Series: The Shadow of Death

Title: The LORD is my Shepherd

Text Psalm 23:1a

May 3, 2020

Series Intro: Taking a break from 1 Corinthians to address concerns related to the coronavirus. My concern is that we are looking at everything related to the virus. We are scared and defenseless sheep. We are worried about the lions and bears; the tigers and wolves. Specifically, we are worried about the coronavirus, the economy, government overreach and an out of control media. We fear for our freedoms, our health, our finances, and our friendships. And as sheep, there is basically nothing we can do about it. We are overwhelmed. And I am reminded of Psalm 23- yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.” We are going to spend a lengthy series meditating on Psalm 23 so that we can say and mean those words. As we do this, I want to encourage you to memorize Psalm 23 in your favorite translation. I want to request that you discuss it with your household, a mentor, a life group, in zoom discussions at 10:30 this Sunday, etc. We are bombarded with this problem all the time. But if we know our shepherd, we will fear no evil, because he is with us!

Organizational Sentence: We will look at each key word of the line: “The LORD is my Shepherd.”

1. **The LORD is my shepherd**

* Personal name of God
* Introduced Himself by this Name in Exodus 3:14

Exodus 3:13–17

[13] Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” **[14] God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”** [15] God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. [16] Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, [17] and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.”’ (ESV)

* Recount Israel’s History
  + He led Abraham out to a place “I will show you”
  + He provided a ram rather than accepting Isaac as a sacrifice
  + He led Jacob despite his shenanigans
  + He provided for the holy family through Joseph despite their mistreatment of him
  + He multiplied and prospered them in Egypt despite the Pharaoh’s oppression
  + He led them out of Egypt despite impossible circumstances
  + He led them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night through the wilderness for 40 years, always providing for all of their needs
  + He led them into a promised land, destroying larger nations with giants in their armies
  + He repeatedly raised up judges to deliver his people from their oppressors.
  + He gave them kings – including David’s predecessor, King Saul

1. **The LORD is my shepherd**

* Not “was” my shepherd
* Not “will be” my shepherd
* The Lord IS my shepherd
* Present, continuous.

Psalm 121

[1] I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

[2] My help comes from the LORD,

who made heaven and earth.

[3] He will not let your foot be moved;

he who keeps you will not slumber.

[4] Behold, he who keeps Israel

will neither slumber nor sleep.

[5] The LORD is your keeper;

the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

[6] The sun shall not strike you by day,

nor the moon by night.

[7] The LORD will keep you from all evil;

he will keep your life.

[8] The LORD will keep

your going out and your coming in

from this time forth and forevermore. (ESV)

1. **The LORD is my shepherd**

* Personal

John 10:1–10

[1] “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. [2] But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4] When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. [5] A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” [6] This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

[7] So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. [8] All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. [9] I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. [10] The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly

* The shepherd calls his sheep by name.
* The sheep hear his voice and come to him, enter his fold, and be saved!

1. **The LORD is my shepherd**

* Role in Psalm 23:
  + Leader
  + Provider
  + Care-giver
  + Healer
  + Disciplinarian
  + Protector
* Jesus specifically is the good shepherd

John 10:11-18 [11] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12] He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. [13] He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. [14] I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, [15] just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16] And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. [17] For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. [18] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (ESV)

Bottom Line:

**If you are not trusting in Christ, you are helpless and alone, and you should be terrified.**

The current problems are bigger than any human or even human government can handle.

This could kill you – and if it does, your problems have only just begun. Eternity is forever!

The only one bigger than your problems – the only shepherd that can take care of you no matter what has no allegiance to you; and you have no allegiance to him.

Without Christ, without a shepherd, we are walking through the valley of death and there is no one leading you safely to the other side.

**If you are trusting in Christ, Jesus is your shepherd and you have nothing to fear!**

He is bigger than this.

He conquered the worst that can possibly happen to you.

And you can follow him to eternal life.

We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death – death itself is just a shadow. If this virus takes you, you will be raised forever. You have NOTHING to fear.

Right now, we are not acting fearlessly.

One of our ladies from church, Brenda Bula, summarized this well:

"If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. If you are His, He has set you free from fear of this virus."