

Thank you!
Barrett Hoffman
Today's speaker

New Christians...and Others Interested
"Foundation Lessons" Class
Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. at the church building

The Compassion and Care of the Good Shepherd

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the wrongdoing of us all to fall on Him." Isaiah 53:6

"Seeing the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd."
Matthew 9:36

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Website:
indiochurchofchrist.com

Preacher: Vacant

Church of Christ
81-377 Ave 46
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

Indio Informer

Vol. 34 No. 29

July 16, 2023

The Lord is My Shepherd

By Sam Willcut

Very few passages of scripture offer more words of comfort and has touched more lives than this little psalm referred to as the "Nightingale Psalm," Psalm 23. It has gone into more homes, hospital rooms, churches, funeral parlors, nursing homes and counseling centers than any other single passage. It is the first words of the Bible many memorize and the last words many recite as they expire. It is astonishing to consider the many ways this text has accomplished so much for so many.

The Lord is my shepherd...

Many passages are easy for us to ignore and overlook because they become so familiar to us. Nevertheless, I want us to delve into this rich psalm in this issue and glean some truths to help us through our difficult lives. Thus, we need not to commit this psalm simply to memory, but we need to commit this psalm to life!

Psalm 23 appears in a trio of Messianic psalms—Psalms 22, 23 and 24. Psalm 22 discusses the Savior, who suffered on the cross of Calvary. This is our Lord of the past, pictured with a cross. Psalm 23 discusses the Shepherd, who because of such is able to meet the needs of His beloved. This is our Lord of the present, pictured with a crook. Psalm 24 discusses the Sovereign, who returns triumphantly and victoriously over sin and death. This is our Lord of the future, pictured with a crown.

As we continue, notice the first line and see the presence of our shepherd: *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."* Undoubtedly, we have studied the unique role and relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. We know the impact this has due to the involvement of David as a shepherd boy of his youth trying to provide for his flock, protect and guide his flock and lead

his flock. Of all the animals in the world, none is more dependent upon others than helpless sheep. They are extremely helpful, but they are also extremely helpless.

Therefore, as David ponders these things, he thinks about the relationship that he has with his God. To breathe is to think about God. To live from day to day is to think about the goodness, greatness and graciousness of God.

As we consider the presence of our shepherd, notice the personal connotation. He is not simply “a shepherd,” or even “the shepherd,” but David wrote that He was “my shepherd.” In fact, this small psalm of just six verses contains no less than seventeen personal references. Yet not everyone can make this acclamation. Nevertheless, based upon our own relationship with the Lord through faith, repentance, confession and baptism into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can understand this personal relationship (cf. John 10:11-15). Therefore, He possesses me, and I possess Him. How wonderful it is to awaken each day, to live each day, to look forward to each day, to enjoy each day and to close each day with these words on our lips and in our hearts! This makes all the difference in the world! Thus, this statement is a statement of hope and trust (cf. 2 Timothy 1:11-12).

Once the relationship of the sheep and the shepherd is established, then the basis of that relationship opens the door to the significance of the psalm: “*I shall not want.*” In essence, this forms the leading thought of the rest of the psalm. In detail, David discusses the fact that he shall not want for provisions, protection and promises. May this beloved psalm bring us closer to the Shepherd!

If We Show Partiality, We Commit Sin

By Dan Jenkins

Maybe Jesus addressed it best when He said, “*For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*” (Matthew 5:46-47) It is so easy to have a right attitude toward those who are kind to us. It’s so easy to be forgiving to those who

treat us in godly ways. It’s just hard to deal with others without being partial.

It’s not hard for God. Moses described God saying, “*The LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality*” (Deuteronomy 10:17). Peter said, “*In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality*” (Acts 10:34). Our God is not partial in any way to any group of people, “*For there is no partiality with God*” (Romans 2:11). Look at it again—NO partiality. NONE!

We struggle with it. We know how to treat some people—those who are kind to us; those who are close friends; those who are “important.” Yet, Jesus is equally concerned with the “least of His brethren” as He is with the more “important” ones. The judgment scene of Matthew 25 emphasized this when Jesus said, “*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me*” (Matthew 25:40). If some brethren are sick, need our help or need visiting, we readily assist them. They may be our friends or close associates. We may think we are really practicing Christianity when we attend to their needs, carry food to them, phone them to see how they are doing, go to viewings or funerals of their family members or visit them when they are in the hospital. However, Jesus would ask us, “*Do not even the tax collectors do so . . . What do you do more than others?*”

The point I am trying to make is this. There are those “nice” Christians we really like and we treat them with tenderness. Then there are the others whom we tend to ignore. We struggle to phone them, to visit them, to assist them or spend time with them. It is true they may be obnoxious, lacking social skills, overbearing, negative or individuals with whom we have little in common. It is our reaction to these that is the measure of the depth of our spiritual growth.

Why not make a special effort to make a phone call, write a card, go out of our way at worship to talk to them or visit them? We must not be partial. Remember that Jesus is equally concerned about the least of His brethren!