

PSALM 23

I Will Dwell

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Psalm 23.6b | September 6, 2020
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we conclude our summer series in Psalm 23, engaging the final line of this ancient poem: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

II. Connecting with One Another

What do you think of when you hear the word "home"? What thoughts come to your mind? What emotions come into your heart? Why?

III. Study the Text

- a. As we have seen throughout the previous 12 weeks in our study of Psalm 23, this 3000-year-old poem can be read as a year in the life of a flock. We begin with the proud, joyous statement, "The LORD is my shepherd," then journey with Him from the green pastures and still waters of home, through tough terrain and mountain passes to the high tablelands of summer. With fall's rain, storms, and sleet, we are driven back down to the home ranch for a long, quiet winter. And like its opening line, Psalm 23's conclusion contains an equally positive affirmation – even more so.

Spend some time carefully pondering each of the phrases we have engaged in Psalm 23. Which has been most meaningful in this current stage of your spiritual journey?

Where do you presently see yourself? Amongst the green grass and still waters of home? Amidst the tough terrain of mountain passes? Atop those lush tablelands? Resting in the presence of your Good Shepherd at the home ranch?

- b. In his book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, W. Philip Keller writes of this final phrase, "It is as if [this sheep] has finally come home again and was now standing at the fence, bragging to its less fortunate neighbors on the other side. It boasts about the wonderful year it has had and its complete confidence in its owner. Sometimes I feel we Christians should be much more like this. We should be proud to belong to Christ."

How comfortable are you boasting to others about how good (y)our Shepherd is?

How has this current season affected your boasting in our Shepherd?



- c. Early on in the Hebrew Scriptures, “the house of the Lord” was the tabernacle, a portable, tent-like dwelling place where God’s people would meet with Him (the first usage of this phrase is in **Exodus 23.19**). Later, King Solomon built the temple as “the house of the Lord” (see, for instance, **1st Kings 7.51** and **8.11**).

Our closest geographical corollary to a holy, sacred space may be our Sanctuary. How has worship felt different these past few months, since being unable to worship together in *our* “house of the Lord”?

Have you sensed God’s presence differently? If so, why do you think that is?

- d. While David was undoubtedly inspired by the tabernacle and the temple, he wouldn’t be able to dwell in such structures *forever*.

What do you think he is ultimately thinking of?

- e. Turn to **John 14.1-6**. As we have seen in previous studies, Jesus is using a first century wedding analogy to describe what **Psalms 23** points toward.

What can we learn from Jesus, our Good Shepherd, about Psalm 23’s last word, “forever”? What will this “forever” look like?

According to Jesus, how do we enter “forever”?

- f. Turn to **Revelation 21** and **22**, especially noting 21.3.

How does this picture of “forever” – this new heaven and new earth – put into perspective our current experiences of green grass and still waters, of walking through winding and tough terrain, of tabletop mountains?

How will “forever” compare?

- g. Wherever you currently find yourself on your spiritual journey, may you know and trust the One who knows the way home, in whose presence you can dwell forever.

What would it look like to recommit your life, today, to this Good Shepherd?

How could you best remain in His presence each day?

IV. Pray

- a. Ask God to give you boldness to boast in your Good Shepherd “over the fence to others” – that it is He, and only He, who leads us home,
b. Lift up those you know who are struggling during this difficult season.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Check out these other references to “the house of the Lord”: **Psalms 27.4, 92.12-13, 122.1**, and **1st Samuel 1**. See also **Hebrews 11.13-16** and **13.14**.

