

The Lord is My Shepherd (1)

Rev. A. T. Vergunst – Psalm 23:1a
(1st sermon in a series of sermons on Psalm 23)

Sing: Psalter 251: 1-3

Read: Psalm 23

Sing: Psalter 124: 1-4,8-9

Sing: Psalter 254: 3-5

Sing: Psalter 55:1-3

Congregation, a walk through a cemetery can be very beneficial, as it reminds us of our ultimate destination. Such a walk also teaches us many things about the people who are buried. It can tell us something about their religion or their hope. You will see crosses, Bible texts, flowers and perhaps sometimes statues of Jesus on the cross. But if we could walk through the cemeteries of the Early Christians, you would notice something remarkable. There are no crosses, no flowers or Bible texts, no pictures of Jesus as a King or as a crucified man of sorrow, instead you will often find simple drawings of a shepherd. Clearly, to the mind and faith of the early Christians, the Good Shepherd stood out as something essential to the Christian faith. Their expression of the 'only comfort in life and death' was to belong to this Good Shepherd Who finds His sheep, carries them and anoints them with oil. Their Master was a King with a shepherd's heart. The kindness, courage, grace, love and beauty of the Good Shepherd were, according to one church historian, their Creed, their Confession and their Canons. The Good Shepherd pictured for them how they understood and experienced God and that's why a shepherd figure often occupied the place of honor on the tombs of their loved ones.

The Holy Spirit has primarily used the Shepherd-sheep imagery to picture before our minds the glory of God and His Church. The first reference to God as a shepherd was made by a shepherd on his death bed. Jacob said while blessing Ephraim and Manassah, "*the God which fed me all my life long unto this day*"

(Genesis 48:15). The word 'fed' in this verse is literally 'shepherded' me and this is how Jacob summed up God's leading. Ever since this first reference, the Bible abounds with references to God as a Shepherd of His sheep.

The Shepherd is not the only image for God used in Scripture. Throughout the Psalms God is compared to various other items. David's doxology of God in Psalm 18:1-2 contains a collection of comparisons, "*I will love Thee, O LORD my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler (small shield), and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*" Besides these, God is also likened to a mother and a father. For example, in Isaiah 66:13 God speaks, "*As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*" In Ps. 103:13 God speaks, "*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.*" It is therefore purposeful that the Lord Jesus used the imagery of a shepherd, a mother (woman) and a father in the parables of Luke 15. It is the Old Testament language.

Why are all these images used by the Psalmist, by the prophets and ultimately by God Himself? It is to make us know God's character. He desires to be known, worshipped and trusted as the Good Shepherd. God is a King with a Shepherd's heart. He leads His people like a Shepherd through the wilderness. He was willing to leave the comforts of His heavenly home to seek the lost sheep. He is not distant or unapproachable as most kings often are in their palaces. He dwells with His people like a shepherd with his sheep. Moses rightly exalts Jehovah with this question, "*For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?*" (Deut. 4:7). Through Jeremiah God asks His people, "*Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?*" (Jeremiah 23:23). Shepherds would never be far from their flock because they knew that if they ever left their flock alone it would lead to death and destruction. So, the Shepherd King never takes His eyes off His precious sheep, the ones He has bought with His own blood. God is like the shepherds who were never farther than a stones-throw from their flocks, day and night.

To let all others know that Jehovah is the best Shepherd, is the real reason why David composed Psalm 23. He wanted everyone to know how privileged He was with having such a Shepherd as Jehovah near to him at all times and in all circumstances. With humble joy I invite you to travel along with me in this series of sermons on Psalm 23. It is the most well-known of all the Psalms, and rightly so. It has been called the nightingale among the Psalms. Many comfort themselves with the soothing words of this psalm without having any relationship to the Shepherd. To sing ‘The LORD is my shepherd’ requires that we know this Shepherd or even more, that we are known of Him. But it is equally harmful when God’s sheep neglect the soul-nourishing content of this Psalm. May the Lord use the expounding of this Psalm in these messages to both endear the Shepherd and the Shepherd’s Psalm to our heart.

David was a very accomplished musician. He was a composer of music and words. 73 Psalms carry his name. But he did not compose a Psalm more beautiful than Psalm 23. The Hebrew Psalms are remarkable poems as they are written with structures that often escapes our attention. Without getting into the details, let me at least alert you to one significant feature in Psalm 23. In the Hebrew, this Psalm is made up of 55 words. Exactly in the middle of the 55 words are three words which in English are translated into four: *“Thou art with me”*. That captures the heart of the only comfort in life and death! May God bless each of His sheep meditating through these verses this comfort in life and strife, in danger and hunger, in sickness and death: *“Thou art with me.”* In considering this first verse, I draw your attention to two thoughts on “The Shepherd’s Psalm”:

1. Who wrote this Psalm?
2. Why did he write this Psalm?

First, let’s consider who wrote this Psalm. You might think, “Well, that easily answered. David did.” Indeed, but who is this David who wrote the Psalm? David was a shepherd himself. He knew the shepherd’s life like no one else. Already from his youth, David had herded the sheep of his family through the hill country of Judea. He knew all the ins and outs of the shepherd’s life. But to

clearly understand what this shepherd’s life was like, we need to step away from a picture in our minds that is totally unreal. How often have we seen the shepherds and their sheep in picture books? The hills are rolling, the grass is waving, flowers are delicately showing through, the sky is blue with puffs of white clouds and the sight of the shepherd with his staff and the beautiful sheep with lambs all around him is very lovely. As lovely as this picture is, nothing is farther from the truth of the Biblical shepherd and his sheep.

There was nothing romantic about shepherding in the Bible times. When we listen carefully to David as he stood before King Saul, trying to persuade him to let him fight against Goliath, David said this, *“Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of His mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear”* (1 Sam. 17:34-35).

Clearly, to shepherd sheep was a dangerous work. The shepherd did not have the time to relax because prowling predators, dangerous weeds, infectious insects, loose rocks, snakes, blinding dust storms, frigidly cold weather or water shortages under furnace like heat would combine to endanger the flock. He had to be with them all day and night, keeping a watchful eye upon the flock. Being alone with the sheep in the hill country of the rugged mountains around Bethlehem was not a romantic or sweet undertaking. It required everything out of the shepherd and the only way that his sheep would survive these dangerous wilderness areas was because of the shepherd.

We also usually think about David writing this Psalm as a shepherd. However, he didn’t write through the eyes of the shepherd. He wrote it through the eyes of a sheep speaking about his shepherd. It is a sheep that sings joyfully, “The LORD (Jehovah) is *my* shepherd, I shall not want.” David shares how he has learned to know and experience His shepherd, Jehovah. For although David was a man after God’s heart, David had a heart like ours. A heart that is included in Isaiah’s words, *“All we as sheep have gone astray”* (Isaiah 53:6). He was a sinner like you and me; prone to wander out of the right and safe way. He was helpless as sheep are. David could write this Psalm with warmth and depth because he

has experienced the Shepherd’s care and security as a sheep. Let’s think a little more about sheep.

God’s favourite animal to compare people to is sheep. There are hundreds of references in the Bible where sheep are used to describe us. Why did God choose the sheep? Sheep are very vulnerable animals and they are foolish. They need a fence or a shepherd, because otherwise they run into trouble and kill themselves. Sheep are also defenceless. Even though some of them have big horns and the ability to buck each other, they are defenceless against predators. They don’t have sharp teeth or huge claws on their feet. In their foolishness they often heedlessly follow the green patch they see in front of them and quickly lose sight of their own flock and their shepherd. They are also very stubborn and they have a perverseness in their habits. So, in short, for a sheep to survive, they need a shepherd.

As we will study the details of Psalm 23, we will learn more about why God has chosen the sheep as the animal to picture His people. For there is so many similarities between the needs of a sheep and the believers in Jesus Christ. As a sheep loves, trusts, admires and follows the shepherd, so believers love, trust, admire and know the Shepherd whom they follow. In John 10:27 Jesus the Shepherd said, *“My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me.”* There are two words in the Greek for the word “hear”. The first, is just the sound you hear, and the second is ‘hear and understand’. It is the second word that Jesus used in John 10:27. He says, *“My sheep, hear my voice.”* They understand my voice and they follow Me, love Me, admire Me and trust Me.

It is important to realize that it takes time for a sheep to learn to know and trust the shepherd. Sheep will never follow a shepherd they don’t know or whose voice they don’t recognize. This is clearly reflected in the words of Jesus in John 10. Repeatedly He spoke about “the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.” Even if there are many shepherds around them, they hear and recognize their own shepherd. That hearing and recognizing doesn’t happen overnight. It takes many weeks of working with the sheep to earn their trust. When a shepherd buys a whole flock of sheep, he begins to work with the sheep. At first the sheep are

frightened, because they have a new owner. They don't know this shepherd, and they don't recognise his voice. Their keen sense of smell doesn't recognise the smell of this new owner either. But as the shepherd begins to work with them, to talk to them, to lead them and to guide them to the pastures, over time the sheep begin to recognise and hear the voice of their shepherd. They develop a relationship of trust.

Isn't this a fitting picture of how it goes spiritually. Jesus has bought His sheep with the price of His own death on Golgotha when He laid down His life for them. But it is in His time that He begins to work with them. Has He begun to work with you? Are you hearing His voice? You may respond, “How would I know that?” Usually, it begins like real sheep. At first His voice may frighten you because the Lord is majestic and holy. You may feel like Peter, “Oh, Lord Jesus, depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). You see, as Peter began to know the Shepherd Jesus, he begins to realise that he cannot live near the Shepherd. The Shepherd is so holy and Peter is so unholy. Peter felt frightened at first. He felt convicted of his sin and when the Shepherd Jesus begins to work with you, you will also sense that. You sense that you do not belong to this Shepherd. But as Jesus continues to work with the sheep that His Father has given Him, they begin to know His voice, recognise His glory and know His character. The more you see that, the more He rises in your esteem as the ‘beautiful Savior.’ Not only beautiful in His Person but also in all His precious offices. You learn to esteem Him as the Teacher, as the Priest and as the King. Is this Shepherd becoming more and more needed and precious in your eyes?

Perhaps you hesitate to say yes for you struggle with the question whether you are a sheep. So let's think about that then. How do you know if you are a sheep of Jesus? To answer that question ask yourself, “What do I think of the Lord Jesus? What does He mean to me? What does His Word mean to me? What do His actions mean to me?” These are the questions that will identify the sheep. *“The sheep hear my voice and I know them.”* No, do not look at yourself and say, “I am a sheep, because I have the right wool. It looks neat and clean.” No, that is not the truth about sheep. Sheep often look very dirty with mud and twigs. The way to determine if you are a sheep of Christ is not about how clean you are. But

also, not by seeing how dirtied you are. You only know if you are a sheep if you know the Shepherd and are known of the Shepherd as Christ says repeatedly in John 10. Let’s listen to how He said it, *“I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep and am known of Mine. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not My sheep, as I said unto you”* (John 10:14, 26-27).

So, don’t make the wrong conclusion when we sing from Psalm 95 or 100, where the poet wrote, *“We are the sheep of thy pasture.”* In that statement the poet exalts God for His grace in having placed us as lost and condemned sinners in the best pasture ground you can ever get. That pasture ground is the visible church where the Lord bestows His care upon us. To be placed as spiritually lost sheep in God’s pastures is one of the most beautiful gifts? Can you think of a greater advantage? Is there a better pasture with a greater Shepherd than the LORD God? Children, is there any richer pasture grounds than a Christian family, church and school? No, there isn’t. Millions of children are born outside the Christian environment. They are not protected from all the vile influences of the world. They may be taught hate instead of love. To pray to idols instead of the living God. Therefore God exhorts us to *‘come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.’* He pleads with us, *“Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart”* (Psalm 95:6-8). Sadly, He needed to say about many of these sheep in His pastures, *“Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.”* In the end He pronounced a solemn judgment, *“Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest”* (Psalm 95:10, 11). What fools to ignore such a Shepherd Who so lovingly and gently calls us to come to Him! Will you be found abandoned in the wilderness? Then none else is to blame but yourself. Let’s reflect on this as we sing,

Psalter 254: 3-5

Now let’s consider the second question about the Psalm, *“Why did David write this Psalm?”* David has one supreme purpose in writing this Psalm: he desires to commend his Shepherd to your sacred attention.

If we listen closely, you can sense the joy in David’s heart about having such a Shepherd as Jehovah is. Although every word in this first verse is emphatic, the main emphasis should be on the first words, “*THE LORD* is my shepherd.” It is as if he cries it out into everyone’s ear, “Hear, you people, my shepherd is the LORD, Jehovah, the faithful and almighty God of love and grace. There is none other as good a shepherd as He is.” He is willing to be my shepherd, and that is no reflection on me but on Him for I am a stubborn sheep, prone to wander, foolish, and helpless to take care of myself. My Shepherd is so tireless, faithful, sacrificial, wise, kind and yes, He is an overflowing fountain of goodness towards me. Oh, it is as if he wants to say to us as, “Come and see Him for yourself!”

Actually, when you read verse one, you read the conclusion, the summary. Jewish poets have a tendency to first state the conclusion and then add supporting details to this. That’s exactly what David does in the Psalm. First the general statement, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.” And then he proceeds to expand that statement with all the examples in the remaining verses.

What is it in David’s Shepherd, Jehovah, that makes this sheep David so joyful, yes, you could say, so boastful? Let me try to sketch this Shepherd David learned to know.

For one, He is the most faithful Shepherd. This can’t be said of all shepherds. We read from John 10 but we can’t disconnect John 10 from John 9. In chapter 9 we read about ‘hireling shepherds’, the Pharisees and the scribes. We read how roughly they dealt with a sheep who was born blind and who was cured by the Lord Jesus. It was in response to what those spiritual leaders did to this blind man that Jesus spoke the message of John 10. He contrasts Himself to those religious leaders, “*I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*” He tells us that He is willing to go to the uttermost in order to love His sheep and to show His love to them. How far did He go? Oh, no shepherd can go lower than dying for his stubborn and foolish sheep. But why would He want to die for them? It is because He is faithful to His own Father and the promise He made to Him even before time became time. He is a faithful Shepherd!

Secondly, Jehovah is the most caring Shepherd. Did you know that you can learn much about the shepherd by looking at a sheep or a flock of sheep? If you see a neglected sheep, with dirty bottoms or skinny bodies, it usually has everything to do with the shepherd. So, looking at the condition of the sheep tells you if the shepherd is caring and committed to making the life of his sheep the best possible.

So, it is also spiritually. A person’s walk and talk, even to some extent their character, will tell you what kind of a shepherd he follows or who is taking care of her. The involvement of the shepherd is reflected in the type of person he is more and more becoming. We become what or who we follow as Jeremiah pointed out, “Thus saith the LORD, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, *and are become vain?*” (Jer. 2:5). If ‘vanity is our shepherd, then we will become vain.’ So likewise, if we truly follow Jesus as our Shepherd, by the power of His Spirit, we will become more and more like Jesus. His care and His leading will be reflected in His sheep. So, as we look at Psalm 23 and read what the sheep is telling us about what is happening in the journey of life, we will learn much about Jehovah Shepherd.

Of course, you cannot always judge the shepherd by the state of the sheep. There are some sheep that in spite of the best shepherd’s care, continue to wander off and get lost again. I was reading about a shepherd who had a sheep that he called “Get-about”. He said she was a beautiful ewe, who produced beautiful lambs year after year. She had a beautiful head and was clean looking, but she had one nasty streak in her. She kept on looking for a weak spot in the fence to get away. Now the big problem was that Get-about not only did that for herself, but she taught her lambs to do it too, and then she taught other sheep to follow her. She was stubborn. But, guess what children? One summer that shepherd took his killing knife and butchered her even though she was one of his most gorgeous and productive sheep. See, you cannot always look at the sheep and say that it is the shepherd at fault. So it is also with the Lord’s children. David himself is a sad example. How often did he not wander away from the Shepherd and brought disgrace upon himself? But even worse, he brought disgrace upon

His Shepherd, Jehovah. That he didn't experience the joy of the Shepherd's nearness for some months in his life was not due to the Shepherd's failure or laziness, but it was due entirely to David's own sin. Oh, what a privilege to belong to the Shepherd Jesus! None is as faithful and as caring as He is. Oh, come and see for there is far more to tell about Jehovah, the Shepherd.

Thirdly, consider this Shepherd's love. This aspect of the Shepherd is so boundless and astounding. I count it as one of the most joyful tasks to speak about the love of the Shepherd. This love stretches back from all eternity and reaches each of the sheep in time. Normally sheep don't become the shepherd's unless he buys them. So it is spiritually. Each of Jesus' sheep are bought with a price, not with gold and silver, but with the Shepherd's own blood. Ponder Jesus' words deeply, *“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself”* (John 10:17-18). The Lord calls attention to *“therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life...”*

Ponder with me about this amazing truth! All the gold and silver of ten thousand universes would not have been sufficient to buy one soul free from the curse that rests upon us. We have sinned against a Holy and Infinite God and it takes an infinite satisfaction to cancel this guilt. That is why it is necessary that the Shepherd came, not just to Shepherd the sheep, but to lay down His life for His sheep. Oh, amazing display! The Shepherd laid down His life in order to buy His sheep, the sheep His Father has chosen for His flock. “Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me.” John Newton sang. Can you see why it is amazing? Are you standing amazed? Do we live in this amazement? There is nothing common about this astounding statement, *“I lay down My life for My sheep.”*

Perhaps you have never noticed the order of Psalm 23 and 22. But in order to get to Psalm 23, we have to go through Psalm 22. We will never appreciate the depth of Psalm 23, if we do not first understand Psalm 22. In Psalm 22 we get a inside picture of what the Shepherd went through, actually even deeper than when we read the Gospel stories about His death on Golgotha. For in Psalm 22 the Shepherd lets us listen to what went on in His heart as He suffered on the

cross and faced His death. But to be exact, Psalm 22 isn't the shepherd's Psalm. It is the sheep's Psalm. We don't look in the eyes of the shepherd but the frightful and pained eyes of Him Who became a sheep and who lost all the sense of His shepherding God. Isaiah prophesied that He as *“sheep was led to the slaughter.”* He was led to the cross to die instead of them. Therefore, in Psalm 22 we hear and sense His agony as a Sheep even though at the same time He is and remains the Shepherd, even while He is on the cross.

Behold then the glory of the love of Jehovah the Shepherd! What a high price He needed to lay down to buy you free, children of God! When we view the sufferings of the Shepherd-sheep, we must never forget that we are not just thinking about an event, a happening or historical moment in the world's history. No congregation, if that is how you think about Golgotha, then you are not understanding the cross. The cross of Jesus, the dying of the Shepherd is far more than a redemptive historical event. Jesus nailed on the cross is a window into the heart of this so infinite God of love. The cross is His message that He so loved the world that He was willing to sacrifice His Only begotten Son on the altar of the cross. It is this message that has changed the world. It has by the Spirit's power conquered rebellious hearts and healed broken hearts. It is this message that David wants all the world to hear when he calls us to behold his Shepherd. Oh, what an ocean of love is opened to us in this truth. The Shepherd assumed the condition of a Get-away sheep and died for such. Who can fathom the glory of God's love? It exceeds all measurement. Who would not fear and love such a God? What fools we are when we remain indifferent to the Shepherd's call, *“Come unto Me, the real Shepherd. Come away from all those shepherds that give you no rest, those who demand your labors without ever being satisfied.”*

Come and see! This morning I may draw your attention to the Shepherd Jesus, the Son of God, Who laid down His life on the cross of Calvary. For whom did He lay down His life? For His sheep, those given to Him by the Father. Each of them were fallen, unworthy, alienated, enemies of Himself and despisers of His grace. Is such a Shepherd not worth knowing and following? As I spoke earlier, don't think romantically about the life of a shepherd in Israel's Bible times. It was a rough and exhausting life. To be a shepherd in David's days meant watching day

and night. These shepherds had to endure months of wandering in the wilderness deserts of Judea in the scorching heat during the day and the freezing cold at night. They had to fight with the wild beasts. They had to go after them to rescue the lambs and the sheep out of their mouth. The thought of finding the right pasture and finding water holes to provide the water in these wildernesses was constantly laying upon their minds. To guide the sheep through the dark valleys of the shadows of death was a demanding task. So put away all those romantic ideas and pictures we see in picture books. None of that is true.

All this comes together in the moving presentation of the Shepherd in Isaiah 53. The Shepherd was bruised for our iniquity. Jesus never had a comfortable day in His life as He lived as the substitute Saviour for His people. He was afflicted with our afflictions. He endured the sufferings of temptation as He fought the powers of darkness all by Himself. Behold Him, dear hearers, as He wants to be remembered in the only visible picture He left behind among us: the breaking of the bread and the shedding of the wine at the Lord's Supper Table.

As we conclude, let it be clear that you and I will never grasp the greatness of His sacrifice, unless you view yourself in the right light. What are we? A sheep! Yes, foolish, stubborn, defenceless, and gone astray. Let us go deeper: we are guilty, a transgressor from the womb, an enemy in the heart, alienated from our great God.

What are we men that we think so big of ourselves? We are nothing in the sight of God. If you take the biggest telescope we have ever made to peer into the universe, and if you could place that telescope on our nearest star, the sun and if we could look back through that telescope to the earth, what do you think you will see? You will see nothing! Our earth is so small that it is too small to be seen with the biggest telescope. And yet consider, that the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, came onto this globe as the Shepherd as well as a sheep to take the place of Get-away sheep. He was led to the slaughter. There He died the most agonising death. We will never grasp the greatness of His sacrifice, unless we view ourselves in the right light. We are unworthy of any attention. We all disowned Him and we continue in our fallen condition stubbornly and

wickedly, even though He calls us gently and lovingly, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon Him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon"* (Isaiah 55:7). Is there any King who will deal with his rebellious subjects as Jehovah? He is a King with a true Shepherd's heart.

Let this last look at the Jehovah the Shepherd draw you to hasten to seek Him! Do not think that Jesus' ministry as Shepherd ended, when He said on the cross, *"It is finished."* The buying part was complete, but the shepherding part continues. Every sheep owner knows that after the first step of buying a flock of sheep, there must also be the continual laying down of their life for them if the sheep are to prosper and flourish until the journey is over and they return to the sheepfold.

How beautifully is that reflected in the sacred Scriptures. First Psalm 22, the Psalm of the cross; followed with Psalm 23, the psalm of the Shepherd's care on earth, which then is concluded with Psalm 24, where we see the Shepherd ascending into heaven to continue His Shepherding care of His sheep while in heaven. And there, as it were, every day He lays down Himself at the throne of God to pray for His sheep. *"Father, keep them as they are on this wilderness journey; as they go through the valley of the shadows of death; as the enemies are making their life hard, and as they wander away again and again."* David knows as a shepherd what the first task of the morning is. The shepherd looks over his flock to see which one is missing. He looks to see which one is suffering with parasites or fly strike. He also looks at them to see which one is skittish. Maybe they had a fright during the night and now they are restless in the morning and they need to be calmed by his voice and presence. So the great Shepherd looks at all His sheep, every day, and all day. It is because of this that David and all God's sheep can boast, *"I shall not want."*

Come, hearers. Come and see! Is this not a Shepherd worth seeking and following? Be convinced we all have a 'shepherd' in our life for we are all as sheep who are following something or someone that 'shepherds' us. Since our fall in Paradise, we all have chosen Satan and self as our shepherd. Do you let

your own sinful craving for world, for pleasure, for success, for prestige or for possession shepherd you? Is that what you live or? Who is the inspiration of your life? What or who prompts you to do what you do?

Doubt not that the Shepherd Jesus looks upon you with the same compassion that He had for the multitudes that followed Him. Seeing them, *"He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd"* (Matt. 9:36). Let that draw you to Him this day with the prayer, "Lord, make me like David, one of thy sheep. Be Thou my Shepherd."

Amen.

Psalter 55:1-3