

One thing I have learned over the years is that good friends are precious, but they can at times disappoint or let us down. Sometimes that can lead to an unpleasant split, which we thought would never happen. I want to take us on a journey through Psalm 23, probably one of the better-known psalms, and see how David discovered he had his faith in a God who would never disappoint him.



This psalm wonderfully illustrates the close relationship he had with Jehovah God as a young man. I hear the cry of so many young people finding it almost impossible to live for the Lord in today's increasingly secularised society. Things were not easy for David with the Philistines on Israel's doorstep, and shepherding a flock of sheep that were prone to having wild animals attacking them. In many ways this psalm is David's testimony of the faithfulness of God; He can be absolutely trusted, even when the going gets tough as it did when he confronted the arrogant Goliath ... and everyone else in the Israelite army wanted to do a runner.

The courage, faith and boldness that helped David confront Goliath were developed out in the pasture as he took care of his father's sheep. So how important is it that we develop these qualities early in our Christian lives? Obviously, the answer is very important.

This psalm is all about relationship. The sad situation is a lot of the Christian church is not experiencing the quality and intimacy of relationship that David enjoyed as a young man. In v.1, David opens up with a important term **"The Lord is my shepherd."** The word for

Lord is the Hebrew word Yahweh. This is so important for us to understand that the creator of the universe is our shepherd. It speaks of the very nature and character of the shepherd. We can be confident that He has pure motives and awesome unlimited power.

In the book of Exodus chapter 3, Moses is having an animated discussion with Jehovah in relation to how God was going to use him in bringing about the deliverance of the nation of Israel. Moses is concerned that he hasn't the right credentials in place and asked God, *who should I say, has sent me to Israel.* In v.14, we get God's answer; *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM".* He said, *"Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."* The root word here for "I AM" is the same word used by David for Lord in Psalm 23. In the context of the Lord being our shepherd, this word is pregnant with meaning. This denotes that Jehovah is the very present God who stands outside

PRAISE the Lord for:

- The opportunity to work with a local church (Impact WA) doing outreach with the Challenge paper. We had 18 team members doing visitation and 12 prayer warriors
- Great trip away for Carl Carmody to WA's northwest visiting churches and promoting Challenge
- Churches using the Challenge newspaper over the Easter period for outreach

Continued over

of time, which speaks of the eternal nature of God. He always was and always will be is what Jehovah is saying to Moses.

The expression “I AM” is an unfinished sentence as it does not have a subject. So to what was God referring when He coined this expression? As we read our Bibles we discover that God is saying, “I AM” whatever you need. This of course has huge significance with David’s declaration that Jehovah is his shepherd. It clearly points us to God who can meet our every need, and it is through meeting that need, that we grow in our understanding of the nature and character of God.

Where there is a need ... there is God. Where there is sorrow, misery, unhappiness, suffering, confusion and oppression, the “I AM”, yearns to be able to meet the need. Whatever the need provides the verb for our sentence. Is there an areas where you need deliverance, then God says, “I am your deliverance.” Is there a lack of peace in your life? Then God says, “I am your peace.” This can apply to whatever the need is, and that the God of the universe can deal with it.

There is another important thing to note in the context of Yahweh being our shepherd, and the intimacy of the relationship that we can enjoy day by day. It is not merely that Jehovah supplies our needs, but that He Himself becomes the fulfilment of that need. This in essence is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit works in us through the fulfilment of a particular need, and causes us to exhibit the very person and character of God.

Notice also that David states that the Lord IS his shepherd, which points to the reality of the present continuous work of Jehovah as our shepherd. God is not spasmodic in His care for us but is on the job seven days a week 24 hours a day.

Notice also that David clearly reminds us that if we are a Christian then we can say that the Lord is MY shepherd. This speaks beautifully of a personal relationship that comes only from a divine origin. It is a relationship where we will not be let down with or disappointed by, as we can be with human friendships. A relationship transforms and wonderfully enriches. The question for you is; do you know this sort of relationship with the one true God, the great shepherd of our lives?

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- The churches that have been involved with the Impact WA evangelism approach. Pray as they follow up that God will transform lives and grow His church
- Kevin Taffurelli as he continues to promote the paper and Impact WA around city and country churches throughout WA
- Our Impact Africa partners (Multi Ministries, Hope Prison Ministries, RICO, Tabitha House, Cornerstone Church) as we cannot travel to South Africa again this year due to Covid restrictions

Challenge Direct Deposit details :

BSB: 066162 (Commbank)
Account: 00900455

AU.CHALLENGE.NEWS

Contact us by phone (08) 9453 3311
Email: info@challengenews.org