

Homework - Week 5

Jehovah Raah (Rohi) *The Lord Is My Shepherd*

The most recited passage of Scripture, next to John 3:16, is probably the 23rd Psalm. When life leaves us weary and heartbroken, this psalm envelopes us with the comforting reminder that our heavenly Father is always there. It is in this psalm that we are introduced to Jehovah Raah...*The Lord My Shepherd*.

Observe It

Read Psalm 23 and record your observations below. Don't let your familiarity with the passage cause you to rush through it, but take time to read it with fresh eyes and soak in what it says.

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

Record below the different functions you see the Shepherd perform in Psalm 23:

Throughout the Bible, we find passages comparing people to sheep. Read the following verses and record your observations:

Psalms 100:3

Isaiah 53:6

Jeremiah 50:6

Matthew 9:36

We also see numerous references in both the Old and New Testament that refer to God and Jesus as our Shepherd. Read the following verses and record what they tell us about our Shepherd:

Isaiah 40:11

Ezekiel 34:11-16

John 10:2-16

Experience It

In Psalm 23, we see the Shepherd acting as caretaker, guide, and protector. Have you personally experienced Him in these roles? What did that look like in your life?

In verse 2, it says that “He makes me lie down in green pastures...” It is interesting to note that sheep will not lie down easily. Naturally skittish and timid animals, it is hard for them to rest unless they feel completely safe and their bellies are full. Yet, this passage reveals that the Lord is our Shepherd who provides the protection and care needed for us to experience true rest.

Does rest come easy for you? Why or why not?

If rest is a struggle for you, what truth about your Shepherd do you need to grab onto and experience today? Is there an area of control that you need to hand over to Him and trust that He will watch over you?

In verse 4, it talks about the Shepherd being with us even in the darkest valley. Have you personally experienced this? What, if anything, was different about the Shepherd’s presence during those times?

Verse 4 also talks about the comfort that comes from the Shepherd’s rod and staff. Both of these are tools that have been used by shepherds for thousands of years, and each one has a distinct purpose. The rod is a short, club-like stick often worn on the belt and is primarily used for defense and discipline. The shepherd uses the rod to defend himself and the sheep against predators and thieves, and it is a visible reminder of the protection he offers. He also uses the rod for discipline when a sheep begins to wander off on its own or is approaching poisonous weeds or other dangers. A quick hurl of the rod will send the wayward animal running back to the flock.

It is easy to recognize the comfort that comes from protection. But what about the discipline side of the rod? What comfort can we find in a Shepherd that disciplines us? Read the following passages and note what they say about God and His discipline of us (Proverbs 3:11-12, Job 5:17, Hebrews 12:5-11, II Corinthians 4:17-18, Revelation 3:19). What is the common theme you see in these verses?

Have you experienced God’s discipline in your life? What did that look like? Did you find it comforting at the time or perhaps later?

The staff on the other hand is probably the most commonly identified part of the shepherd's outfit, a long walking stick with a gentle hook at one end. It is used to draw sheep close to one another or to the shepherd in intimate relationship, and it is also used to gently guide them and keep them on the path. In addition, it can be used to rescue sheep who have found themselves in trouble because of their foolish choices, perhaps slipping down a ravine or getting stuck in a thorny bush in their pursuit of one more bite of grass. What parallels do you see between the Shepherd's staff and how the Holy Spirit interacts with us? How have you experienced the Shepherd's "staff" in your life and what did it look like?

Based on what you read in Psalm 23 and what we have discussed above, is there a specific area or circumstance in your life right now where you need to experience God as your Shepherd? Explain.

Express It

How would your life look different if you fully embraced the truth that the Lord is your Shepherd and that He provides all the care and guidance and protection you need? What would it look like for you to live in a state of contentment and rest because of these truths? List some specific ways you can apply and express these truths in your life.

What are some practical ways that you can express this picture of a Shepherd to the people around you this week? Is there some care or guidance that you can give someone? Is there someone you need to pull close this week and love on? Maybe there is some practical provision that you can offer. Pray and ask the Lord to give you some specific ways to reflect His Shepherd's heart.

Pray It

Spend some time praying about what you learned in your study of God as your Shepherd. Ask God to increase your understanding and experience of this part of His character, and pray that He would give you wisdom to know how to express it to those around you.