Series: The Shadow of Death

Title: I Shall Not Want

Text Psalm 23:1b  
May 10, 2020

Organizational Sentence: I want to ask a couple questions about your life, then we’ll see 3 possible reasons why we can say, “I shall not want.”

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

2 Questions

1. Does your life say, “I shall not want”?
   * Pornography: “If only I had enough sex, then I would not want.”
   * Power-Hunger: “If only I had enough control, then I would not want.”
   * Materialism: “If only I had enough stuff, then I would not want.”
   * Greed: “If only I had enough money, then I would not want.”
   * Manipulation: “If only I could change them, then I would not want.”
   * Self-actualization: “If only I become \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”
   * Self-righteousness: “If only I did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”
   * Mysticism: “If only God would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”
   * Travel-obsession: “If only I could go to the right places, then I would not want.”
   * Entertainment: “If only I could see or hear the next thing, then I would not want.”
   * Gambling: “If only I could win this much, then I would not want.”
   * Intellectuals: “If only I know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”
   * Substances: “If only I could feel this always, then I would not want.”
   * Health-obsession: “If only I avoid \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”
   * Gluttony: “If only I could taste \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would not want.”

Almost nothing in this world can bring you to the conclusion I shall not want.

Buddhism gets that part right. Their solution, however, is quite circular. “If only I did not want the wrong things, then I would not want.”

So the solution would be yourself and your discipline and self-control.

And that could be reworded: “If only I had perfect self-control, then I would not want.”

That, my friends, can control your life as much as the rest, albeit with less devastating circumstances in this present life.

“If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” -C.S. Lewis

1. In your life, if the conclusion is, “I shall not want” how did you get there?
   * Childhood: “Dad or mom or whoever is my shepherd, I shall not want.”
   * Capitalism: “Work is my shepherd, I shall not want.”
   * Socialism: “Society is my shepherd, I shall not want.”
   * Communism: “Government is my shepherd, I shall not want.”
   * Individualism: “I am my shepherd, I shall not want.”
   * Idolatry: “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

What this Is Not Saying, contextually:

* This is not an empty command to stop wanting. “Thou shall not want.” You shall not covet. That is a law. It is one of the 10 Commandments. We all fall short of it. But this is not contextually a law. To treat it as such would be legalism.
* This is not saying, no Christian anywhere will ever starve. There is a tension in this Psalm in that we also walk through the valley of the shadow of death. There are pleasant things. There are scary things. To turn this into a blanket promise of prosperity in the present has the wrong timeline. Verse 6 definitely ties this up with an eternal timeline. In this life you will have difficulty. Statistically, you are likely to die somehow. Shepherds do slaughter sheep. God has numbered your days. But God will be with you and provide everything you need until your days are done. Even if a Christian starves, they will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

3 Possible Reasons to Say, “I shall not want.”

1. I shall not want… because I have the Shepherd’s provisions.
   1. It follows in the Psalm. “I shall not want … he provides in all these ways.”

Psalm 34:9–10

[9] Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints,

for those who fear him have no lack!

[10] The young lions suffer want and hunger;

but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. (ESV)

1. I shall not want… because I have the Shepherd.
   1. This precedes in the verse. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Psalm 34:8

[8] Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (ESV)

1. I shall not want… because that’s not my job anymore.
   1. The Lord is my shepherd – I am not – I shall not want.
   2. Christ-follower, you have a shepherd who loves you better than you can love you.

Matthew 6:25-34

[25] “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27] And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? [28] And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, [29] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [31] Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ [32] For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. [33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

[34] “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (ESV)

Bottom Line: If the Lord is your shepherd, turn your focus to him, and there’s nothing left to worry about.