

The Lord My Shepherd

by Octavius Winslow

The Lord is our Shepherd, providing for us, protecting us, and loving us with an infinite ocean of divine love.

Scripture: Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, John 10:28, Romans 5:8, Titus 2:14

Topics: "Christ as Shepherd", "Divine Love and Atonement"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the profound relationship between Jesus as the Shepherd and His Church, illustrating how Christ embodies both divine and human attributes to care for His flock. He highlights the immense love of Christ, which should inspire believers to trust and find solace in their Shepherd, especially during trials. Winslow also discusses the atoning sacrifice of Christ, urging that His death should lead to a transformation in our lives, prompting us to live righteously. The sermon reassures believers of Christ's power over spiritual enemies and His provision of spiritual nourishment through His Word and sacrificial love. Ultimately, Winslow encourages believers to remain close to Jesus, the Shepherd, and to actively participate in the growth of His Church.

Transcript

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul."

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."--Psalm 23:1

The pastoral office of Jesus is in beautiful harmony with the existence of His Church under the similitude of a Flock. And there is scarcely any part of His mediatorial work which more essentially involves, or more clearly evidences, the twofold nature of our Lord as this. Fully to discharge the duties of the Shepherd of His Church, He must possess all the perfections of God, in equal balance with all the attributes of man. He must be divine to know, provide for, and keep His flock; He must be human to accomplish its salvation, and to sympathize with and aid its trials, infirmities, and temptations. Both these extremes of being--the Infinite and the finite--meet in Jehovah our Shepherd.

Our Lord is a loving Shepherd. But oh, what pen can describe the vastness of Christ's love to His sheep--His one fold? In proportion to our faith in the love of Christ to us will be the condition of our hearts towards Him. The Lord direct your heart, beloved--perhaps wounded by sin or shaded with sorrow--into the depths of this infinite ocean of divine love; that, filling the shallows, and tiding over the unsightly infirmities, failures, and sins of your Christian life, you may walk in its happy, holy influence. Oh, lose not sight of your Shepherd's love!

Christ is an atoning Shepherd. This was His own declaration. "I lay down my life for my sheep." These words will admit of no rational, intelligent interpretation other than that, having "loved us, He gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God." And what should be the sanctifying influence of the Atonement of Jesus? Should not His death for sin, be our death to sin? How forcibly the apostle puts this truth--"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works."

Think, O my soul, of the power of your Shepherd. When David would prove his ability to confront the vaunting Goliath, he reminded Saul that he had slain both the lion and the bear which had invaded his father's flock. But Christ, our true David, the Lord our Shepherd, has overcome all our enemies--condemning sin, bruising Satan, conquering death and the grave--and has thereby proved His power to slay the lion and the bear of all our spiritual foes, ever prowling, ever watching, ever plotting to worry, wound, and, if possible, to destroy the sheep given to Him by His Father, and purchased with His own atoning and most precious blood. But, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hands."

It is the especial province of the Shepherd to provide suitable and plentiful pasture for the sheep. This He most faithfully does. He provides the green pastures of His Word into which by His Spirit He leads us. Yet more, He has provided for us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, figuratively, spiritually, believingly. Truly has He prepared a table of the richest and costliest provision in the wilderness, and before our enemies, at which He Himself presides, saying to each welcome guest, "Eat, O friends, drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Sit down, O believer, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Why should you be lean and famished, even though a famine may prevail, when all the promises of God are yours, and all the provision of the gospel is yours, and all the supplies of the covenant are yours, and, above all, all the fullness of Jesus is yours? Among these divine meadows you may roam, feed, and lie down until the Shepherd calls you to richer pastures on high. Until then, keep close to the Shepherd's side--'Jesus only'--and feed with the sheep--the ONE Church of Christ, and do all you can to enlarge the flock and to spread the renown of the Shepherd who ransomed you with His own blood, who sought you in the cloudy and dark day, and, laying you upon His shoulder, bore you gently back to His fold.

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