

# Psalm 23 v 4 - 6

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening. Welcome. Good to have some visitors amongst us as well. Welcome you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Would you turn with me please briefly to Psalm 105. Psalm 105 as we come to worship.

This evening, as you can see, we've prepared to share in the Lord's Supper. And we do invite all those who know and love the Lord Jesus to share with us in that.

If you're a believer, if you're not trusting the Lord Jesus, if you know he died for your sins, walking with him, then please share with us. But if you know you're not a Christian, then you're very welcome to stay right through the service to the end.

But the Bible warns us against eating of the bread and the wine without faith, without trust in Christ. So please feel free just to let those, when they're offered, just let them pass by and that will be fine. So Psalm 105, I'm going to read a few verses together. Just make a few comments as we do. Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name, make known among the nations what he has done.

[ 1 : 08 ] Sing to him, sing praise to him, tell of his wonderful acts. Here we are at the beginning of a new year, we're able to look back on the wonderful acts of God.

Not just in the work of our Lord Jesus, in his death, resurrection for us, but in our own lives in 2018. What wonderful things he has done for us. We're here to praise him for that.

To praise and worship him for his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength.

Seek his face always. Always. We're looking forward to the year ahead. And in that sense, we're looking to the Lord. We're seeking his strength, his help for the year ahead.

We know we cannot go in our own strength, but we go seeking him. And therefore we have reason to rejoice. We may have anxieties, concerns about the coming year.

[ 2 : 08 ] But the wonderful truth is that we know with Christ, with our Lord, with our God, we can rejoice. Because he is the one who will strengthen and sustain us in the year ahead.

And we come to worship him then and praise him for that reason. Let's continue in our worship as we pray together. Let us pray.

Oh Lord, our God, it's our great desire this evening as we come into your presence once more to bring you our praise and our thanksgiving and our worship. To make known to one another and to the nations what you have done for us.

We thank you, O Lord, that we have so much to sing about, to rejoice in, to give thanks for. For at the opening of this year, Lord, again, as we thought this morning, we remember that you are with us.

And that, O Lord, you are the shepherd of our souls. Thank you that you have kept us. We confess again, Lord, that through the last 12 months, at times our hearts have wandered.

[ 3 : 14 ] At times, O Lord, we have backslidden. At times, O Lord, we have not been faithful sheep to our shepherd. But we thank you, O Lord, that you never gave up on us. But like that wonderful shepherd of whom you spoke, you sought us out.

You brought us back. Lord, if it wasn't for your wonderful shepherding care, for your pastoral love to us, for your powerful influence over our lives, then we surely would have wandered off to our own sadness, demise, and sorrow, to your shame, and to the spoiling of your name.

But, Lord, you haven't let us go. And you'll never let us go. For you are faithful to the end. And, O Lord, we long again that you would strengthen us in that same faith.

Cause our faith to rise, Lord, for the year ahead, especially as we come to your word. May we again, Lord, know you speaking to us and encouraging us to trust you and to follow you.

When we gather around the table, we have the evidence, O Lord, that you are the God who loves us. We have evidence, O Lord, proof, substantial and concrete, that you are the God who has done wonderful things for us in the past, providing for us forgiveness for sins, providing for us peace with God and newness of life and a home in heaven.

[ 4 : 35 ] Thank you, O Lord, that the table, the communion table is to us a time of fellowship as we rejoice in Jesus who bore all our sins away. And so we pray that this evening, as we meet together around your word and around the table, as we meet together in your presence, we long that your Holy Spirit may be here too.

That he may be meeting with us and drawing us close and speaking to us, quickening, refreshing and reviving us. For, Lord, we know that, O Lord, you never send away anyone empty-handed. But it is your good pleasure to bless and to bless abundantly. And so we ask these things and look to you in faith because of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour and King.

Amen. Turn with me to the Gospel of John and chapter 14. It's not 10, that was this morning. It's the first Sunday of the new year, so everything's gone completely wrong, which is pretty usual.

But, you know, by the time we get to about July, we'll have got our wheels back on the wagon and we'll be sort of heading in the right direction. But the Lord knows and he is sovereign. But we're going to read from John 14 and going to read from verse 1 through to verse 21.

[ 5 : 56 ] But actually, those of you here this morning will know we'll be going back into the 23rd Psalm, but this will help us, I hope. John 14.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I'll come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I'm going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

[ 7 : 02 ] Philip said, Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered, Don't you know me, Philip, even after I've been among you such a long time?

Anyone who's seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority.

Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I've been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I'm going to the Father.

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. If you love me, keep my commands.

[ 8 : 02 ] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate, to help you and be with you forever. The Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you. Before long the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.

Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.

The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them. Yeah, please turn to Psalm 23.

We looked at particularly the first three verses of this morning, applying it to ourselves about the wonderful truth, that as we go into this new year, we go with the assurance that our Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd, that we lack nothing, particularly, as the psalm seems to indicate, nothing in regard to the health of our souls.

[ 9 : 16 ] We are not merely body, or even merely body and mind, but we are spiritual creatures. We are made with a soul, a spirit, and for that reason we need and look to the Lord to supply for our souls.

And we saw how he provides for us the essentials for life and for living healthily in the Christian life particularly. And the challenge was really this, is the Lord your shepherd?

Is the Lord your shepherd? That you can say, I lack nothing. He supplies all my wants. He provides all my needs. I picked up on the news just a week or so ago that the mountain rescue teams in the Lake District have had one of their most busy years, in fact, the busiest year on record in 2018. They're made up of 12 volunteer teams, a great number of men and women, and last year they had 654 call-outs, which was a record.

And the chairman of that group of search and rescue, Richard Warren, said it's a growing trend and it's a worrying trend. Call-outs have risen from 474 in 2014, which was itself a rise of 10% the year before.

[10:42] And what he says is a big cause of concern was the 180 avoidable call-outs last year. He says people get lost mainly due to no preparation, or little preparation, no understanding, navigation, no map, no compass, no torch.

And the warning was really to people through that item on the news to make sure that you are prepared before you go out into the fells, into the hills, the mountains of the Lake District. And again, it's true of other places as well. Very sadly, even this week, a climber fell off Ben Nevis and was killed. Well, if we should be equipped and prepared to climb mountains and hills, then how much more do we need to be prepared for the year 2019?

Every year of our lives is another leg of the journey of life, another mile in the race of faith. And I believe that Psalm 23 that we looked at this morning and again we look at this evening has much to say on the subject of life being a journey. Christian life is not one of stagnation, but a constant journey.

[11:57] And so we have language which speaks of always moving or traveling. He leads me, he guides me. Verse four, though I walk through.

And later on, verse six, surely goodness and love will follow me. We can only follow something that's moving. So the Christian life is a journey where moving is a sense of traveling. And as John Dunyan would put it in the Pilgrim's Progress, we're walking along the King's Highway. We're on this journey. Now, as we thought this morning, the Lord Jesus Christ is our good shepherd.

He's the one who provides in himself all that we lack. He is the bread. He is the drink. He is the refreshment for our souls. He is the nourishment for our spirit.

And so it is the case as well in this challenge of walking and journeying and climbing, as it were, the Christian life. We have a shepherd who gives us whatever we need for wherever we go.

[13:00] The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing. And we said that that is not primarily to do with the physical provision of the Lord Jesus. Although we know he has promised to do that.

It is for the spiritual needs that we have for our souls. And it's as we look to Jesus as our good shepherd and as we journey that we find that he is the one who prepares us, provides for us, equips us with everything necessary for the Christian life.

Why do we need the Lord Jesus as our shepherd in 2019? Why can't we make it on our own? Why is the Christian life one of complete and total daily dependence and reliance upon Christ?

Well, like those who would set out to climb the fells or the mountains or the valleys in the Lake District and so on, we have challenges that we shall most certainly face in 2019.

We're not ignorant, as it were, of what is ahead of us, just as they shouldn't be ignorant of what is ahead of them. I can't say that I've done a great deal of walking in the lakes, but of those I know who've been there will tell you that the weather can change very quickly.

[14:18] From being a very sunny day, as it were, at the bottom, it can become a day of freezing rain, even blizzards, dark, and the night can come unexpectedly and quickly, wind and so on, and there's no shelter.

So to head off into the hills carelessly, thinking that none of those things will happen to you, that everything will be fine, it'll be a sunny walk up, and a sunny walk down is at worst, at best, naive, and at worst, foolish arrogance.

Dear friends, if we go into 2019 and we have this sort of thought that everything will be sunny and rosy, either we've got very short-term memory to remember what 2018 was like, or we are naive. We have great needs, spiritual needs, as we go into this year, and we must look to Christ. We are on a journey, dear friends, and we're on a journey to the house of the Lord.

There's that sense, isn't there, at the end, verse 6, all the days of my life, and I will dwell, I will ultimately arrive at, I will ultimately get to, the end of, the destination of this life.

[15:30] What is the destination of your life and mine? As believers, as sheep of Christ, it is not death, it is life, life in the house of the Lord, forevermore.

And Jesus, our good shepherd, provides for us on every leg of the journey. So I've said that there are challenges. Well, there are two that are set before us here, two realities that David makes mention of, that we shall certainly face at some time, or more than once, in the year ahead.

First of all, he mentions this darkest valley, or the dark valley. Even though, verse 4, I walk through the darkest valley. As you know, in the authorised version, it speaks about the valley of the shadow of death.

There's a sense in which it is the very worst of experiences. It is the place of the darkest. David uses very extreme language, if we can put it that way, in an attempt to convey just how difficult, how dark, how dangerous in that sense, this place is.

It is unpleasant. It's been a hundred years, wasn't it? Last year, celebrating the end of the First World War. A very different view of war in 1918 to 1940.

[16:51] There were soldiers who marched through the streets and were cheered and paraded. They had been told, told by the generals and the hierarchy, as it were, as they went off to the Western Front, it was something of an adventure.

It was going to be a bit of a breeze. It was going to be easy. The Hun were going to be put to route and they would all be returned home safely. Four years, of course, changed everybody's view of that.

What they were told was nothing, could not be any further from the truth. When our Lord Jesus spoke to his disciples, as he was sending them into the world, as he was sending them off to the Western Front, in that sense, to take the gospel, to preach it to the world, he was very, very plain. He didn't use flowery language. He gave no false hope or optimism. He said to them in John chapter 16, in this world, you will have trouble. That word trouble, again, older translations use the word tribulation.

It's not a word we understand so much. That's why newer translations use trouble. It means trouble and suffering. It means hardship and loss. It means sacrifice. It means pain.

[18:01] Again, it's a word which is evocative. Life, following Christ, serving Christ, living for Christ in this world, is no bed of roses.

It's no easy trail, no path with flowers, as it were, petals laid out before us, or red carpets. So, David says, through the darkest valley, dear friends, there will be, as we've experienced, each of us, I'm sure, in the past, in one way or another, dark valleys.

There will be, 2019, dark valleys as well. It's been the reality, for every Christian. It's not been any more, it's not any more difficult, for us, than it was for our forefathers, in the faith.

You go, right back to the days of Paul, to times, in the Roman Empire, where Christians, where Christians, were persecuted, and killed. Then you find again, all through history, God's people have always faced, the challenge, of living in a world, where there is tribulation, and trouble.

That's not the only thing, that David talks about. He talks about, that darkest valley, but he also, is aware, of the reality, of dangerous enemies. Verse 5, you prepare a table, before me, in the presence, of my enemies.

[19:17] And David knew what it was, to have enemies, all through his life, he had enemies, not just Goliath, in one sense, Goliath was the easy enemy, for him to overcome. But he had enemies, that were very close at hand, even within his own family.

Absalom, his son, turned the whole nation, against him, and threw him out, of his position, as king, for a little while. Isn't it interesting, that he talks about, you prepare a table, before me, in the presence, of my enemies.

He doesn't talk about, Lord, you're going to be with me, in the battles, with my enemies. Or, Lord, you're going to be with me, when I'm under attack, from my enemies. There's a sense in which, these enemies, are subtle enemies, aren't they?

They're sat at the table, with him. They're close by to him. Jesus told his disciples, that that would be, their experience too. That the enemies, that they faced, would even be, as he put it in Matthew 10, members, of your own household.

Members of your own family, sometimes, I know, for some of you, as Christians, that it's been difficult, when you first became a Christian, you've come from a non-Christian family, and the attitude, of your family, has been hostile, or at the very least, discouraging, towards you following Christ.

[ 20 : 32 ] Sometimes, that can be a reason, why people don't become Christians. They think, well, if I become a Christian, my parents will disapprove of me, or my wife, or husband will disapprove, or somebody else, they'll be angry with me.

They won't understand. They'll think that I've, gone off the rails, I've gone mad. Jesus makes it claim to his disciples, even close family, even those that are near to you, may well be your enemy. But dear friends, I think especially, when we think of this, as we should, in the spiritual sense, of the journey, that we have as Christians, we have one enemy, an enemy in this world, who is relentless, in his opposition to Christ, and in his desire to destroy, and to eat, as it were, the sheep of his fold. Peter tells the believers, in his first letter, chapter 5, be alert, of sober mind. In other words, be aware, be conscious of the danger, don't be naive, don't wander around, with your head in the cloud, your enemy, the devil, prowls around, like a roaring lion, looking for someone, to devour. Soon as you become a Christian, you are engaged, in a spiritual battle, in spiritual warfare, and in this battle, there is no ceasefire, until Christ comes again.

[ 21 : 54 ] In this world, there is no time, in which dear friends, we can relax, as it were, and put our feet up, and say, oh well, the war is over. No it's not. As long as you seek, to follow Christ, as long as you, seek to live for him, and follow Christ, your good shepherd, you shall meet with enemies, and with the spiritual enemy, the devil.

Well then, how should we feel, about 2019, in light of these things? We should be, jolly pessimistic, shouldn't we? Oh dear, I've just told you, you've got, the troubles, and tribulation, and dark valleys, you've got an enemy, he's out to get you, oh no, 2019, is going to be, an awful year, a horrible year, depressing year, is that how we should be?

No, of course not, of course not dear friends, that's the whole, purpose of this psalm, those who have the Lord, as their shepherd, have no reason, to think this way, there's no reason, for us to be fearful, or anxious, or concerned, overly, with what is to come, those who can say, the Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing, whatever I face, wherever I go, wherever he leads me, I'm confident, that he shall supply, and provide all my needs, well, what is our confidence, what is, what is it, that we look to, what is it, that assures us, with the Lord being my shepherd, that wherever we go, whatever we face, we have no lack, well it's simply this, it's what we thought of again, this morning, but it comes out particularly, there in verse four, even though I walk, through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, it's as simple as that, you are with me, wherever we go, in 2019, Christ is with us, we thought about the importance, the essential importance, of being in the presence of Christ, spending time with him, fellowshiping with him, how that feeds, and nourishes, and refreshes our souls, but the reality is this, as we go through life, as we are with the shepherd, he is with us, he's not a shepherd, as we read this morning, from John 10, a hireling, somebody who runs off, as soon as there's any trouble, someone who deserts their post, and gives up the sheep, to the wolves, no, he is the faithful shepherd, the good shepherd, who is with us, you are with me, and because Christ is with us, our needs are met, in three ways, he provides for us, first of all, by his presence, courage, courage, even though I walk, verse 4, through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, is he a fool, isn't it, isn't it right, to fear evil, isn't evil, a fearful thing, isn't there evil around, and abounding, in our world today, yes there is, but he says,

I'm not going to be afraid of it, why is he not afraid, oh well David, was a mighty warrior, wasn't he, faced Goliath, and slew him with a stone, he had led armies, and fought battles, was that his confidence, was that his assurance, that he was, could not be overcome, because he was a mighty, valiant man, no, no, no, even though I walk, through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, that's his confidence, that's where his courage lay, his courage lay, not in himself, in his own bravery, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, how often, when the Lord Jesus, walked the earth, with his disciples, how many times, he had to say to them, didn't he, don't be afraid, don't fear, the storm was raging, Lord, don't you care, if we drown, don't be afraid, trust in me, have faith in me, why was it, that they were afraid, it wasn't because, Jesus had abandoned them, they weren't afraid, because Jesus, wasn't near, because we know, that in the boat, on the storm, there he was, asleep in the stern, and they woke him, he was with them, in all of those situations, and circumstances, where they were afraid, the reason, why they were afraid, was because, they did not, know who

Jesus was, they didn't understand, and grasp, that here, in their presence, and with them, wherever they went, was the mighty God, that wonderful name,

[ 26 : 10 ] Emmanuel, we've been thinking of, over Christmas, God with, God with, us, and for the Christian, it's the same, it is the Lord, is my shepherd, the Lord is with, me, you are with, me, verse four, because, he's with us, and because of who he is, we need to be afraid, think about it, imagine that you, were walking through, a very, dark, dingy street, at midnight, the light, had broken, it was all, dark, and like me, you probably got to, whistle to yourself, to try and, keep yourself, your courage up, you're afraid, you might be mugged, or, something around the corner, imagine, you were doing that, and you had two heavily, built, bouncers, and men, walking with you, along through that street, wouldn't be bothered, would you, think, whoever comes my way, I've got these, big strong, strapping fellas, next to me, then, nobody's going to, touch me, so just with Christ, we have, a big strapping shepherd, if I can put it that way, we have a, a mighty, saviour, who walks with us, wherever we go, even in the very, darkest of places, who never leaves us, nor forsakes us, that's why Paul, was able to write, the Christians in Rome, in, in that time,

Rome was the very, hottest spot, for the Christian, under Nero, Christians were arrested, and murdered, and killed, in most horrible ways, place of darkest persecution, well what does he say, to those Christians, if God is for us, who can be against us, it's a rhetorical question, nobody can, nobody can, it gives us courage, as Jesus sends his disciples, out with that great commission, to make disciples, of all nations, as he, on the, on the, at the time, as he's about to return, to the father in heaven, after his resurrection, he says to them, assured words, I am with you, always, even to the very end, of the age, we have a friend, who sticks closer, than a brother, scripture speaks about, that's Jesus, your Jesus, is going with you, your shepherd, your good shepherd, is with you, you don't need, to be afraid, you don't need, to be anxious, don't need to be, taken up with fear, he gives us courage, gives us courage, to stand, and to go forward, into even, times, of difficulty, and secondly, we see here, that with the Lord Jesus Christ, not only are we given courage, by his presence, but we're also given comfort, by his presence, the rest of verse four, your rod, and your staff, they comfort me, it's not that they literally, because the rod, and the staff, one's a club, and one's a sort of, a hook type of stick, they don't give the comfort, but they're in the hands, of the shepherd, they're his tools, in one sense, they're the things, which he used, to defend the sheep, to rescue them, when they fall into trouble, comfort, comfort, yes, we will, find times, of trouble, the word comfort, speaks, doesn't it, of speaking, and imparting peace, to someone, who's troubled, of soothing, a wounded spirit, the truth is, that we will pass, through dark times, in 2019, it's unavoidable, there's nothing you can do, you can lock yourself, in a monastery, you can take yourself, to an inhabited island, and you still, will have trouble, dear friends, we can't escape from it, it's part of the reality, of life, we are engaged, in spiritual warfare, again, that's something, you can't get out of, if you're a Christian, the enemy, the devil, is looking, to devour you, these things, will happen, but dear friends, we have a comforter, a comforter, one who is, not only sympathizes, with us, and puts his arm, around us, to say,

I'm with you, in the midst of this, but also the one, who is able to give to us, grace, speak words of healing, speak words of peace, to our troubled souls, Jesus, we read there, didn't we, from John 14, I will give you, another advocate, is the translation here, but the word is, is parakletos, in the Greek, it means, it means someone, who gets alongside you, and so it's translated, as comforter, it's translated, as helper, or counselor, another one, in other words, Jesus is the primary one, the first one, the Holy Spirit, comes and carries on, that work, that he has begun, when we, go through those times, where things are dark, we go through those times, when we feel ourselves, overwhelmed, perhaps, by the enemy, our soul, and our heart, we feel ourselves, under attack, and bombardment, it's then of course, we particularly feel alone, isn't it, it's then particularly, we may be tempted, to think that Christ, has abandoned us, and left us, that he doesn't care, for us anymore, that he's left us, to the ravages, and the difficulties, of life, but nothing could be further, from the truth, we read there, in John 14, verse 18,

I will not leave you, as orphans, what's the characteristic, of an orphan, they have no family, no one to care for them, no one to be with them, and to help them, no I won't leave you, as orphans, I'll come to you, what a wonderful, comfort that is, you're not alone, even if you are, physically alone, you're not alone, you don't need to, go through life, and through this year, afraid of being alone, or fearful, that Christ won't be there, with you, he will be with you, he will stick close to you, he will comfort you, lift you up, when you're downcast, strengthen you, when you're weak, it's all in him, it's

all of him, and so David said, the Lord's my shepherd, I'm not going to lack anything, I'm not going to need anything, he's everything, that I need, and thirdly, and lastly here, dear friends, I believe that we see, that the Lord Jesus Christ, gives us, not only courage, comfort, but contentment, contentment, it's all sounded, rather gloomy, hasn't it, to a certain degree, as I've said before, is there nothing, to look forward to, this, we're thankful, that God gives us, Christ gives us courage, and we're thankful, that Christ comforts us, is it all going to be hard work, and hard slog, this 2019, this walking, for Christ, we mustn't forget, that it is difficult, but dear friends, that's not the whole, story isn't it, that's not everything, look at what he says, in verses five, and six, you prepare a table, before me, in the presence, of my enemies, you anoint my head, with oil, my cup overflows, surely your goodness, and love, will follow me, all the days, the life, he ends with this, wonderful sense, of joy, and rejoicing, and delighting, in the goodness of God, and the love of God, there's blessings, for our souls, hallelujah, 2019, there will be challenges, but there will be blessings, great blessings, overflowing blessings, and notice, there's no lack, to these blessings, you anoint my head, with oil, it's a sign, of acceptance, it's a sign, of being received, and loved, and honored, and special, and look at that, you're never going to have, an empty cup, whatever your particular, tittle is, tea, or coffee, or juice, of some particular kind, even a glass of wine, occasionally, it's never going to run dry, my cup's going to overflow, with the good gifts, of Christ, the goodness of God, there's riches, in store for us, dear friends, in 2019, blessings, without number, good things, without limit, surely, certainly, definitely, goodness and love, will follow me, wherever you go, behind you, in one sense, is the goodness, and love of God, right there, so we can, with optimism, we can, with expectation, we can, with great delight, and joy, look to this coming year, and say,

[ 34 : 49 ] Lord, whatever I need, you'll provide, but finally, dear friends, let's not forget, where Jesus is, leading us, as the good shepherd, I will dwell, in the house, of the Lord, forever, he is with us, every step of the way, to bring us, into the father's house, this journey, this journey, that we're on, which is life, is not simply, the wheel, a hamster, runs around, and around, and around, or the circle of life, that Elton John, sang about, in the Lion King, it's not simply, about getting through, surviving, until at the very end, that's it, we pop our clogs, and there's nothing more, no, dear friends, we are on a purposeful, mission, we're on a journey, which has an end, we are heading, to something, to some place, we have a goal, at the end, of this journey, and it is the father's house, that's why we read, from John 14, my father's house, has many rooms, if it were not so, would I have told you,

I'm going there, to prepare a place for you, the Lord Jesus, is leading us home, leading us onward, the good shepherd, is taking his sheep, back, into the father's, fold, that we might be, with him forever, and enjoy his delights, forever, dear friends, each year, we're another, marker, stone, closer, to home, just like the marathon, if you've ever run a marathon, I haven't, along the way, from the beginning, there's a marker, every mile or so, which says to the runner, 23 miles left, 24 miles left, and so on, all the way down, I think, I'm not sure about the last mile, or so, it'll tell you how many, meters or yards, or however much it is, counting down, not in a sense of counting down, to the end, but counting down, to the completion, to fulfillment, the promise, and it's ours, and it comes through Jesus, our good shepherd, and what do we have to do, to get this, wonderful treasure, this promise, all we've got to do is, follow the shepherd, he's the, he's the pioneer, he's the one, who's made the way for us,

I'm the way, the truth, the life, simply trusting him, leaning, and looking to him, he will bring us, through every danger, snare, possible problem, he will bring us, to green pastures, and he'll bless us, by still waters, and then ultimately, he'll bring us in, that place of eternal peace, eternal safety, eternal comfort, is Jesus your shepherd, is he your shepherd, for 2019, are you trusting him, are you daily looking to him, you're resting, in all his goodness, and faithfulness, I trust that you are, and let me encourage you, to do it, all the more, please do sit down, those who are, he'slar■, I don't know, the greater means is, that's rubbed, he's the preacher, sayover, as well, theπ■...

he's the kind of a prostate, some of theuled, the ■■■ Broly, and you try, and that it supports me, to do it, he's the same thing, as well, he's still other, and theína, as well. They're this, those who are going,