

Sermon Notes for June 20, 2010

**Sermon Series On
The 23rd Psalm
“The Protection Of The Shepherd
For His Sheep”
Psalm 23:5**

Introduction

A. BELIEVERS ARE SHEEP!

1. In the Word of God, believers are **not called**:
 - a. **lions** – who take care of their pride
 - b. **bears** – who can overwhelm their opponent
 - c. **even birds** – who soar in the heavens
2. **In the Word of God, believers are called SHEEP!**
 - a. of all the animals in the animal kingdom that God could have chosen to call us, He chose to call us sheep
 - b. please notice what sheep are:
 1. directionless
 2. defenseless
 3. dirty

B. BELIEVERS NEED A SHEPHERD!

1. And, whereas, most animals do not need help:
 - a. finding their way home
 - b. taking care of their own needs
2. Sheep will die if they do not have a caregiver – or a shepherd

C. We Have Been LOOKING AT BEING A SHEEP IN THE FLOCK OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1. The Good Shepherd takes care of His Sheep.
2. The Good Shepherd restores sheep that have fallen over.
3. The Good Shepherd protects His sheep as they go through the valley of the shadow of death.
4. The Good Shepherd protects His sheep with His rod and staff.
5. **Today, we continue our study of the 23rd Psalm, as we look at how the Good Shepherd further protects His sheep.**

I. The PROTECTION OF THE SHEEP

Vs. 5 – “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

A. The PHYSICAL NEEDS OF THE SHEEP

1. The shepherd goes to prepare a place for the sheep for the summer months
 - a. as the shepherd prepares his sheep to travel from the valley to mountain during the hot summer months, the shepherd must first go “prepare a table”
 - b. a “table” would be another term for a grazing area
 1. called a mesa in Spanish
 2. called a table in many countries (Cape Town, South Africa has a place called Table Mountain).

2. At the “table” that the shepherd chose for his sheep, the shepherd had to care of two areas to properly “prepare a table” for his sheep
 - a. **first**, the shepherd not only had to make sure that there was “good vegetation for his sheep to eat”, he made sure that there was no “bad vegetation” that could harm his sheep.
 1. certain plants could not only be harmful, but could be deadly to the sheep; and sheep will eat almost anything.
 2. there is a plant called a white cama
 - a. if sheep eat this plant, it could mean certain death
 - b. the sheep becomes paralyzed; stiffens like a block of wood and eventually is overtaken by the toxic poison from this plant
 - c. thus, the shepherd who “prepares the table” may actually pick all of the white camas from a field so that his sheep will not eat it.
 - d. shepherds almost have to be botanists to be able to effectively protect their sheep
 - b. **second**, the shepherd would see if there were any predators who could injure or kill his sheep.
 1. the shepherd was always looking for coyotes, cougars and bears
 2. one of the greatest struggles for the shepherd was that shepherds did not usually “see” the predators until after the damage had been done.
 - a. **Philip Keller**, (A Shepherd Looks At The Twenty-Third Psalm)

“It reminds me of my encounters with cougars. On several occasions these cunning creatures came in among my sheep at night working terrible havoc in the flock. Some sheep were killed out right, their blood drained and livers eaten. Others were torn open and badly clawed. In these cases, the great cats seemed to chase and play with the sheep in their panic like a house cat would chase a mouse. Some had huge patches of wool torn from their fleece. In their frightened stampede, some had stumbled and broken bones or rushed over rough ground injuring legs and bodies.

Yet, despite the damage, despite the dead sheep, despite the injuries and fear instilled in the flock, I **never once actually saw a cougar on my range**. So cunning and so skillful were their raids, they defy description.”

B. The SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF BELIEVERS

1. Our Good Shepherd has “prepared a table for us” by **coming to this earth** and experiencing all that we will deal with in this life **BEFORE WE DO!**
 - a. **Hebrews 4:15** – “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, **but we have one who has been tempted in every way**, just as we are--yet was without sin.”

1. Greek - sumpatheo
 - a. sum - with
 - b. patheo – to feel with, to suffer with
2. Jesus has “felt” the same pain; the same temptation as we do
- b. In “preparing the table” for us by coming to this earth, Jesus did not want us to live a life on this earth and to feel alone.
 1. as if He could not relate to our struggles as on this earth
 2. “because” Jesus came to this earth, HE KNOWS WHAT WE ARE GOING THROUGH.
- c. Illustrations
 1. Rod Serling – The Twilight Zone – “A dimension of sight and sound;” “a parallel dimension”
 - a. what if there did exist a “parallel dimension” and you met your “parallel dimension equal”?
 - b. would you not want to talk with them:
 1. to see what they felt
 2. when they went through the same experiences as you did
 3. “The Kid” – movie
 2. three widows in our church share their anniversary dates
 - a. Mae Bright – June 7
 - b. Gail Voss – June 8
 - c. Jimmy Jansen – June 9
2. Our Good Shepherd has “prepared a table for us” **by dealing with our enemy**
 - a. Our Good Shepherd KNOWS our enemy - Satan
 1. Jesus was tempted personally by Satan in His 40 days in the wilderness
 2. Jesus referred to Satan repeatedly during His ministry
 - a. **Matthew 12:26** – “If **Satan** drives out **Satan**, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?”
 - b. **Luke 22:31** - "Simon, Simon, **Satan** has asked to sift you as wheat.”
 - b. Do you believe in Satan?
 1. **C. S. Lewis** – “There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan”
 2. **HOW ELSE DO YOU EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS?**
 - a. **alcohol abuse:**
 1. **23%** of people 12 years and older have participated in binge drinking
 2. underage drinking costs the U.S. more than **58 billion dollars a year**
 3. alcohol is involved in **50%** of all traffic fatalities
 4. **1700** college students die each year due to alcohol

5. Americans spend some **90 billion dollars** on alcohol per year
 - b. **drug abuse:**
 1. **60%** of all teens say that drugs were sold, used or kept in their schools
 2. **20% of all 8th graders** report that they have used marijuana
 3. Opiate addiction costs Americans some **484 billion dollars annually**
 - c. **abortion:**
 1. there are some **40-50 million abortions** per year in the world
 2. there are some **1.2 million abortions each year** in the U.S.
 3. there have been some **50 million abortions** since the passing of Roe vs. Wade in 1972
 4. **50% of all abortions** are committed by unmarried women
 5. **50% of all abortions** in the U.S. are by women 25 and younger
 6. **61%** of all abortions are obtained by women who have one or more children.
 7. teens compose **17% of all abortions**
 8. **1 in 4 evangelical christian women** have had an abortion.
 - d. **pornography:**
 1. some **25 to 30 billion dollars** are spent on pornography per year
 2. **800 million pornographic videos** are rented annually
 3. **80%** of all **youth aged 15-17** have visited multiple pornographic websites
 4. **90% of those aged 8-16** have visited a pornographic website
 5. **47% of all Christian** men say that pornography is a problem in their life
 6. **53% of all Promise Keepers** confess that they have viewed pornographic websites this week.
2. **HOW ELSE DO YOU EXPLAIN SUCH STATISTICS?**
- a. Our Good Shepherd not only KNOWS that there is an enemy
 - b. He helps us to deal with him
 - c. So . . .
 1. “we sheep” need to realize that we have an enemy

2. and we need to “stick close to the shepherd”
 - a. find a church
 - b. get active in that church
 - c. seek the support of fellow christians
 - d. walk closely with your Good Shepherd
 - e. or you will be a “sitting duck” or better said “sitting sheep”
- d. PLEASE REMEMBER what **Philip Keller**, who was once a shepherd himself, said:
 - a. he never actually saw a cougar around his sheep
 - b. he only witnessed their damage

II. The PEACE OF THE SHEPHERD

Vs. 5b – “You anoint my head with oil;”.

A. The PHYSICAL PEACE PROVIDED BY THE SHEPHERD

1. sheep were **affected by flies**
 - a. there was a saying among shepherds: “summertime is fly time”
 1. warble flies
 2. bot flies
 3. heel flies
 4. nose flies
 - b. these flies were a real nuisance to the sheep, especially the nose fly.
 1. the nose fly would land on the wet nose of the sheep and attempt to lay its eggs
 2. the eggs would hatch in a few days to form small, slender, worm-like larvae
 3. these larvae would work their way up the nasal passages and into the sheep’s head
 4. the larvae would burrow into the flesh and cause intense irritation followed by severe inflammation
 - c. sheep would respond to these flies
 1. for relief from this intense pain and discomfort, the sheep would deliberately beat their heads against trees, rocks, posts or bushes
 2. in extreme cases, the sheep may hurt or kill itself as it attempted to get rid of the incessant aggravation
 3. obviously, when nose flies were seen by the sheep hovering over them, the sheep would become frantic with fear and often panic to escape their tormentors
 4. in some cases, lambs would stop milking with their ewes causing the ewes to lose weight
 - d. the shepherd would solve the problem of the flies and his sheep
 1. the shepherd would apply a solution of oil to protect the sheep from the flies

2. Keller said that his mixture was linseed oil, sulphur and tar that he applied to the nose of his sheep as a protection against the dreaded nose flies.
2. sheep were **affected by scab**
 - a. there was another problem that sheep had in the summertime; sheep contracted a disease called “scab”
 1. scab is an irritating and highly contagious disease common to sheep
 2. scab is caused by a microscopic parasite that spreads through a flock by direct contact between the sheep.
 3. as sheep are prone to rubbing their noses with one another to show affection, scab is transmitted from one infected sheep to another as the sheep rubbed their noses together
 4. **Keller** said that he once had a problem with scab in his flock after he purchased some sheep that had scab. After a time, the infected sheep transmitted scab through his entire flock.
 - b. the only solution to deal with scab was to dip the entire sheep in a solution to kill the disease
 1. for **Keller**, it meant purchasing a huge dipping tank and dipping every single sheep into the vat.
 2. since scab was transferred by sheep rubbing their heads against one another, the shepherd made absolutely sure that the heads of each sheep were dipped in the solution.
3. sheep were **affected by other sheep**
 - a. during mating season, or “the rut,” the male rams would fight for attention of the female sheep
 1. often to gain advantage, the rams would literally “butt heads”
 2. **Keller** recalls that the crash of heads and thud of colliding bodies could be heard through the hours of the night
 - b. the way that the shepherd dealt with these aggressive, battling rams was very similar to the solution of dealing with nose flies.
 1. before the rut, the shepherd would apply grease on the heads of the rams
 2. then, when the rams collided, the lubricant would make them glance off of each other in such a way that the rams stood there feeling rather ridiculous. In this way, much of the damage would be dissipated.

B. The SPIRITUAL PEACE OF THE SHEPHERD

1. we, as believers, have “**flies**” in this life
 - a. what are our “flies”?
 1. the little things in life (S.C. “no see ums”)
 2. missed appointments
 3. a car wreck
 4. unexpected bills
 5. our house fire – phone call while on vacation
 6. your Doctor may say to you: “You have a suspicious mole that I want to take a closer look at.”

7. Brian Regan, Comedian
 - a. walk into a spider web
 - b. have a bee chasing you
 - c. “what’s wrong with that guy?”
- b. how do we deal with these “flies” in our lives.
 1. have you ever noticed that it does not do much good for someone to tell you “don’t worry about it. It will be O.K.”
 2. also, it does not do much good to tell yourself; it will be O.K.
 3. in our lives, as believers, the **ONLY SOLUTION**, to the “flies in our lives” is that the Good Shepherd applies His Holy Spirit to us.
John 14:26-27 – “But the **Counselor, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.** I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid..”**
4. **PLEASE REALIZE THAT ONE APPLICATION OF OIL WAS NOT ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF THE FLIES ATTACKING THE SHEEP.**
 - a. **Keller** – “Only one application of oil, sulphur and tar **was not enough** for the entire summer. It was a process that had **to be repeated. The fresh application was the effective antidote.”**
 - b. trust me, there will be “flies” in our lives each and every day: therefore, we need the “anointing oil” of the Holy Spirit each and every day.
 - c. lest, you allow the “flies of life” to cause you to worry, fret and lose control
 - d. how do you receive this daily anointing?
 1. **Psalm 1:1-3** – “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. **But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.** He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. **Whatever he does prospers.”**
2. we, as believers, **can have “scab” in this life**
 - a. notice that scab is transmitted from one “sheep” to another “sheep”
 1. scab is not transmitted from a wolf to a sheep or a cougar to a sheep;
 2. no, sheep transfer scab to other sheep
 - b. what is the lesson here?
 1. notice that the Psalm says “He anoints **my head** with oil.”
 2. the mind of the Christian is affected positively and negatively:

- a. if I put Godly thoughts into my mind, Godly thoughts will come out of my mind
 - b. please notice **Romans 8:5** – “Those who live **according to** the sinful nature have their **minds set** on what that nature desires; but those who live in **accordance with** the Spirit have their **minds set** on what the Spirit desires.”
 - 1. **THIS IS A PRINCIPLE OF LIFE!**
 - 2. **Proverbs 23:7** – “**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.**”
3. So . . .
- a. if a believer spends most of his time in the unbelieving world, reading and learning ungodly principles
 - b. if a believer spends no time in God’s Word, meditating and learning the truth
 - c. then, **THAT BELIEVER** will develop “spiritual scab” that can “infect” other healthy sheep
4. **AS THE PASTOR OF THIS FLOCK, I AM ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR “BELIEVERS WITH SCAB!”**
- a. either believers who are members of this flock
 - 1. who have walked away from the Lord
 - 2. and are “rubbing noses” with fellow believers, infecting them with ungodly thoughts.
 - b. or those who enter this flock with ungodly beliefs
 - 1. let me tell you something about me -- I take my calling as your shepherd very seriously
 - 2. and if, I, meet or sense, someone who is new to this flock that comes “with an agenda,” or a belief in ungodly or unbiblical thoughts or teachings, **I WILL TREAT THAT PERSON AS A THREAT TO THE HEALTH OF THIS FLOCK!**
 - a. this is my calling
 - b. this is my responsibility
 - c. this is my commitment to you as my flock
3. we, as believers, **can “butt heads” in this life**
- a. inasmuch as the rams of the flock have a responsibility to the shepherd to assist in expanding the flock
 - 1. these same rams do not have the freedom to “beat up upon one another” in that flock
 - 2. it is therefore, the Pastor/shepherd’s responsibility to protect the “leaders of the flock” from one another by applying the protective oils of God’s Word and Spirit.
 - b. there is always a danger that spiritual leaders can “butt heads”
 - 1. it is my responsibility to always be aware who “the rams” are in this flock; in this case, the elders.

2. and if I see spiritual leaders “butting heads” with one another, I will ask:
 - a. is this an issue of pride?
 - b. or, are these “rams” butting heads over Biblical issues?
 3. without a doubt, I will find out if each of these “rams have oil” on their heads or “need oil on their heads”
- c. let me convey a serious message to all of our leaders here at Christ Covenant**
1. being a leader of a church is a very serious matter
 2. and you CANNOT and MUST NOT think that you can do this “in your own power”
 - a. **if you, as a leader, are not willing to spend time with the Lord on a consistent basis so that God’s Holy Spirit rests on you, I would humbly ask you to cease being a leader here at Christ Covenant.**
 - b. because, ultimately what will happen is this:
 1. without the blessing and grace of the anointing of the Holy Spirit
 2. spiritual leaders will:
 - a. insist on getting their way
 - b. battle others to make their point
 - c. think that their goal will be to embarrass those who do not agree with them.

Conclusion:

1. As your shepherd, I want to “**prepare a table for you**” each and every Sunday.
 - a. I want to bring the finest of food, the richest of spiritual diets to feed you as sheep
 - b. that is why I study and prepare so much for each message that I preach
 1. my goal is to “load you down” with so many groceries that you cannot handle it
 - a. not these “little baskets” that you see in the grocery store
 - b. but a hugh cart, full of bags of groceries—just like the “loads” you see at Sam’s Wholesale Club
 2. it is a crime for a shepherd not to feed his flock.
2. As your shepherd, I want to be **aware of the “flies”** that can be such a nuisance in the lives of believers:
 - a. examples:
 1. medical tests; bad news
 2. family issues
 3. financial issues
 - b. I want to be the one to lead you to the blessing and anointing of the Holy Spirit.
3. As your shepherd, I want to be aware of the **danger of spiritual leaders “butting heads”**
 - a. I want to recognize our spiritual leaders – our elders
 - b. and I want to remind them:

1. The Scripture does not call us to be businessmen as leaders, but shepherds.
 - a. Abraham was a shepherd
 - b. Moses was a shepherd
 - c. David was a shepherd
 - d. Jesus was a shepherd
2. **THE SHEPHERD IS OUR MODEL OF MINISTRY**
 - a. not CEO's
 - b. not executives
 - c. not administrators
 - d. but, shepherds of God's sheep
3. **I Peter 5:1-4** – “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: **Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care**, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; **not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.**