

WORSHIP NOTES

Sunday March 4, 2018 9:30am

CHOIR ANTHEM This anthem is based on Psalm 23 which begins with the simple words "The Lord is my shepherd." "The Lord" is emphatic here. It is the LORD who makes our faith distinctive. No other person fits. "MY" personalizes the relationship, revealing intimacy and closeness. "Shepherd" is the most comprehensive and intimate metaphor in the Psalms. The shepherd lives with his flock and is everything to it---guide, physician, and protector. The last phrase "I shall not be in want," means that God will fulfill my deepest personal needs and that I will find meaning and true identity in Him. In short, I don't need God plus anything or anyone. All my emotional and psychological longings for significance and security will find fulfillment in the Lord.

Refrain: Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life. 1. God is my shepherd, so nothing I shall want, I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love, I walk by the quiet waters of peace. (refrain) 2. Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul, you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth, my spirit shall sing the music of your Name. (refrain) 3. Though I should wander the valley of death, I fear no evil, for you are at my side, your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. (refrain) 4. You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred, crowning me with love beyond my power to hold. (refrain) 5. Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. (refrain)

CALL TO WORSHIP This comes from Psalm 95 (read this in your Bible). The psalmist almost explodes with praise in this stirring enthronement psalm. He sings for joy to the Lord and worships the One who provides security and deliverance. He moves on to celebrate God's marvelous wide-ranging creativity, for He is the "Great King above all gods" who made the mountain peaks, the sea, and the depths of the earth. In the tradition of Abraham and other spiritual forefathers, I am compelled to fall facedown before my Lord. Merely bowing or kneeling will just begin to express my heart's adoration in the presence of such majesty. Yet He is also my tender Shepherd and desires to have intimacy with the people of His pasture. (prayer) *Great King and Gentle Shepherd, I can scarcely believe that you who created the world desire fellowship with one of your lowly sheep. Praise your name forever!*

Leader: Come, worship the Lord, for we are his people---the flock that he shepherds, Alleluia!

People: Come, let us sing to the Lord and shout with joy to the rock who saves us. Let us come with thanksgiving and sing joyful songs to the Lord!

Leader: Come, worship the Lord, for we are his people---the flock that he shepherds, Alleluia!

People: The Lord is God, the mighty God---the great King o'er all other gods. He holds in his hands the depths of the earth and the highest

mountains as well. He made the sea, it belongs to him. The dry land too, was formed by his hand.

Leader: Come, worship the Lord, for we are his people---the flock that he shepherds

People: Alleluia!

HYMN From Psalm 72: *May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! May all kings fall down before him all nations serve him! For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper, he has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight....* King Solomon wrote these words. He was held in the highest esteem. He was blessed with personal gifts, agricultural prosperity, a solid, enduring reputation, and the respect of his peers. The common folk praised his for paving the way for flourishing trade, peaceful alliances with neighboring nations, and the blessing of God on their land, which yielded unprecedented crops and herds. Solomon's response to all of this takes the form of a majestic doxology. *"Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory."* As you worship today, catch a new awareness of God's great power, goodness, and wisdom. Think also of His promise to be at your side. Praise him as you go.

1

**I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.**

**I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule by day;
the moon shines full at his command, and all the stars obey.**

2

**I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;
he formed the creatures with his word and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how your wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,
if I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the sky.**

3

**There's not a plant or flower below but makes your glories known,
and clouds arise and tempests blow by order from your throne;
while all that borrows life from you is ever in your care,
and everywhere that I may be, you, God, are present there.**

CONFESSION: When we allow God our Shepherd to guide us, we have contentment. When we choose to sin, we are choosing to go our own way and we cannot blame God for the environment in which we find ourselves. Our Shepherd knows the ~~meadow~~ grass+ and ~~quiet~~ streams+ that will restore us. We will reach these places only by confessing our sin and following him obediently. Rebelling against the Shepherd's leading is actually rebelling against our own best interests for the future. We must

remember this the next time we are tempted to go our own way rather than the Shepherd's way.

Leader: Gentle Shepherd, you guide us in right paths, you lead us in the ways of righteousness, but we have allowed our sinful nature to direct our paths. **People: Forgive us, Jesus, for not following your ways. Forgive us when we have not listened for your voice and instead have acted in the ways of the world. Guide us back to your path, to loving you and loving our neighbors. Help us to unclench our fists and lend out our hands in hope and healing, forgiveness and love.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON At night, sheep were often gathered into a sheepfold to protect them from thieves, weather, or wild animals. The sheepfolds were caves, sheds or open areas surrounded by walls made of stones or ranches. The shepherd often slept in the fold to protect the sheep. Just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) cares for his flock (those who follow him).

Leader: How tenderly you care for us Jesus our Shepherd! When we wander far away, you search for us. When you find us, you hoist us upon your strong shoulders, rejoicing that we have been found.

People: Jesus, you are the gate that leads to the fold of salvation. When we are in danger, you lay down your own life for us. You give us the gift of life, life to the full. Thank you gracious Shepherd for your mercy, forgiveness and pardon.

SCRIPTURE/SERMON Read I Samuel 3:8-10 and John 10:1-6. One would naturally expect an audible message from God to be given to the priest Eli and not to the child Samuel. Eli was older and more experienced and he held the proper position. But God's chain of command is based on faith. His view of authority and ability is not based on age or position. In finding faithful followers, God may use unexpected channels. Be prepared for the Lord to work at any place, at any time, and through anyone he chooses.

SEE YOU SUNDAY IN WORSHIP