

## **Faithful Shepherd**

Psalms 23

### **Discover**

Faith is a strong belief and total confidence in someone. Faithful means trustworthy, loyal, and steadfast. A shepherd is someone who provides spiritual care and wise guidance.

Moses was a shepherd for many years. He learned how to guide and protect flocks of helpless animals, which prepared him to guide the helpless nation of Israel out of Egyptian slavery into the Promised Land. (Exodus 3:1-10)

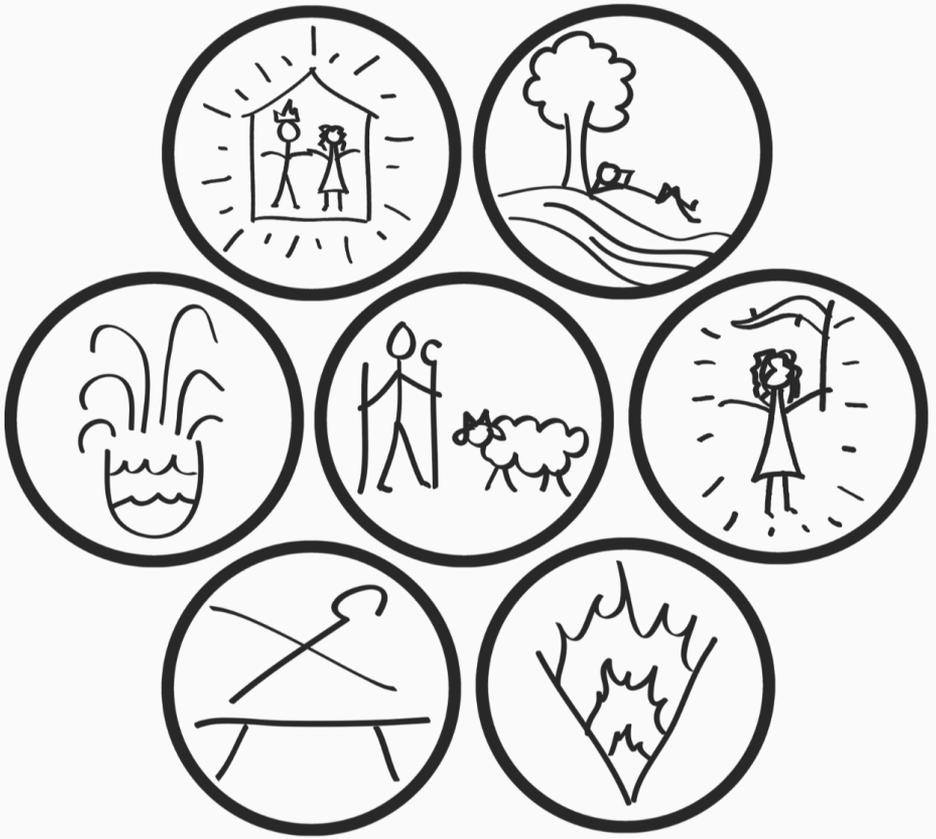
King David was once a shepherd as a youth. His experience killing lions and bears to protect his sheep prepared him for battle with the dangerous giant Goliath. (1 Samuel 17:34-37)

Isaiah describes God as an affectionate shepherd who gently nurtures lambs, gathers wandering sheep together, and holds them close to his heart. (Isaiah 40:11)

Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd who protects the sheep from thieves and wolves. The sheep know his voice, and he willingly dies for the sake of his sheep. He even leaves his flock to rescue forsaken sheep. (John 10:11-18)

Paul gathered together the Ephesian church elders to pray before he left for Rome. He called them “shepherds,” described their church as a “flock,” and warned them that false teachers are like bloodthirsty wolves. (Acts 20:28-32)

This lesson teaches us about God Almighty’s loving compassion and powerful protection. He is present in our lives, never leaving or forsaking us. Because God is so awesome and faithful, we trust him. We gladly endure suffering, persecution, and even death, because our Father is worthy of all honor, glory, and praise. (Revelation 4:9-11)



# FAITHFUL SHEPHERD



PSALMS 23

## **Draw**

Devoted Protector: shepherd & sheep - King David describes our relationship with God as a shepherd caring for sheep. Sheep are dumb and defenseless. A shepherd watches over, provides for, and guides the sheep. (23:1)

Soul Restoration: tree, stream, & disciple - God loves and delights in us when we rest in him. He creates spaces and places for us to step back from the busyness of daily life to rest from our work, sing, pray, and listen to his voice. (23:2)

Refreshed Disciple: praising disciple & flag - All power and glory in the universe belong to God. He knows everything. Rest leads to trust, and trust leads to peace. Peaceful rest is the open door to hearing God and discerning his will. (23:3)

Suffering Seasons: valley & flames - We must expect suffering, because we follow a Master of Sorrows (Isaiah 53). Our peace and joy are knowing and experiencing the Holy Spirit as we journey through pain by faith. (23:4)

Safe House: rod, staff, & table - God is like a safe house: somewhere secure you can go when you are in trouble. His staff guides our steps, his rod defends against enemies, and his table is always set with triumphant victory. (23:4-5)

Divine Favor: cup, water, & overflow - The result of resting in God is receiving his blessings and favor. He showers us with spiritual gifts and assists us in serving others out of the overflow of whatever we have received. (23:5)

Heavenly Home: king, disciple, & house - When we surrender to our Saving Shepherd's leadership, his life becomes our life. We return his love, and his goodness flows through us like a river. This age will end soon, and we will live with God and his family forever in heaven. (23:6)

## **Discuss**

Psalms 23 begins and ends with examples of comforting rest, like green pastures and eternity in heaven. The middle of the song describes a death valley, evil forces, and dangerous enemies. Why do you think David wrote about God's refreshing rest in the context of spiritual warfare?

Take a closer look at this song. What does our Faithful Shepherd do? (example: he leads me) What do we do? (example: I will live) What stands out to you about the relationship between what God does and what we do?

Read Hebrews 13:20-21. Why is Jesus the "Great Shepherd?" He equips us with good things to do his will. What are some good things he equips us with to obey him? How does our faithfulness bring him eternal glory?

Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. How is it possible for Jesus Christ to be both sheep and shepherd? When was he the sheep? When was he the shepherd? Compare your life as a straying sheep to a safe sheep secure in the Master's flock.

## **Disciple**

Let's get practical. Have you completely embraced this truth that God is your Faithful Shepherd who loves you, died to save you, and guides you through every day of your life? Pray, and speak to God about his loving protection over your life. Whom do you know that does not know God this way? When can you meet with them to discuss this song?

## **Dedicate**

Father, thank you for this glorious news that we can trust you to faithfully care for us. You are more than enough for all of our needs. We rest in your protection and receive your blessings, in Jesus' name and for his glory we pray, amen.