

The Lord is my shepherd; Psalm 23:1a

Can you begin to count the number of times you have quoted this Scripture? Probably not. It is often one of the first verses we are taught. However, do we really think about the words, or do we just repeat them by rote? Each person can only answer that question for themselves. But, I have to admit, that I often think about, or possibly quote scriptures, yet do not put a lot of thought into what they really would mean, if I applied them to my life.

So, together, let's look at Psalm 23:1a.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.....

The---such a small word and one that is used frequently in the English language. Yet, can you tell me what the word means? Go ahead and think about it. I will wait.....OK. "The" is used to emphasize one of a group or type; it indicates uniqueness. Notice that David did not state that 'some' Lord is my shepherd. He was very specific. THE Lord---the only one; a particular one; a specified one; a unique one.

Lord---who is the Lord? A lord is someone who has authority, or power over others. Some would possibly call him a ruler. A lord could also be someone who is a leader of others. But, who is the Lord? (Notice the difference in the 'case' of the letter 'L'.) The Lord is our:

Life---"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life..." John 14:6. Not only does He give life, he gives it abundantly. "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:10,11. To give us abundant life, He gave His life for His sheep (you and me).

Offering----"...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:10,12. An offering is a gift. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Luke 23:46. "When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30. Often, especially in songs, we used the word 'spilt' to explain what happened when Jesus shed his blood for us. However, to 'spill' something implies an accident. Can I say to you, that Jesus WILLINGLY SHED His blood at Calvary. It was not an accident, even right down to the timing of His death. (It was mentioned first in Genesis 3:15, and was completed at just the right time.)

Rest---"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. Do we live in a hectic world, with no time to rest? A time of resting should be a time for refreshing---even a time to let someone else carry the burden for awhile. (Jesus did offer to do that for us in

Matthew 11.) We have technology that our ancestors would have never dreamed of having, yet they knew the meaning of the word rest, (and we don't). Did our ancestors have refrigeration? Electricity? Computers? (Which you will be using to read this.) Microwaves? And, the list could go on and on. You would think with all of the 'helps' that we have, we would be a generation of rested people. However, that is not so. But, whose fault is that? Even if the work schedule might be hectic, or the children have three places to be at once, or it seems that house work or yard work is never completed-----guess what? There is a place of rest. And, we can find it in Him. This rest, of course, is not only physical rest, but spiritual rest as well. Have you tried to relax in His arms? Try it; you might like it.

Dew----Maybe you did not see that one coming! However, look in Hosea 14:5 where we find an exhortation to repentance, and a promise of blessing. "I will be as the dew unto Israel..." Hosea 14:5. The *Pictorial Bible Dictionary with Topical Index* (Zondervan) explains that dew is "the moisture which forms...during a still, cloudless night...under air that is saturated with water vapor. The dew is a great blessing to the fruits of the land." It further states that the word 'dew' (Hebrew and Aramaic *tal*) is often used in Scripture as a symbol or blessing and refreshment. It is also used to represent purity, and freshness. Have you let Him refresh you lately? What needs refreshing----your attitude, your time of Bible study, your prayer life, your relationship with family? Whatever it is, let His blessing, and refreshing, become a part of your life.

Is----another small word, but it has great meaning. 'Is' represents something that is factual, actually the case. Notice that David did not say that the Lord 'might be', or 'hopefully will be', but **IS** my shepherd.

My----the possessive form of "I". It would do no injustice to the scripture for you to place your name in the place of 'my'. Try it. Read the verse as "The Lord is _____'s shepherd." Make it personal.

Shepherd----I hope to do an article about the role of shepherds at a later date. But, for now, I will mention that John 10:11-16 gives an excellent listing of what Jesus is to us. He:

is the good shepherd

gave His life for the sheep (us)

knows the sheep (and the sheep know Him----in the lands of shepherds, even if the sheep get mixed into a flock of other sheep, each one knows his master's voice and will follow)

As I was working on this article, it seemed to just grow and grow as far as thoughts. But, I do not want to make it too lengthy, so will stop with the first part of the verse. However, I hope this was an article that will cause you to look deeper into God's Word, and to see what Jesus would like to be to you. For instance, can I give you an assignment? Try to find other words

which match with the letters in the word L-O-R-D and find scripture to reinforce this. Also, please think on this thought. If Jesus is my **L**ife, **O**ffering, **R**est, and **D**ew, how can I do less than give Him my **L**ove, **O**bedience, **R**espect, and **D**edication.

The Lord is my shepherd..... And, I pray that you will allow Him to yours.

(Later, we will look at the remainder of the verse.)

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