

The LORD Is My Shepherd, I shall Lack Nothing

My brother in Christ, Jack.

You have chosen Psalm 23:1 as your confirmation passage: *"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."* And in this verse, Jesus speaks to you a very wonderful promise. He promises to you that, as you remain in him, there is nothing you will lack. And it's good to focus on this fact. Jesus gives you everything you might ever need.

And it's important for us to focus on this fact, because the world around will be telling you just the opposite. It will tell you that you need what *it* has to offer. It will tell you that if you have the right friends—and a lot of them, then life will be complete. It will tell you that, if you just find the right date to the prom, then your life will be complete. It will tell you that if you get the right place on the football team, then your life will be complete. It will tell you that if you just get the right place in your favorite college when you finish up High School, then your life will be complete.

And, I can tell you in all truth, Jack, that all these thoughts are lies. Now, there's nothing wrong with being on the football team or going to a good college or asking a nice girl to the prom. But, none of them will give you what you need to get through this life in one piece.

Our LORD Jesus is the only one who can do that. He is the only one who can tell you the promise that with him, you will lack nothing. So, why is it that with Jesus, or Shepherd, we lack nothing? David tells us (psalm 23:4): *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

In this psalm, King David starts out with this promise from the LORD, that with him as his Shepherd, he lacks nothing. Then he goes into a list of the ways the LORD shows him that he lacks nothing. He says that even when he is walking through darkness so dark that it feels like and pulls him into death, nevertheless, he is not afraid.

Jack, you lack nothing. You lack nothing because you have the answer to a question which terrifies this world. The question is: what will happen to me when I die? As you learned—and learned well in Catechism class, there are details everyone in the world is able to learn about God. They can look out at creation and see a structured, ordered universe which did not simply pop out of the sky. And they see that the person who made the universe had to be powerful. They also have consciences. And these consciences tell them that there are times they do bad, wicked things. But, what don't they have? They don't have the third way we know there is a god. They don't have God's word. They don't hear of a Good Shepherd who lays down his life for you, a sinful, wandering sheep. They don't hear a message of a Savior who sees our sins and then, instead of punishing us because of them, punishes himself. Jack, you have the answer to that question. When you die, whether it's tonight or eighty years from now, you have no reason to fear that shadow of death, because Jesus will protect you. You lack nothing.

So then, Jack. Since the LORD is your Shepherd, and with him you lack nothing, stay with him. When a sheep runs off by itself, what happens to it? It dies. It starves or is killed. It dies. And so it is with us. Since you know who your Good Shepherd is, remain in him, not just for the next week or year, but for the rest of your life. And I will rejoice in seeing you come to church. And you will faithfully attend bible study. I will rejoice to see you use your gifts and talents and ability to serve your family and your Shepherd. You do all of this because you understand and trust the promise Jesus speaks to you in his word. And so, there is another promise which the Lord speaks to you: *“אֵדֶּן טוֹב וְחַסֵּד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל-יְמֵי חַיִּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבַיִת-יְהוָה לְאַרְךָ יָמַי:”* *"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."* May the mercy and undeserved love of Jesus, our Good Shepherd follow you all your days, both now and forever. Amen.