The Shepherd Leads Us

(by David Maxson)

***“He leads me beside still waters”*** (**Psalm 23:2**). Sheep are easily frightened by a river or even a stream with a fast moving current, and so a shepherd must find a slow moving stream or a pond where the water is still for his sheep to drink.

Our Shepherd knows how fearful and insecure we are in life and though He often leads us through frightening valleys (**Psalm 23:4**), after we pass through them He finds peaceful pastures and waters where we can feel safe and secure.

When there is no secure place for us to find rest and peace, it is then that our Shepherd carries us. ***“He will tend His flock like a shepherd: He will gather the lambs in His arms; He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young”*** (**Isaiah 40:11.**)

As we go through struggles and fearful times in life, our Shepherd has given assurance that one day we will not have to live in this world anymore. ***“For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes”*** (**Revelation 7:17**).

So with confidence we can face the mighty stream that threatens us daily and say...  ***“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”*** (**Psalm 118:6**). Good Shepherd, lead us beside still waters and let us drink of the living waters that give us life everlasting.

Grace vs. Works

(by Doy Moyer)

In all the discussions regarding grace vs. works, there is a great irony that seems to escape. It is simply this: those who do not obey are the ones trusting in themselves. To refuse to submit my will to God's is the height of arrogance and self-righteousness. It is, in essence, saying that I can do it myself; I don’t need God or His commands telling me what to do.

Further, if we think that we can just appeal to God’s grace, while at the same time refusing to submit our will to His, then we have bought into a severe delusion. ***“No one will see the Lord”*** without the pursuit of holiness (**Hebrews 12:14**). Holiness is defined by God, not us. This pursuit can only happen when we relinquish our will to God’s. If we don’t, any appeal to His grace will turn us into mere clouds without water, autumn trees without fruit. God’s grace is defined by Him and given by Him. It is not defined by us, determined by us, or meted out according to our desires. If we desire God’s grace, then it will be His way, and His way involves us pursuing holiness. ***“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works”*** (**Titus 2:11-14**). Any other path is self-righteous to the core.

2% Will Destroy You

(by Jamey Hinds)

At one time I was having trouble with mice, so I bought some d-Con. As I looked at the package, I noticed that 98% was good, wholesome food. Only 2% was deadly poison. Now, if some educated mouse could read, he might reason, *“But there is so much good in that food, a little bit won’t do me harm; and besides, I’m hungry.”* Yet, I dare say, that all that good food didn’t do that poor creature much good because that little bit of poison either killed him or gave him some mighty nasty indigestion. It wasn’t worth taking 98% of nourishment if that 2% killed him! And 98% good nourishment was not enough to offset the fatal effects of the 2% poison. The manufacturers of d-Con are experts on mice extermination to know they have to put a lot of good tasting food in their product before they can tempt mice to eat a little bit of poison that will kill them.

This is the way some folks look at what they accept religiously. They feel that if there is so much good in their doctrines, a little bit of error won’t harm them. But the devil is scheming enough to give people spiritual d-Con — 98% truth, 2% lie. Man won’t go 98% to heaven and 2% to hell; 100% of him will go one place or another. Didn’t James say, ***“For whoever keeps the whole Law but fails in one point is guilty of breaking all of it”*** (**James 2:10**)? The person who rejects just 2% of God’s Word is no worse off from the fellow who rejects it all! ***“The person who isn’t with Me is against Me, and the person who isn’t gathering with Me is scattering”*** (**Matthew 12:30**).