

# THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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## IS THE LORD YOUR SHEPHERD?

Vernon Teagarden

There probably is no more famous and well-known Psalm than the 23rd Psalm. It's read at funerals, found on bookmarkers, on various sized and types of plaques hanging on the walls of countless homes; memorized by children and adults alike.

Yes, the Psalm is well-known, but how many people really know the Shepherd and are known by him? (cf. Jn. 10:14).

David knew the Shepherd and knew that He was his Shepherd (Psa. 23:1). David begins the Psalm, "The Lord is 'my' Shepherd..." No "if" or "I hope so," but rather, "He is my Shepherd!"

Further, note the use of the word "my." David does not say, "The Lord is the Shepherd of the world at large, and leads forth the multitude as His flock." No, the Lord is "my" Shepherd. In other words, "If He be a Shepherd to no one else, He is a Shepherd to me!" Reminiscent of Paul's attitude toward his relationship with the Lord found in (Phil 3:8). Paul considered Jesus to be "my" Lord!

David also recognized the benefits of having the Lord as his Shepherd. That He would care for him, watch over him, and preserve him (Psa. 23:1). "The Lord is my Shepherd, I SHALL NOT WANT!" Further, not to be lost on us is the fact that the words of David are in the present tense. David understood that he was even now under the care of the Good Shepherd. That He was able and certainly willing to supply all of David's physical and spiritual needs. (cf. Psa. 23:2-6).

However, these benefits and blessings belong to the one who is the Lord's sheep! No man has the right to consider himself the Lord's sheep, nor the Lord as his Shepherd who has not become a part of His flock by hearing and following the Shepherd's voice. It is possible to not be part of His sheep or flock, and consequently, not have the Lord as one's Shepherd. (cf. Jn. 10:25-26). How then can this situation be remedied?

What must one do for the Lord to become "my" Shepherd, and enjoy the blessings and benefits belonging to the Lord's sheep? Consider what the Good Shepherd has said about that.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (Jn. 10:27). Moreover, Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20). In order for there to be fellowship between you and the Shepherd; in order for there to be a relationship between you and the Shepherd then, you must hear His voice and open the door of your heart!

There are many who have closed their hearts to the Lord through sin; and instead of having the Lord as their Shepherd they are like the sheep described by Peter in (1 Pet. 1:25) - they are "going astray!" What is needed for one in such a condition, is to hear the voice of the Shepherd, and open the door of their heart, and come to the "Shepherd and Overseer" of their soul (1 Pet. 1:25b).

But, what does it mean to "hear the voice of the Shepherd?" Simply put, He speaks to us through His word (the gospel); and we "hear" it and follow His voice through obedience to that word. (cf. Jn. 10:4). Note the words of Father on the Mount of Transfiguration as recorded for us in (Matt. 17:5). "... 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. HEAR HIM!' We must heed the words of the Son. He is the author of eternal salvation unto all who will "obey"

**Southeast Church of Christ**

**35 Walnut Ct**

**Mogadore, OH**

**330-628-7432**

**Service Times:**

**Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm**

**Wednesday: 7:30 pm**

Him (Heb. 5:9). God's power to save is found in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). That gospel was revealed to us by Christ (Gal. 1:11-12); therefore, I must hear it and obey it. (cf. Rom. 10:17; 6:17-18).

After becoming one of the Lord's sheep one must continue to follow the voice of the Shepherd. (cf. Jn. 10:3-5). If the Lord is truly "my" Shepherd, then I will follow "only" His voice. I will not follow the voice of a stranger, such as the voice of the false teacher or the voice of the world. (cf. 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 9-10; Jas. 4:4; Gal. 5:19-21). I will do my best to always follow only His voice in order that I may always enjoy the blessings that "my" Shepherd provides for me now, and in the end, eternal life. (cf. Jn. 10:9; 27, 28).

Can you say with David, "The Lord is 'my' Shepherd?" If not, why not? And if not, why not do something about that by "hearing" His voice. Open your heart and let Him into your life through simply obeying His voice. However, as always, the choice will be yours!

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### SENTENCE SERMONS

1. Many of us have the right aim in life. We just never get around to pulling the trigger.
2. When you flee temptation, make sure you don't leave a forwarding address.
3. Experience is one thing you can't get for nothing.
4. God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves.
5. Life is short, but it gives us plenty of time to outlive our good intentions.
6. No matter how it turns out, there is always some person who knew it would.
7. People will take your example far more seriously than they take your advice.
8. Parents do not bring children up any more—they finance them.
9. Even though the tongue weighs practically nothing, it's surprising how few people are able to hold it.
10. The faith that moves mountains always carries a pick.

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### USEFUL IN SERVICE

A great musician willed his beautiful violin to a relative with the condition that it never be played again. Soon the instrument that had made such beautiful music became warped and useless through neglect. This is a reminder that a life withdrawn from service to others becomes empty and useless. Keep your life tuned up and filled with meaning and joy by giving yourself in sacrificial service.