

## Psalm 23

### L-11: Anointed with Oil

#### A. Outline of lesson:

1. The nose fly
  - a. the fly = temptation
  - b. laying eggs = sin
  - c. wiped with oil = confession, 1 Jn 1:9
  - d. infested into head = reversionism, 2 Cor 11:3
  - e. begin with oil = ability to not sin, Gal 5:16
2. scab, infection spread by contact
  - a. rub heads = transfer of thought
  - b. peer pressure, Ch fellowship, 1 Cor 15:33
3. Show off rams, 1 Cor 1:31
4. Promotion
  - a. Ex: David, 1 Sam 16:12-13
  - b. Davidic Covenant, Ps 89:20,28,29
  - c. produces 'oil' of the Spirit, Gal 5:22-23
  - d. anointed = highest honor, 2 Thess 1:12
5. Blessings of overflowing cup
  - a. Cup
  - b. Blessings overflow, 1Cor 2:9, Eph 3:20

#### B. Bible verse: [Psalm 23:5b](#) “You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

The ‘memory requirement’ for a sticker this week is: “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. 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. You have prepared a table before me, in the presence of my enemies.”

#### C. Review:

1. Need for a shepherd? Becoming His sheep
2. Contentment, LG, the desires of your heart.
3. Lie down and rest = no fear, no infestation, no fighting, no hunger.
4. Grass and water together – BD + HS
5. Restoring a cast sheep
6. The spiritual life is called ‘paths of righteousness’
7. Death-shadowed valley – soul and spirit go to heaven
8. Confidence removes fear
9. The rod represents authority, discipline, examination, protection. The staff represents fellowship, guidance, forgiveness
10. Doctrine – our prepared table

#### To the teacher:

Present the gospel and information about salvation as often as the Holy Spirit prompts you. Those who have never believed will have the opportunity and those who have will learn a little bit more about their so great salvation.

Begin every lesson with confession – the naming of sins to God. This insures the filling of the Holy Spirit for the teaching of God’s Word. It may be necessary to repeat this process throughout the lesson so learning will be maximized.

These lessons are consecutive and build on the previous lessons. It will be helpful for you to look over the previous lesson, so you can see their continuity.

One of our objectives is to have the children memorize the entire Psalm, which has only 6 verses. To help encourage this we have a “Psalm 23 chart” with each phrase and a place for a ‘lambie sticker’ when each part is memorized. With each consecutive week, the child needs to say everything so far and the newest part learned in the previous lesson. Then, a sticker can be put in the corresponding box.

Doctrinal materials for this series were taken from R.B. Thieme’s study of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm (Spiritual Dynamics 232-251) and [A Shepherd Looks as Psalm 23](#) by Phillip Keller

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#### D. The Lesson:

*The best part of the journey is near the end of summer when the weather is warm, the streams are cool, and the grass is thick and luscious. The sheep have arrived at their destination, having traveled the steep dangerous paths and gone through the dark shadowed valleys. This is the peak of the journey. This is the best time. The shepherd has prepared all the meadows. There are no poisonous white callas, the streams are still and clear, and he personally guards them from animals that attack in the night. The new lambs are growing strong and playing in the fields. The rams and ewes lie down in the green pastures and enjoy the rest. It is during this time of greatest blessing that the bugs come out, especially the nose fly. The nose fly is a little insect that buzzes around the sheep's nose trying to lay its larvae in the moist mucous areas just inside his nostrils. This is very annoying to the sheep and he shakes his head back and forth constantly to keep the flies away from his nose. The sheep doesn't have a long tail to whip the bugs away and so is helpless to stop the flies, so the eggs are laid inside the sheep's nose. As the eggs hatch, the small slender worm-like larvae crawl up the sheep's nasal passages into his head. These little worms burrow into the flesh and infect the sheep. It is intensely irritating and painful. A sheep with this problem will find a tree, a bush, or a rock and bang his head trying to get some relief, but he is helpless to solve the problem. Sometimes the infestation is so severe the sheep will actually kill himself from hitting his head too hard. Sometimes the larvae crawl into the nerves of the eyes causing the sheep to become blind. You can understand why flies scare the sheep. As they begin to swarm each summer the sheep panic. They stomp their feet and run here and there trying to escape their tormentors. Some toss their heads for hours and end up dying from exhaustion. They hide in the bushes and refuse to come out into the green pastures to eat. The last thing they'll do is lie down and rest. Ewes stop giving milk and the lambs lose weight and become sick. The wonderful warm days of summer have become torture.*

*Only the shepherd can solve the problem of 'fly-time'. He has an antidote that he smears on the nose and head of each sheep – a mixture of olive oil, sulphur, and spices – that keeps the flies away. Oh, how calming this oil is to the sheep. Almost instantly, they can relax and enjoy the blessings of summer in the high mountains again. The frenzy is gone. They are no longer restless. Once again they can graze peacefully without distraction. Before long, they are resting in the green meadows as before. It's interesting that human-sheep have the same problem. Just when we begin to grow a little spiritually, having eaten from the green grass of God's Word, and having drunk from the still water of God the Holy Spirit, and after practicing staying on the paths of righteousness, the flies of distraction attack. In the Christian life, the flies are the little 'insects of life' that tempt you to sin – to become fearful so you panic, irritated so you beat your head against a bush, annoyed so you toss around for hours until you ache, and so angry that you stomp your hooves on the ground. You run in circles but get nowhere. You run off and try to escape into the forest, but none of these things stops the 'irritating fly-tests' of life. The worst part of the problem is that you cannot eat from God's Word while you are so upset – you have no appetite for Truth. The 'irritating fly-test' has completely distracted you from the Shepherd's plan. You are not eating, drinking, or following. Neither are you 'resting' or 'trusting' in your Shepherd. If you behave like an animal-sheep, you will soon be 'fighting the fly' and throwing a frustrated fit. For us, having a fly buzz around our heads is 'temptation to sin'. This means that something or someone is irritating you or trying to distract or upset you – anything to get you to stop following the Shepherd. However, the fly doesn't land in your nose and lay its eggs until you DECIDE to be irritated, annoyed, distracted, mad, or whatever sin you choose to do. The 'nose-*

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*fly' is the temptation; but nose-flies don't become larvae worms until you decide to 'let them in'. A temptation doesn't become a sin until you decide to do it! The good news is Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, has oil for our noses. His oil is the soothing, healing, calming Holy Spirit. When you get a worm up your nose all you need to do is tell your Shepherd your sin – tell Him you let the fly in – you decided to do the temptation. Immediately, because He is faithful, He cleans your nose with soothing oil that kills the larvae.*

*“If we confess [name, admit] our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and PURIFY us from all wrongdoing.” 1 John 1:9*

*However, if you fail to call to the Shepherd and tell Him about your fly problem, those worms will grow, crawling up the soft mucous passages until they get to your brain – your thinking. Unconfessed sin brings false, lying thoughts into your soul. It is a very dangerous thing. And, just as the sheep is eventually driven crazy with the worm eating the flesh inside his head, so Satan wants to get his lies into your thinking and destroy your spiritual life, making it impossible for you to eat the grass of God's Word, use the water of the filling of the Holy Spirit, or follow God's plan of righteous paths for you. Satan is very sneaky. If he can't get you with a cougar or a vulture, he will attack with an annoying fly.*

*“However I am afraid that perhaps, as the serpent deceived Eve with his crafty dishonesty [buzzing fly], your minds might be led astray [larvae in your head] from the sincere devotion [thinking doctrine] and purity [obedience], which exists because of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3*

*The soothing oil of the Holy Spirit is our protection against irritations in life. When the sheep's head and nose is smeared with the shepherd's oil, the flies don't bother him. They can fly around and buzz all they want, but because a fly won't land on the oily surface, it no longer is a bother to the sheep. The Holy Spirit does the same thing for us – He covers us with a spiritual oil that stops the flies from irritating. This does not mean that the little bugs of life go away – they simply don't bother you. The oil of the Holy Spirit is your ability to not sin when a temptation attacks. Different from animal sheep, we get to choose each time a fly comes near – do we want to USE the Holy Spirit's 'oil' and not 'react' to the fly? Or, are we going to let the fly bother us? If we choose to let the fly bother us, we have said no to the 'oil' – the power of the Holy Spirit to not sin. We then decide to do the sin and the bug flies up our nose and lays its eggs.*

*“But I say, keep walking by the Spirit [keep using the oil], and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh [react to the flies, letting them lay their eggs in your nose].” Galatians 5:16*

*The shepherd's oil solves another problem among sheep – scab. Scab is a very tiny microscopic parasite that grows on the foreheads of sheep during warm weather. It is highly contagious, which means a sheep can catch it easily. The interesting thing about scab is that it is spread by contact, when the sheep are 'friendly'. Sheep show kindness and affection to one another by 'rubbing heads'. When a sheep with scab decides he wants to be friendly with another sheep, he gives the other sheep his infection. However, if the shepherd 'anoints' – rubs this same oil mixture on all the sheep's heads, then the tiny parasite is not passed from one sheep*

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*to the next. Without the oil the entire flock will become infected. When this occurs the shepherd must completely dip them in a vat of the oil mixture, for the disease spreads all over their bodies. This is hard work for the shepherd and requires large tanks and a lot of extra effort. He has to make sure the oil soaks through all the wool, and has to take special care to see that the sheep's face is completely rubbed down. The sheep don't like it; it is not fun. For them, it is like the discipline that comes from being in trouble.*

*We, human-sheep have this problem also. It is usually called 'peer-pressure' (however, is also a good description of the dangers of 'Christian fellowship'). We must be very careful with whom we 'rub heads'. Rubbing heads pictures how ideas and thoughts are passed from one person to another. It is a picture of 'influence'. Influence means that one person is trying to get another to think like him. When a person has the oil of the Holy Spirit on his head, meaning that he has been learning God's Word as explained by the Holy Spirit, and obeying what he learns, then rubbing heads is a very encouraging and helpful thing. It is good influence. Our Shepherd likes His sheep to get along, enjoy each other's company, and pass on good ideas from the Bible to each other. When each sheep has the oil of the Holy Spirit, there is no infection. However, if one sheep is without the Spirit's oil, then he probably has scab. Rubbing heads with this sheep only infects your thinking; it is bad influence. It is very important that we choose carefully with whom we rub heads. This disease starts off so tiny, you don't notice that you have it until your entire life is infected. Then, the only option left for the Shepherd is the 'discipline of the vat'.*

*“Stop being deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’” 1 Corinthians 15:33*

*The shepherd uses the oil for one more thing – to keep the rams from hurting each other as they fight in the fall. As the season turns to autumn, the rams want to mate – they want to find a ewe and have baby lambs. What the rams tend to do, however, is to fight over the ewes. They charge each other with their big curled horns, crashing hard, trying to knock the other one down and show the ewes – who's the strongest and best. These battles often become so fierce one ram will seriously injure another and sometimes even kill him – all to show off. This is when the shepherd, one more time, rubs their heads with oil. When the oil is applied they charge and crash, but simply slide off the other's head. They are left a little dazed and looking rather silly and foolish, but no one is hurt. We are so much like the show-off rams. “Look at me! I can do this. I'm better than you. I bet you can't do this ...” and so the bragging goes. A person who shows off and brags about himself is just like the ram, trying to impress a ewe. The Bible tells us that this kind of behavior is arrogance, and is a sin. Without the oil of the Holy Spirit bragging becomes fighting, and people are hurt. There is only one person worthy of bragging about – the Good Shepherd. The sheep has done nothing for himself, not the rams, the ewes, or the baby lambs. The Shepherd has done everything. It is the Shepherd who feeds and supplies fresh water to the sheep. It is the Shepherd who protects them from danger and rescues each sheep when he gets himself in trouble. The Shepherd is the one who know what paths are right and which way to go. It is all about the Shepherd. The rams are proud of themselves, but have no reason to be. Without the Shepherd they would have been destroyed long ago. A ram is no match for a cougar.*

*“so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”  
1 Corinthians 1:31*

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*There was a day in David's life, long before he wrote the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, when God anointed him with oil. He was out shepherding sheep at the time. One day, one of his brothers took the long trek into the mountain country to find him. "Younger brother David, I have come to take care of the sheep for a while. Father wants you back home in a hurry. The prophet Samuel is visiting our house because God has told him that one of us is going to be the next king. It seems the prophet wants to see you before he decides." So, David gathers up his things, gives lots of instructions to his brother, who was a soldier and not a shepherd, and returned to Bethlehem, his father's home. When he comes in he is rather dirty. He has been out in the hills with the sheep for several months now. He needs a bath. But, Samuel simply looks at him. He knows instantly (because God has told him) that this is the man God has chosen to be the next king of Israel. Samuel takes a ram's horn, filled with oil, and pours it over David's head.*

*"So he [Jesse] sent and brought him [David] in. Now he was ruddy [red haired], with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah." 1 Samuel 16:12-13*

*This time the oil represents promotion. It means God is going to give great blessing to David. He will be the next king. A little later in David's life, God gives him a great promise, "The Messiah, Jesus Christ, will come from your line. He will be one of your great, great, great grandchildren!" David, the shepherd who wrote our psalm will be the great grandpa of the real Good Shepherd who will one day lay down His life for the sheep. If you were to ask David, this promise is the most wonderful thing God ever did for him.*

*"I have found David My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him, My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant [promise] shall be confirmed [guaranteed] to him. So I will establish his descendants forever [Jesus Christ as king of Israel – Messiah] and his throne as the days of heaven." Psalm 89:20, 28,29*

*The Shepherd's oil is very special. It is how a sheep learns to handle the little problems in life that bug him – without throwing a fit and sinning. When the oil is rubbed on your nose, the Holy Spirit gives you the calmness to not become upset or distracted by the irritating problems of other people, or difficult things that happen. Next, the oil is used to protect the flock from spreading bad ideas and complaining thoughts to one another. It stops the sinful 'scab' of gossip, arguing, and friends who suggest wrong things to you. The shepherd's oil also stops boasting and bragging. When a person is using the oil of the Holy Spirit he is not proud of himself. He knows that, as a human-sheep, he is nothing without his Shepherd. Using the Holy Spirit's oil is HOW a sheep deals with and passes the 'tests' of life. God allows trials and tests to come to each of us – so we can learn how to use the Spirit's oil. Without the flies, the scab, and the fighting rams, we would not know that being 'anointed with oil' gives us the amazing ability to not sin! The oil of the Holy Spirit causes us to respond instead with love, happiness, harmony, patience, kindness, integrity, confidence in doctrine, humility, and self-control. This is HOW the*

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*oil rubbed onto the sheep's head gives him happiness and contentment in life. This is exactly the life the Shepherd wants for His sheep – a life smeared with the soothing oil of the Holy Spirit.*

*“But the fruit [oil] of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;...” Galatians 5:22-23*

*Our Good Shepherd watches us closely. He knows which sheep use the anointing oil and which ones are stubborn and do not. For those who use the oil to pass the tests, He has one more wonderful surprise. It is the greatest honor Jesus Christ can give to one of His sheep – He pours that same oil over your head, promoting you, just like he did for the shepherd, David. The last anointing of the Spirit brings great blessing – beyond what your eyes can see or ears can hear. It is greater than anything you can dream. It is blessing beyond your wildest imagination. This special anointing with oil belongs to the sheep who has obeyed the Shepherd's desires for him. He has 'eaten' the words of God's Word every day, growing strong in his soul. He has concentrated and learned these words with the water of fellowship of the Holy Spirit, helping him to understand them clearly. When he becomes cast, he confesses his sins. He obeys daily, following the paths of righteousness. When tests and trials buzz around his nose, he decides not to sin, so sin doesn't lay its eggs in his nostrils. When a sheep wants to rub heads, he looks – does he have the oil on his head? Is he using the Holy Spirit when he talks? He has learned to choose his friends wisely, ones who also love the Good Shepherd and obey His voice. This sheep has learned not to show off all his talents and abilities, like the butting rams, but instead, with humility, he takes pride in His Shepherd. He has practiced using the oil provided by the Shepherd, the oil of God the Holy Spirit teaching him to think the right thoughts, make the right decisions, say the right words, and do the right things. This sheep is growing up spiritually. When he is spiritually mature, the Shepherd will take the same oil, the oil that he used to pass all those tests, and pour it over his head, promoting him! He will give him an over abundance of blessings, so much so that 'his cup' cannot contain them all. The Shepherd will make him one of the most honored sheep, because he was one of the few who obeyed.*

*“... in order that the person of our Lord Jesus might be honored by you, and you honored by Him, on the basis of the grace of our God, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:12*

*The 'cup' is your ability to receive, enjoy, and be thankful for blessings. The cup is molded from your knowledge of and obedience to the Shepherd's will. When a sheep keeps on learning God's Word and obeying it, his 'capacity' for blessing grows. Capacity is the amount of space inside the cup. If a sheep spends his days disobeying his cup of obedience is very small and so only holds a little bit. But, the obedient sheep has a very large cup with room for tremendous blessings from the Good Shepherd. The Lord blesses each sheep with exactly how much room there is in his cup. If the cup is tiny, then one little drop of blessing will fill it. However, if the cup is big and wide, then the Shepherd must keep pouring and pouring and pouring. In fact, since the Shepherd knows that the sheep with a big cup is also very thankful and will not brag about his blessings, he will 'overflow' his cup – He keeps on giving to that sheep and the blessings never stop. They spill out and overflow. The other sheep want to be near him, simply to 'taste' some of the delights that overflow from his huge bowl of blessings.*

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*“just as it stands written, ‘things with the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard, in fact, it has not even entered into the heart of man the things with God has prepared for those who keep on loving Him.’” 1 Corinthians 2:9*

*“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,” Ephesians 3:20*

*David is telling us in this part of the psalm, that he has become one of the honored sheep, one who has used the ‘oil’ to not sin, and when a fly does land he confessed that sin. He is careful to listen to the words of friends who have the Shepherd’s thoughts and avoids bad influence from those who don’t. He has learned not to brag about himself or fight over who’s head ram. His cup of obedience has grown. Therefore, the Good Shepherd has anointed him with unspeakable blessings, beyond anything he imagined. He will be the king of Israel. And, amazingly, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd Himself, will be one of his descendants and rule forever and ever! David’s cup is full and overflowing!*

*“You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Psalm 23:5b*

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Craft: Make a ‘ram’s horn’ for pouring pretend oil

Coloring Picture: Shepherd anoints sheep with oil

Take-home pamphlet:

This little pamphlet is a short version of this lesson, a picture to color, a puzzle to do, and a question and answer section at the end. It is designed to be given to the children at the end of class. However, if you need to fill time, you can give it out early. A child can read the story and all the children can work together to answer the questions on the back.

Psalm 23: literal translation from the original Hebrew

*A song of David*

*The Lord is the One shepherding me*

*I cannot and do not lack for anything.*

*He causes me to lie down in pastures of choice grass*

*He leads me to waters of refreshment*

*He restores my soul*

*He guides me in paths of righteousness because of His Person*

*Also [in addition] when I walk through a death-shadowed valley*

*I cannot [do not] fear evil [disaster, distress, harm, whatever is your manner of death]  
because You – with me!*

*Your rod [discipline], Your staff [deliverance], then comfort me.*

*You have prepared a table in front of me for my benefit in the sight [presence] of my enemies*

*You have anointed my head with oil; my cup - overflowing*