

The Good Shepherd

Introduction

Although everyone has their own favourite psalm, it is probably fair to say that Psalm 23 is the psalm with which people are most familiar. The psalm has been and still remains an important part of the liturgical tradition of the church, both as a hymn of praise in times of joy and as a word of comfort in times of loss.

Although most readers focus upon the image of the shepherd (vs1-4), the psalm in fact uses two images to describe the LORD. The second image which depicts the LORD as a generous and loyal host (vs5-6) is just as important and encouraging as the first, and in fact leads directly to the clear statement of confidence and assurance with which the psalm ends.

The rich theology of the psalm, especially its description of the goodness, love and faithfulness of the LORD, and its deeply personal and relational tone make the psalm both encouraging and challenging for the reader. The testimony of the psalmist David is to the LORD's faithfulness not his own and it stands both as a declaration of praise to God and as an invitation to the reader to discover for him- or herself that the LORD is indeed the good shepherd and generous host, the one to whom we can entrust our lives with complete confidence.

Read Psalm23vs1-6



Investigate:

Answer the following questions from the text:

1. What two images does David use to describe the LORD?

2. In what way does the psalm describe the LORD's relationship with His people as 'personal'?

