

THE SHEPHERD TRIO
(A Scripture reading for three people with audience participation.)

Verna's introduction: Besides Psalm 23, written by young David when he was tending his father's sheep, the Bible is full of passages that use the theme of God as a Shepherd and we who believe as the sheep of his pasture. Though I have never been an actual shepherd, I certainly have been aware of myself as one of God's sheep.

I am glad to have reached the age where I can look back and sincerely say with Jacob, THE LORD HAS BEEN MY SHEPHERD ALL MY LIFE TO THIS DAY. I think the expression "to this day" includes an acceptance, not only of what we have experienced in life, but of the way things are in our old age. Jacob walked with a limp for many years, because of God's action in his life, which Jacob accepted. I am crippled, too, yet I have no quarrel with God. My wonderful Shepherd will lead me all the way Home and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

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1 – Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

2 – You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord.

3 – He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

1 – We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

2 – When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

3 – I myself will tend my sheep and make them lie down, declares the sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak ... I will shepherd the flock with justice.

2 – "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says,

1 – 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

2 – I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

3 – "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one

shepherd.”

1 – Now please join us in the reading Psalm 23, written by David, the shepherd who became king:

1, 2, and 3 – The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
 he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, 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.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

3 – Jesus said, “I am the gate for the sheep; all who enter through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

2 – My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

1 – May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

3 – Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

1, 2, and 3 – Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen!

Scripture References: Psalm 100:3; Ezekiel 34:31; Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 53:6,7; 1 Peter 2:23-25; Ezekiel 34:15,16; Luke 15:4-7; John 10:14-16; Psalm 23; John 10:9; John 10:27,28; Psalm 95:6,7; Revelation 7:12.

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