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The Lord is My Shepherd

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Psalm 23 (NRSV)



## Ice Breakers:

1. Pen or pencil?
2. What is the worst school cafeteria lunch you’ve ever eaten?
3. Would you rather eat only kale for a week or eat only candy for a month?
4. Would you rather run on hot sand barefoot or swim in a pool with work boots on?

## The Word of God:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. **2**  He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; **3** he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake. **4**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.” Psalm 23 (NRSV)

### Which definition of the word, shepard, are you most familiar with? Least familiar?

* 1. A person who tends sheep
  2. A pastor/priest
  3. To guide or direct in a particular direction
  4. Carefully manage
  5. Other

### Sheep are stubborn animals that tend to wander and settle for less than ideal circumstances just to satisfy their impatience. What are some areas of your life that you, like sheep, tend to settle for less than ideal?

* 1. Food- I tend to grab junk food instead of eating regularly and nutritiously.
  2. Sleep- I stay up too late with distractions then have a hard time waking up in the morning because I’m still tired.
  3. Homework- I mismanage my time, rush through my assignments and then don’t do as well on my exams.
  4. Relationships- I sometimes put up with unhealthy relationships because it’s better than having no friends.
  5. Time with God- I find myself rushing through my prayers or skipping Soorp Badarak on Sundays because I’m so busy but then I find myself worrying and stressing throughout the week.
  6. Other?

### How does the Good Shepherd in this Psalm respond to the stubbornness of his sheep?

* 1. He leads the flock to green pastures so they are nourished properly.
  2. He leads them to calm, clean waters so they can drink without being scared and drink until they are satisfied.
  3. He leads them through paths that are not harmful or unbearable.
  4. He comforts them even in the darkest of valleys where other animals/enemies are prowling to attack them.
  5. The Good Shepherd meets their needs generously and abundantly.
  6. Other

### If God is *my* Good Shepherd, how will He respond to my sheep-like behaviors? How can I respond to His goodness?

* 1. God knows what is the best for me and He guides me to those areas of life that will sustain me and allow me to flourish. I simply need to follow Him.
  2. He restores my soul with hope and proper perspective when I am down and out. I need to look to Him for hope and perspective.
  3. He delights in providing generously and abundantly for all my needs. I need to trust He is able to provide and delights in doing so then live with gratitude for all He continues to do for me.
  4. He directs me through paths that are healthy and safe for me so the enemy can’t easily attack me.
  5. He wants me to “stay close” to Him through the Sacraments of the Church, especially through regular confession and Holy Communion.
  6. I am safe and secure all my days, regardless of my circumstances, because I know He loves me and delights in caring for and protecting me.
  7. Other?

### A caring shepherd will literally rub oil on the heads of his sheep to help prevent insects and filth from infecting his sheeps’ bodies. During Chrismation at Baptism in the Armenian Apostolic Church, the priest anoints, literally rubs holy oil-Soorp Muron, on nine parts of the child’s body as a seal of the Holy Spirit. Below are the nine parts and the prayers the priest says as he anoints the child. How does this anointing, like a shepherd’s anointing of sheep, protect and prepare us for our daily life? Discuss.

* 1. **Forehead**- “Sweet ointment in the name of Jesus Christ is poured upon you as a seal of incorruptible heavenly gifts.”
  2. **Eyes**- “this seal in the name of Jesus Christ may enlighten your eyes that you may never sleep unto death.”
  3. **Ears**- “This holy anointing be unto you for the hearing of the divine commandments.”
  4. **Nostril**- “This seal in the name of Jesus Christ be to you a sweet smell from life unto life.”
  5. **Lips**- “This seal in the name of Jesus Christ be for you a guardian for your mouth and a strong door for your lips.”
  6. **Hands**- “This seal in the name of Jeus Christ be to you a cause for charity and for all virtuous deeds and behavior.”
  7. **Heart**- “This divine seal may confirm in you a pure heart and renew within you an upright spirit.”
  8. **Back**- “This seal in the name of Jesus Christ be to you a shield of strength thereby to quench all the fiery darts of the Evil.”
  9. **Feet**- “This divine seal of God may direct your steps unto life everlasting that you may not be shaken.’

## Commit:

Which of the following will you commit to doing this week?

1. I will pray that God will reveal areas in my life that I may be settling for things that are not feeding me nutritiously. I will pray that the Holy Spirit will strengthen me to have courage to turn to the “green pastures” God wants for and delights in providing abundantly for me.
2. I will read the following Bible passages. John 10:11-15; Luke 15:4-7; Matthew 5:6; Jeremiah 2:13; Psalm 79:13; Psalm 100:3; Ezekiel 34:11-16; What additional insights do these passages show us about our relationship with our Good Shepherd?
3. Reflect on the prayers of each of the nine body parts anointed during Chrismation listed above. Pray that God may reveal specific ways you can live and act more consistently with the reality of these anointings.
4. I will reread Psalm 23 every night this week before going to bed to help remind you how much our Good Shepherd loves me.
5. Listen to the song, “Come What May,” by We Are Messengers. How do the artists utilize this Psalm in their song?
6. Other?

### Prayer:

1. Pray for any specific needs your group or members may want to pray about..
2. Close with Hayr Mer…