

# the shepherd

## introduction

During this meeting you will help students learn of God's love by studying Psalm 23. (Have someone read Psalm 23 aloud.)

## message

1. The first verse announces who God is and what He will be for us. He is a God of mercy, justice and all-sufficient strength. Thus, as we rest in Him and allow Him to be God, we will not be in need. You see, God is real. He hears our every need and knows our every desire. But you ask, "Did God know what I was going through as I walked on campus this morning? Does He know my hurts, needs and deepest concerns? And, if He does know everything about me, will He really help me?" The answer is yes. The phrase, "I shall not want," means that we will lack nothing when we put ourselves in the care of the Lord.
2. While verse 1 is an announcement statement, verses 2 through 6 are assurance statements. In other words, verses 2 through 6 prove what verse 1 proclaims. Verse 2 uses the imagery of the shepherd to help us understand the peace of God. Sheep are free from all fear when their shepherd is near. He is their protector. He also often has to create a pasture from a brown, sun-scorched piece of land, clearing rocks and debris so that the sheep can rest. Isn't that how our Lord takes care of us? He makes a way for us. He clears a place for us to rest.
3. Verse 2 also speaks of water—quiet water. The shepherd leads the sheep to quiet, smooth-running spring water that will not scare them. Likewise, our God often treats us to times of peaceful refreshment, times when He gently ministers peace to our troubled souls.
4. The beginning of verse 3 says, "he restores my soul." This means He refreshes, or returns us to wholeness. The strongest and healthiest of the sheep sometimes were "cast," which means they rolled over and couldn't get back on their feet. This problem resulted from too much wool, too much weight, or ground that was too soft. In this position, sheep became vulnerable to attacks from wolves. Also loss of circulation in their legs could cause death. If the shepherd found the sheep in time, he massaged their legs to restore circulation. He then rolled them onto their sides and later lifted them to their feet.

## salvation appeal

In this beautiful Psalm, the author paints a picture of a caring shepherd. Pray to God today, asking Him to be your shepherd. He wants to bring peace to your turmoil, joy to you depression and healing to your hurts.

## challenge

We have a tremendous God. As your Shepherd, He always watches over you. Today's devotional is about Gods' love and care for you. If you are broken, bruised or hurt, He will restore you and bring you back to wholeness. That's what Psalm 23 is about.

