

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 30 December 2018  
**Services:** 730, 930 Tewantin (combined with Peregian)  
**Series:** The Riches of Psalm 23  
**Passage:** Psalm 23:1  
**Title:** Lacking nothing  
**Outline**

1. Is David's shepherd *our* shepherd?
2. What does 'lacking nothing' look like?
3. Take home for new years

---

**INTRODUCTION**

- We begin work on this Psalm this morning and we will continue throughout summer...
  - One of the best known Psalms
  - If you know any of the Psalms off by heart it is probably **this** one
  - Many a time I've gone to share this with an older saint in hospital and they've been able to recite it with me...
  - It has ministered to many a believer in need...
  - Brought solace and comfort to the **dying**, to the **grieving**, to the **sick** or the **struggling** (whatever the reason...)
  - Maybe it's been a favourite of **yours** – maybe it's pretty **new** to you...
  - **David** the great King of the Old Testament – who himself had been a shepherd – a man acquainted with both joys and sorrow, trials and triumphs, confidence and fear, sinning and repentance, ups and downs... proclaims "**the Lord is my shepherd** – I shall not want" – or as we have it in front of us today "**I lack nothing**"
  - *Because* the words are very familiar to most of us –we need to ask the Lord to help us see new things or old things in a different way.... Don't let over-familiarity rob you of the riches of this Psalm.
  - But I have some questions as I begin...
1. Is David's shepherd, our shepherd?
  2. what does 'lacking nothing' look like?
  3. what are the take homes for us for 2019?

**1. Is David's shepherd, our shepherd?**

- How we read and use Scripture is important.
- And just because **David's** testimony is "*The Lord is my Shepherd*" – doesn't automatically mean that we can or should jump to the conclusion that we can claim that promise for **ourselves!**
- I mean King David was the great King of the Old Testament... he had a **unique relationship** with God – he played a **unique role in Old Testament history** and in the **story-line** of the **Bible**...
- For **him** to say that **Yahweh** was his **shepherd** is **one** thing... can I say the **same?** /
- The image of sheep and shepherd of course is beautiful... and if you've been to a funeral I've preached at you've probably heard me on this...

**Preaching Christ...**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

- We're not talking Australian drover-type shepherd – on horseback or motor bike chasing a flock with the help of sheep dogs from the rear...
- No; we are talking about a shepherd in the ancient eastern world... about 30-40 sheep each... the shepherd knew each one individually – he would call them by name and they would know their name and respond to it...
- And insofar as the sheep **followed** the **shepherd** and did what the shepherd **told** them; **surrendered** to **them**; the sheep would have **all its needs met** - great and small...
- A place to **lie down** – because sheep only lie down when they know they feel completely **safe**... they are an **anxious** lot
- A place of **still waters** – for they won't drink from **moving** waters...
- Protection from **wild animals** and **thieves**...
- A peace among **themselves** in the presence of their master without the **older** ewes pushing around the **younger** ones... /
- If a sheep had a **good** shepherd – they had it **made**!!
- They **lacked** – **nothing**!! //
- And David is saying here – I have the **best shepherd ever**...! have the **best shepherd** any one could **ever want**... because the LORD – the LORD **God** – **Yahweh** / is my **shepherd**!
- No-one **provides** for me – **cares** for me – looks **out** for me – **protects** me – like **he does**!
- And insofar as David **trusted** God as his shepherd – followed him – **surrendered** to him – **obeyed** him – then David enjoyed all the **blessings** of having as his shepherd, the **best imaginable**! //
- But we haven't answered our **question**... is **David's** shepherd **our** shepherd?
- Are **we** able to make the same bold claim "**The Lord is our Shepherd – Yahweh is our Shepherd**"?
- I have **two** answers to **this**
- "**Yes**" and "**you tell me!**"
- "yes" – in that YES, he **promises** to be our shepherd...
- In **Ezekiel 34** – God says through the prophet – that the shepherds of Israel were **useless**... they had only been taking care of **themselves** – not the **flock**...
- That is, the **leaders** – the **priests** – **fed** only **themselves**, looked after **themselves** – they ruled the people **harshly**, they did not **protect** their sheep, they did not go **after** those who were **missing**... and he says – I am **against** you and will **remove** you...
- And so the LORD says (Ez 34:11-25) "*I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. <sup>14</sup> I will tend them in a good pasture,... There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.*"
- Full of **imagery** of course... but as **we** are now God's **people**... in **fulfilment** of this prophecy – **we** can be sure that he is **our Shepherd**...!
- And then of course when we turn to the **New Testament** – what do we find? – that Jesus sees the crowds and has **compassion** on them because they are look **sheep** without a **shepherd** – and so he begins to **teach** them – to **nurture** and **nourish** them - to provide for them - as their **shepherd**.

**Preaching Christ...**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

- And in **John 10** – Jesus himself refers to **himself** as the **Good Shepherd**... the Good Shepherd who **loves his sheep** and **knows** them by **name** – the Good Shepherd who lays down his **life** for the **sheep!!** /
  - And Peter in 1 Peter 2 says - *For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.* //
  - Oh yes **friends** – **our** shepherd is **God**... our **shepherd** is **God the Son** – our **shepherd** is **Jesus** the **Good Shepherd**...!
  - ...who is **so** committed to us his sheep that he laid down his **life** voluntarily to **rescue** us and bring us back from the brink of **death** that we might be **his** – the **sheep** of his **pasture**.... //
  - But I said the answer to my questions was two-fold – I asked “is David’s shepherd our shepherd...?” and I said the answer is both ‘yes’ and ‘you tell me’ ...
  - Because only **you** in the end, can answer the question as to whether the **Lord** is your **shepherd!**
  - Your “shepherd” **controls** you – **manages** you – **directs** you – you **follow** your shepherd – **live** for your shepherd – in the end are **totally focussed** on whoever/whatever is your **shepherd**... //
  - What is **controlling you**?
  - Is it **greed**?
  - Is it **lust**?
  - Is it **self-pity**?
  - Is it your **family**?
  - Your **reputation**?
  - How **others** see you?
  - Is it **YOU**? //
  - Here’s the **challenge** isn’t it at the start of a new year
  - **IS** the Lord your **shepherd**? //
  - You can only claim the **promises** – you can only **assume** the **implications** – if indeed the Lord **is** your **shepherd**...
  - ...if you’re **living** for him – **obeying** him – **following** him... //
  - Is **David’s** shepherd our **shepherd**?
  - **Absolutely** – seen and understood **perfectly** in **Jesus** the **Good Shepherd**...
  - Is **David’s** shepherd **your** shepherd?
  - **You tell me**...! //
2. What does ‘lacking nothing’ look like?
- It’s an amazing testimony of King David’s isn’t it?
  - That because the Lord – because **Yahweh** – is his **shepherd**... he **lacks** nothing – there is **nothing** he **wants**.
  - But what did this **mean** for David?
  - David knew **pain and hurt and treachery**... his own King **Saul** turned on him and tried to **kill**

**Preaching Christ....**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

him... as did his own **son** later in life... Plus his enemies the **Philistines** with whom he was in **constant** battle...

- Of course David knew what it was like to fall into **sin** and would **weep** in **repentance**..
- He knew **hardship** and **poverty** and **anguish of spirit** but he says he **does not want**... ! //
- How can you go through all that **David** went through and claim to be **lacking nothing**? /
- Was he talking about only in some periods of his life and not others? Was he referring only to the **best of times**? /
- **I don't think so**... /
- I think David learnt that he could say "The Lord's my shepherd, I lack nothing"... even when he was **lacking**!!
- Because when you have the **Lord** as your **shepherd**... when you're **following** him... when you find yourself in his **presence**... when you see that **he** is on the **throne** – that the **Creator** of the universe is in **control**... then you can be lacking almost **everything**, but not be lacking **anything**...!
- Are you **getting** what I'm **saying**?? //
- When a toddler is **hungry** and **thirsty** and **hot** and **tired** and **weary** – but they are **safely** in **daddy's** arms – then they have **everything** they **need**... // they feel **safe** and **secure**... /
- The Apostle **Paul** teaches this... (Philippians 4:11-13)  
*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in **need**, and I know what it is to have **plenty**. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*
- How can he be **content** whether well **fed** or **hungry**?
- Because the **Lord** is his **Shepherd** and he **trusts** the **shepherd**!
- What does 'lacking nothing' **look like**? //
- It doesn't mean you have everything you **want**...
- It doesn't mean all your **dreams** have come **true**
- It doesn't mean as some churches promise that you'll **prosper financially**... (especially because you've given **them** lots of money...)
- It doesn't even mean that you won't be **hungry** some times... or have **cancer**... or be estranged from someone you **love**
- It doesn't mean life becomes **easy**...
- But keeping your **eyes** on the **Shepherd**... means you'll know that **everything** is going to be **OK** - even if it's **not OK**!
- It means you could be lacking **everything** – but ultimately lacking **nothing**...!
- Facing **death**, but lacking **nothing**
- Experiencing financial **challenges**, but lacking **nothing**
- Facing relationship difficulties, but lacking **nothing**
- Learning the **secret** of **contentment**... through **him** who gives you **strength**... //
- **Because** the **Good Shepherd** – the **Great** shepherd is my **shepherd** – I lack **nothing**... //

**Preaching Christ....**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

- he is actually providing for all you really need... **love, care, nurture, protection, the power of his presence, the knowledge that he has you in his hand...** the assurance that his **plans** are **perfect...** his timing **right...** // and therefore – **lacking nothing!** //
- Tanzania in 2002 – pastors’ conference... some of the pastors were the **poorest** people I had ever met – but also the people who were most **content** in **Jesus I’d ever met...** there’s something **sick** about the **western world** and **Christians** in the **western world** who are blessed with **so much** but complain they have so **little!!**
- I wonder if this reminds you of Jesus’ promise in Matthew 6:33-34 *Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own*
- make the **shepherd’s** priorities **your** priorities and he will take care of the **rest...** And you can **rest** in him **for** them... ///
- what do you think? **Real** or **rubbish?** Is this Christians hopelessly – naively - crossing their fingers and thinking the **best** things about the **worst circumstances?**
- Or is this following through the **only logical implications** of having the one who **made** us and gave himself **for** us as our **Good Shepherd?** ///
- Well friends – on the eve of a new year – what are the take homes for us?

3. **What are the take homes for us for 2019?**

- Two brief questions I want you to ask
- **Who is my shepherd?**
- **Do I believe this?**
- **Who is my shepherd?**
- Who is in **charge** of my **life?**
- Who’s calling the shots?
- Who do I trust?
- Who am I seeking out?
- Who do I run to?
- Where does my hope lie?
- Who gets my attention?
- Who am I trying to please? //
- Ask that question **honestly... search your heart... your soul...** and ask if anything needs to **change** in **2019** //
- And do I **believe this?**
- Do I really **believe** that if I’m **serving** and **following Jesus** as my shepherd, than I lack **nothing?** //
- Do I really **believe** that even in **great need** or **serious illness** or **financial ruin** or relationship disaster I can still, lack **nothing?** //
- If you **believe** it: – **live** it – **claim** it – **revel** in it – put it into **practice** – **rest** in it – and **show** it in your lives to the **thousands** around us who are **shepherd-less** and would **love** to have your

**Preaching Christ....**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

**shepherd** and your **blessings!!**

-----

- I saw this as I was preparing yesterday – on **Tim Keller’s twitter feed** and I thought it would be a **great** way to finish –
- Lord,  
I **worry** because I forget your wisdom.  
I **resent** because I forget your mercy.  
I **covet** because I forget your beauty.  
I **sin** because I forget your holiness.  
I **fear** because I forget your sovereignty.  
You always remember me.  
Help me always to remember you.  
Amen.