

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

#### A. Outline of lesson:

1. Kinds of fear, Ps 56:3
2. Problems on the path
  - a. Things in the way, 1 Peter 5:7
  - b. Falling off the cliff, Job 5:19
  - c. Predators at night, 1 Sam 17:34-35
3. Confidence/trust removes fear, Ps 56:3-4
  - a. Is why shepherd allows troubles
  - b. Example: Red Sea, Ex. 14:13-14
4. Fear is sin, (destroys 3 spiritual skills, eating, drinking, following)
5. Fear is Satan's plan of evil, Prov 3:25-26
6. Shepherd's plan removes the fears

#### B. Bible verse: [Psalm 23:4b](#) "I will fear no evil, for You are with me"

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 ..."

#### 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

#### D. The Lesson:

*Fear is one of the sheep's greatest problems. Sheep are easily frightened. The shepherd goes to great lengths to teach his sheep to trust him. It is only in the ability to trust the shepherd that the fear stops. During the summer months, the shepherd takes his sheep on long drives up into the high mountain country. It is up on the heights that the shepherd teaches the sheep how to have confidence in him. The mountains are tall and rugged. There are deep gorges and dangerous rushing streams from the melting snow. Summer storms come suddenly, without warning. They bring thunder and lightening and torrents of rain, sometimes even sleet and hail. The trails are narrow and the precipices are steep. Up here, in the mountain country, is where the fierce predator animals live, and this is where the shepherd brings his sheep. These are the narrow paths he has chosen for them, because it is on these paths that the shepherd teaches his sheep how to not be afraid.*

#### 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 Gods 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

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

*There is only one thing that is powerful enough to stop fear, and that is confidence. 'Confidence' is trust in someone or something that is bigger and stronger than the scary problem looming up ahead on the path. An alarming situation is not difficult if right beside you is someone larger and mightier than the problem. It is on these long summer treks amongst the dangerous cliffs and ravines that the sheep learns just how big and strong his shepherd is. In fact, if the shepherd never took the sheep up these treacherous paths, he would never learn to have faith in his shepherd. Something startling must happen, or the sheep has no need to depend on the shepherd. Our Good Shepherd picks difficult paths for us on purpose – so we can learn to have confidence in Him. He wants us to know that He can solve every single problem of life, whether it be a small thing that irritates or a huge terrifying crisis. There is only one way to eliminate fear from a sheep's thinking, and that is to show him over and over again, that his shepherd will solve all his problems. Human-sheep have this same fear problem. We fear all kinds of things and everyone has his own different set of fears. Some people are afraid of the dark, some are afraid of being alone, and some are afraid of other people. Some people are afraid of not being liked. There are those who are afraid of high places and falling, low places and not being able to get out, or tight crowded places that don't have enough air. There are other kinds of fears – fear of failure so you try much too hard, fear of failure so you don't try at all. It doesn't matter which set of fears you have, they are the rocks and trees and things in your path that cause you to stumble and get hurt. Fear is a sin. In the Bible, God has told us many times, "Do not be afraid – I am with you." But, this is a hard lesson to learn, and our Good Shepherd knows that. So, as He planned the path for our lives, He chose one that has 'problems' along the way. Then He says to us, "Do not be afraid of these problems; I am bigger and stronger than every problem you will face, and I am walking right here beside you. I will never leave you!" The sheep learns to replace his fears with confidence in his shepherd.*

*"When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You." Psalm 56:3*

*Since a sheep 'learns as he goes' the shepherd begins by leading him along a path with a boulder in the way. When they get to the big boulder, the sheep doesn't know what to do. He tries butting the big rock with his head, but it doesn't move; it is much too heavy. The sheep starts turning circles trying to find a way over or around it, but it is too high and much too wide. When he can't find a way to pass he becomes confused or scared or worried. "Oh no, what will I do?" This is when the shepherd's teaching lesson begins. He talks softly in his ear, "Don't worry, little one, I will lift you over this big boulder." What a relief when the shepherd wraps his strong arms around the sheep and lifts him to the other side of the problem that is in the way. The sheep, no longer troubled with the problem, walks on, merrily up the path. Before long the sheep comes to a fallen tree, crossing right over the trail. At first, he butts the tree with his head, trying to push it out of the way. Then, he begins turning circles trying to find a way around the log. The shepherd looks down at his sheep, "Have you forgotten the lesson of the boulder already? Didn't I solve the problem for you by lifting you up and over the big rock? If I can solve the problem of the rock, can I solve the problem of the fallen log?" Patiently, the shepherd teaches the sheep the same lesson again. He wraps his strong, muscular arms around the sheep and lifts him over the tree. Then, the sheep, seeing that his problem is solved, trots down the trail, once again. After a while, he comes to a big overgrown thorn bush, blocking the path. The sheep is a little slow in learning, so he rams his head into the bush, attempting to shove it out of the way. Sadly, all that happens is a head full of sharp stickers. The shepherd, coming up beside him, says, "Little sheep,*

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

*when will you learn this lesson? You must stop trying to clear the path yourself. That's my job. Now you have painful thorns embedded into your wool." The shepherd chops down the thorn bush, clearing the way for the sheep to pass. Then, with the problem solved, he makes the sheep sit down, while he pulls out all the thorns. "Little sheep, when you learn to wait for me and trust me, you will have confidence that I will solve the problem, and you won't get a head full of stickers." It will take many times for the sheep to learn to wait for the shepherd when there is an obstacle in the path. After he has traveled this path for many days, the sheep learns that the shepherd will solve 'the obstacle in the way' problem, and so he is no longer afraid of boulders, trees, or thorn bushes. He has learned to have faith in his shepherd.*

*"casting all your problems [cares, anxiety] on Him, because He has a deep concern for you." 1 Peter 5:7*

*As they travel higher and higher up the trail, the problems become more difficult. There are places with steep ravines along the edge of the trail. If a sheep doesn't concentrate on staying on the path he may wander right over the edge. If he does, he will have a bigger problem than simply a rock in the path, he will be tangled up in a briar bush that is growing out from a crevice of the rock. Or, even worse, he will have fallen down, bouncing on several sharp rocks on the way. He'll be wedged between a sharp stone and an old lightning-struck tree on a small ledge of the cliff. Now, he is stuck, bleeding, and scared to death. He is afraid of falling into the ravine. The sharp thorns are hurting the tender skin under his wool coat. Before long, he is in a full panic, bleating in terror. Oh, how greatly relieved he is when he sees his shepherd climbing down the ledge, coming for him. He hears his shepherd's voice, "Oh little sheep. What have you done now? You weren't concentrating on the path, were you? Now, you are hurt and bleeding. Don't worry or be afraid; I am coming for you." Then, he reaches out with his shepherd's crook and tucks it just under the sheep's shoulders. Then, with his great strength, the shepherd lifts his sheep to safety. Back on the path, the shepherd sits down with his broken sheep in his arms and tends his wounds with soothing oils. He caresses his sheep, calming him. The sheep wants only to look into his shepherd's face. Oh, how he is learning to love that face. The shepherd gently rebukes, "Keep your eyes on me and you will not fall over the edge, little sheep." The sheep has learned something very important – his shepherd WILL rescue him when he is in trouble, even if it is the sheep's own fault. This sheep is learning that he can **DEPEND** on his shepherd.*

*"From six troubles He will deliver you, even in seven evil will not touch you." Job 5:19*

*Then, come the dark nights. The shepherd herds the entire flock into a somewhat safe place on the side of the trail, next to the rocky wall for protection. This is one of the most dangerous times on the trip, for this is when the cougars wait in ambush to capture and devour their next meal – a tasty little lamb or some delicious mutton. Their howls can terrify the sheep. A scared sheep cannot lie down and rest; he is much too afraid to relax and go to sleep. The shepherd knows the calling of the wild animals can scare his sheep. So, a good shepherd does several things to reassure them that he will protect them. First, **he gives them his promises** – in the form of his voice singing in the night. Hearing his voice calms them, for it is an ever present reminder that he is right there. Second, the shepherd has some **weapons** for the protection of the sheep. He has a rod and a sling. His sling is his 'long range' weapon. The shepherd is an excellent shot*

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

*and has several smooth round rocks in his pouch for just such a moment as this. When he spots a coyote or lion or bear scouting the perimeter, he takes careful aim and swings the sling around in circles over his head to gain velocity. Then, at exactly the right moment, he lets one thong of the sling go, which 'fires' the rock like a bullet. This well-aimed stone usually kills the predator instantly. The rod is his 'medium-range' weapon. It is a thick and very sturdy stick. The shepherd is very practiced with his rod and can accurately throw it many yards. If one of these killer animals actually sneaks into the flock, the shepherd will go right after it. He knows exactly how to swing that rod and where to place the death blow. If by chance a fierce animal grabs a lamb, the shepherd has a third weapon ready – his bare hands. The shepherd has big, strong, powerful arms and hands. A good shepherd has enough power in his hands to pull open the vicious jaws and rescue the little lamb. Then, as soon as the lamb is safe, he kills the enemy animal with his tremendous strength. The Bible tells us that there was a time when David's flock was attacked by a bear. It snatched a lamb and ran off. But, David, the faithful shepherd, went after that bear. Using his sling or his rod, he aimed and with fierce accuracy hit the bear, yet not injuring the lamb in his jaws. He ran to the bear and with his own hands, he rescued the lamb from its mouth. Then, in hand to hand combat he killed the bear. The same thing happened on another occasion with a lion. Can you imagine killing a lion with your bare hands? David was a very strong and powerful shepherd – one who was not afraid!*

*“But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him.’” 1 Samuel 17:34-35*

*As each sheep lives through all these ‘terrifying’ events he learns something very important – his shepherd will help him over the obstacles in the way, his shepherd will rescue him when he falls over the cliff, and his shepherd will deliver him from the very jaws of danger. This sheep has actually been lifted over the fallen logs. He has fallen off the cliff and been rescued. He has been pulled out of the mouth of the lion. By living through all these scary problems and by being the one the shepherd has saved over and over again, this sheep KNOWS he can trust his shepherd. He has CONFIDENCE that his shepherd is right there beside him always watching and caring for him. This absolute confidence in his shepherd takes away his FEAR. He is so thankful for all these times, because if the shepherd had not brought him on this dangerous trip into the high mountain country, he would never have learned how to TRUST his shepherd. Now, when he sees a boulder in the way, he is not worried about how to get around it. Even when he makes a bad decision, his shepherd will rescue him from falling down into the steep ravine. When evil predator animals howl in the night, he can lie down and sleep, for his shepherd can and will destroy them with his powerful weapons. The FEAR is GONE. In its place is total TRUST and CONFIDENCE in the shepherd.*

*“When I am afraid, I will put my trust [confidence] in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man [evil predators] do to me?” Psalm 56:3-4*

*This is why the shepherd leads his flock into the mountains each summer. The sheep need to learn to trust him. They need to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he really will solve their*

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

*problems. He will rescue them when they get themselves in trouble. And, he will protect them from all danger. A sheep will take this journey every summer, for many years. He starts as a new young lamb, just learning how to depend on the shepherd. Each summer, year after year, as he takes the journey again, his faith in his shepherd becomes stronger and stronger. By the time the sheep gets to his 'last summer journey' and enters into the shadows of the valley of death – he does not fear dying. Many sheep have taken this last journey. He has walked along beside them. He knows the shepherd is right there with them and has watched him hold them in his arms as they close their eyes and die to this life and wake to new life in heaven. He has gone through the same dark valley during all those previous summers, and knows that one day it will be his turn. It is in the walking through the dark valleys, sleeping to the howls of the wolves, and being lifted with the shepherd's crook that the fear is removed. No bad thing can hurt this sheep, for his shepherd is with him. The shepherd plans these trips for the purpose of teaching his sheep how to not fear evil.*

*We are human-sheep, and because we are like sheep we have this same fear problem. And, just as with animal sheep, fear is removed by confidence in the Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ. We learn to trust Him with the same system. First, there is a promise that we must learn. This is compared to the sheep listening to His voice. The Bible is filled with promises, several thousand, one for every problem in life. Once we learn the promise, our Good Shepherd gives us an opportunity to use that promise. This is why He allows 'boulders and trees' to fall across our path. When you come to a big rock in the way, you can either butt your head against it (which is like getting mad), or you can try to lift it (a human solution), or you can use your promise and wait for your Good Shepherd to either remove the problem or lift you over it. There is a story just like this in the Bible. Moses and the Israelites were leaving Egypt and Pharaoh's army was pursuing them, trying to kill them. Then, there was a 'big rock' in the way, only this wasn't a rock, it was a huge sea – the Red Sea – and it was completely blocking their path of escape from the enemy. So, what were the people supposed to do? Swim across the sea? Try to walk around it? If you look at a map you will see that both these human solutions were completely impossible, and if the people had tried them, they would have been killed by the Egyptians. Instead, God did the exact same thing the shepherd in our lesson did – He cleared the path. The people were to do nothing but stand there and trust in Him. They were told to not be afraid, but to have confidence in their Lord. Listen to how the Bible tells it ...*

*“But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by [Be still] and see the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; ... The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.’ Exodus 14:13-14*

*Then, the Lord did a great miracle. He cleared the path – right through the sea, a wide path with dry ground, and the people marched right through, safely. When the evil predator animals (the Egyptian army) tried to follow so they could attack and kill them, the Lord Himself took His 'weapons' and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the evil enemy. All by Himself, the Lord, Israel's Good Shepherd, killed the entire army of Pharaoh in the night, while the Israelites waited safely on the other shore.*

*God wants us, His human-sheep, to learn to trust Him. In fact, God tells us in His Word that fear is a sin. Fear is the opposite of confidence and trust. Fear is one of the main ways the evil*

## Psalm 23

### L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

*enemy attacks your spiritual life. When talking about sheep, the spiritual life is the life of following the shepherd down the paths of righteousness. God's plan for you is within the width of the trail. Fear is a sin that gets you off the path. There are many kinds of fears that attack human-sheep. Fear of the dark, or of high places, or of small tight places. Some human-sheep are afraid being alone, or that the other 'sheep' won't like them. There are lots of kinds of fears and each one is EVIL. Evil is the enemy's plan of attack against you. Evil is how the enemy tries to get you to leave the paths of righteousness, to wander from God's plan for your life. Evil is the system of sinning that makes you a 'cast' sheep. Evil is Satan's plan for you. When you allow yourself to become afraid, you are letting the evil enemy predator win.*

*“Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked [evil] when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.” Proverbs 3:25-26*

*When a sheep is afraid, he cannot eat or drink. The same is true for us, when we have the sin of fear, we cannot 'eat' from God's Word. When we are afraid, we are not 'drinking' from God the Holy Spirit. Fear takes us off the path of righteousness so we cannot 'follow' the Shepherd. The three main parts of God's plan for us is – eat, drink, follow – and fear destroys the entire thing. No wonder our Good Shepherd goes to such lengths to teach us how to not be afraid. Not only does He want to take away the sin of fear, but Jesus Christ wants us to fill that 'place of fear' with complete trust and confidence in Him. This is why He walks beside us, all the time, ready to help and rescue and deliver. Because He is WITH us, fear can't sneak in like a wolf at night. A sheep who keeps his eyes on his Shepherd cannot be afraid. He must let his eyes wander off first. He must lean over and look down the steep ravine to be afraid. A sheep who knows how his Shepherd removes boulders in the path is never worried. Our Good Shepherd is telling us that because He is always with us, we never need to be afraid. Listen again to how David, the writer of this psalm puts it ...*

*“I will fear no evil, for You are with me” Psalm 23:4b*

*Our Good Shepherd allows problems and troubles along the way **to remove your fears!** David, in this verse of his psalm, does not say that our Good Shepherd removes all the evil rocks and trees that fall over the path. Psalm 23 does not talk about God never allowing an enemy predator to attack. He does not describe a path without a dangerous precipice along the edge. The verse says that the FEAR of EVIL is removed, because the Shepherd is WITH us! And – He is bigger and stronger and mightier than any evil attack Satan can do. Now, when the sheep is about to face the 'scariest' problem of life – going through the death-shadowed valley for the last time (the only time he doesn't return to the home pasture on earth), he is not afraid at all, for if his Good Shepherd can destroy every other fear in life, He can surely be with him through this one also.*

---

Craft: Paint and/or color 'bear' and 'lion' wooden cutouts (purchased at a craft store, about 25cents each)

Coloring Picture: “Fear no Evil” predator animals

## Psalm 23

L-8: Fear no Evil, for You Are with Me

### 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! ...*