord is. He is the model Shepherd, and no one is really worthy of bearing the title who does not follow the model. Thus, elders in the church have two reasons for being like the Lord: (1) Because it is God's will for all of us that we seek to be like the Lord; (2) because in serving the people of God elders are under-shepherds, serving under "the chief Shepherd.

How different life would be for all of us if the Lord were not our Shepherd! And let us remember that though the writers of Scripture have emphasized our relationship to the Lord in these terms, the terms did not originate with the writers of Scripture. It originated with God. And the focus of Scripture is upon the Lord Jesus Christ as our Shepherd. This is one of the main ways that He wants us to think about Him. And the more we meditate on this glorious truth, the greater will be our joy and our peace day by day.

But now I want you to look with me for the rest of our time together at verse 3. I think that there is more in this verse than most of us have seen. This is the verse around which the whole Psalm has been written. Let me point out what I mean. Understanding this verse will make us more intent on praising the Lord.

## II. THE HEART OF THE PSALM: VERSE 3.

There are seven exhortations in this Psalm:

- 1) "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord..."
- 2) "Serve the Lord with gladness."
- 3) "Come before his presence with singing."
- 4) "Know ye that the Lord, he is God."
- 5) "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."
- 6) "Be thankful unto him."
- 7) "Bless his name."

Now I don't mean to say that the Psalm was designed this way, but it is a fact that the middle exhortation in this Psalm is: "Know ye that the Lord he is God." And this is what introduces the fact that we are the Lord's people and the sheep of his pasture." But it is introduced by this one command which does not call on us to do anything, but to know something.

### A. "Know ye that the Lord he is God."

We are to understand who the Lord is, and, as the verse goes on, this means understanding what our relationship to the Lord is. But the statement basically means that we must understand that the Lord is a sovereign God. He is under no compulsion to do what He has done. He is carrying out His sovereign will. But, since He is God, let us recognize that what He determines to do, He will do. But we need to begin by recognizing Who He is, and we need to keep reminding ourselves of this glorious truth, and then we need to apply it to all of the circumstances of our lives. He is God. He is an unchanging God, the Lord. He is a sovereign God.

Spurgeon said about this verse in this Psalm: "Knowledge is the mother of devotion, and of all obedience" (Treasury of David, II, 237).

Therefore how important it is for us to know what God wants us to know, and to keep reminding ourselves of the knowledge the Lord has given us. This first statement of verse 3 forms the foundation upon which the rest of the verse rests.

But let us look at the next statement:

### B. He has made us what we are.

The Psalmist's words are, "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

— Now when you first read that statement, perhaps you are like I was. I felt that the Psalmist was telling us that this God is our Creator. We didn't make ourselves; He made us! And this is certainly true. But I don't think that the Psalmist was speaking here about creation. The context even of this verse is that "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." That is what the Psalmist was speaking about.

And so it seems to me (and there are commentators who share my opinion), that the Psalmist is speaking here of our salvation. This is our beloved doctrine of election. We did not make ourselves the creatures we are; that is obvious. But neither did we make ourselves His people, His sheep. He chose us. He sought us. He brought us to Himself. He saved us, and He is transforming us. Isn't this a statement that perfectly describes our salvation: "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves"?

Now we need to notice:

### **C. What He made us.**

— Here is our answer: "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

These statements mean that the Lord has claimed us as His very own people, and because we are the sheep of His pasture, we can be assured that He intends to do everything necessary to take care of us. All that sheep depend upon their shepherd to do, the Lord has committed Himself to do for us. He will feed us. He will give us rest. He will protect us. He will guide us. And He will never let us get away from Him.

"His pasture" represents all of His provision for us. His pastures are always green, as David said in Psalm 23. And there is always refreshing water nearby. Aren't these pictures of what the Word of God is to us? And even though enemies may be close by, the Lord never fails to spread His table for us.

— When David said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," he was saying that since the Lord was His Shepherd, he would never lack anything that was necessary for his existence as one of the Lord's sheep. To be "the sheep of his pasture" means that by His grace we have a right to be there, and no one will ever be able to put us out. "His mercy is everlasting; and his truth (his faithfulness) endureth to all generations."

**Conc:** Can you understand now, perhaps a little better than before why the Psalmist wanted the Lord people to make a joyful noise to the Lord, to serve Him with gladness, to come into His presence with singing and thanksgiving to praise His name? We are His people. We didn't make ourselves His people; He made us His people. And knowing that as His people we would still be capable of sin, still be plagued with our weaknesses, still inclined to wander, He has committed Himself to take care of us here and now, and to assure us that He would continue to care for us until we are safely home.

What a blessing it is to know the Lord, and to belong to Him! This is the source of our joy, and this is the only way we can have peace in a world of sin like we live in.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? If not, perhaps the Lord brought you here tonight because He is seeking you, and He intends to lay His loving hands upon you, and to take you to His fold, and to His pasture. The Lord is still gathering His sheep. Perhaps in the depths of your heart tonight you are hearing His call. Come to Him. Believe on Him. Trust Him to save you by His grace. He alone is *the Shepherd, the good One*.