

God Our Shepherd

Isaiah 40:11



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FOCAL Read Together Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Shepherds - those men who herd sheep - have an important place in the Word of God. The second person born - Abel - **was a keeper of sheep (Genesis 4:2)**. Abel offered a sacrifice that was acceptable to the Lord, for he offered a **Lamb without spot or blemish** on an ancient altar. The ancient **Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father in law (Exodus 3:1)** when God called to him out of a burning bush. One of the greatest Kings that Israel ever had was the **Shepherd King David**. The greatest event in human history was announced by the Angel Gabriel - not to Kings and Princes - but to lowly **shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night (Luke 2:8)**. The Child that was born and who lay in a manger was no ordinary Child. This **Baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes was the Savior, Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11-12)**. God Himself would fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah given some 700 years before. **A virgin would conceive, and bear a Son, and call Him Immanuel - or God with us" (Isaiah 7:14)**.

God would lower Himself as any Shepherd must do in order to care for His sheep. The Shepherd must smell like sheep, must be where the sheep can see Him, and must even eat and sleep in the same fields where the sheep are. God loves His people, and lowered Himself from Heaven to earth in order to save us. We were of the dust, and He was of sinless Spirit. For our sakes He came

from Spirit to flesh, from high to low, from a place of perfection to a place where imperfection ruled. What a Blessed Savior we have! His sheep **are all gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way (Isaiah 53:6).** Did God abandon us? No! He came to this earth so that He could **bear the iniquity of us all.**

The Child of the manger grew up, and at the appointed time went about preaching His Gospel. "**The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost**" (Matthew 18:11). It was not God's Will that His Son come to this earth to save a select few. It was God's Will that Christ save whosoever will. Jesus went first to **the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10:6). He came unto His own people - Israelites - but His own would not receive Him (John 1:11).** When Israel rejected Him Christ turned and began offering Himself to not only Jews but Gentiles as well. Jesus said:

John 6:37 ... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

None will be cast out. God is a Shepherd to His people - and any who come by faith can be His people. **God is not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Whosoever will believe on Jesus shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).**

1. Consider The Shepherd

FOCAL Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those

that are with young.

God is the Shepherd of His people. That's the main focus of this text. He **shepherds** us.

Think about the Shepherd for a moment. The Rock Hill community farms cattle rather than sheep, so you may not be aware of what a Shepherd does.

The Shepherd has to **provide for the nourishment of the flock.** This is the first thing mentioned in our text:

FOCAL Isaiah 40:11 **He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ...**

God **provides** for those whom He loves. **He feeds His flock.** He gives *nourishment* to those He loves.

Like a Shepherd God sustains His flock by providing for their physical needs.

God sustains His lambs like a good Shepherd should do. He provides us with food and drink, caring for our physical needs. The Psalmist wrote:

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

If you have jobs, you have them because God provided them for you. If you have food it is because God has given you a means to secure food. **God takes care of His**

lambs, of His flock. The righteous need not beg bread. The God Who gave Israel *Manna in the desert, and doves for meat* will not abandon you, dear one. He cares for His own, so that we can confidently say:

Psalms 23:1-2 ... The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. {2} He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

If you are a believer and are hungry, then it's because you have turned away from His pastures. **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures**, but He does not make us eat. He gives us provision, but we must eat! In ancient Israel God commanded that a portion of every field be left unharvested so that the poor could eat. In the Church Age the local Church offers food and drink to those who are widowed and orphaned.

God gives provision to even the lost, those who are not of His flock. Like a Wise Shepherd He keeps the unbeliever alive so that they will have every opportunity to *become* part of His flock.

Our Lord Jesus said that God

Matthew 5:45 ... maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

I have seen many farmers - lost as a goose in the desert - drive past the Church on Sunday morning in large tractors. They enjoy a bountiful harvest, though they care

little for God. God send sustenance even to such as these so that they might live another day and - perhaps - believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

FOCAL Isaiah 40:11 ... He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, ...

Not only does God provide *physical* food, but He gives us *spiritual* sustenance as well. **He gathers us with His arm.** He bring His flock together in groups called the Local Church. **He carries them in His bosom.** He holds us close, and gives to us His precious Word.

Every sheep knows that the safest place to be is in the Presence of the Shepherd, within the sound of the Shepherd's Voice. The most dangerous place to be is *apart from the Shepherd's flock.*

We must gather together to hear His Word. It is the Word of God that feeds our thirsty souls. Jesus said:

Matthew 4:4 ... Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

There are frightening things in the world. There are wolves that roam just outside of the flock, waiting for a lamb to draw away from the Shepherd's Voice. **Satan as a roaring lion wanders about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).** The foolish lambs struggle against the Shepherd, and refuse to stay where they are gathered. Oh that everyone would realize the truth of the Scripture:

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

The lamb that stays within the sound of the Shepherd's voice never need fear either wolf or lion. Our Shepherd is mighty - for He is God. Our Shepherd has

Isaiah 40:12 ... measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance

The God Who made Heaven and Earth is more than able to feed His sheep. He wants to feed us, He wants to gather us, He wants to lead us. Do not struggle against Him, dear lambs, for He loves you so.

FOCAL **Isaiah 40:11** He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

He shall feed He shall gather He shall lead. God is accessible to all of His lambs. He is not a Shepherd Who is far off, but He is close to His own.

God is not far off. Though there may be times when He seems to be far away, He is never far from us. God said:

Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those

that seek me early shall find me.

God was with Adam in Eden, "walking in the Garden in the cool of the day". Though Adam and Eve hid from God He nevertheless found them, and - in love - clothed them with the skins of animals (**Genesis 3:21**). Though God could no longer allow fallen man to live in a perfect Paradise, the Lord still looked after His creation.

Most of the disasters that have occurred in human history have happened because man turned away from God. Adam fell. Noah built an ark, and all but eight souls died on the face of the earth. Abraham's nephew Lot found his family in Sodom. King David murdered another man in order to steal his wife.

And yet God still seeks to shepherd us. Though God's Israel often refused His direction the Bible says that:

Exodus 13:18, 21 ... God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: {21} And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: ...

God led His people like a Shepherd leads His flock. At no point did God ever take His attention away from the flock whom He so loved. Had Israel trusted God's provision as Shepherd they would have entered into the Promised Land right away. Yet Israel kept ignoring the Word of God. They kept *struggling against the grip of*

the Shepherd, and kept trying to do things their own way. God told Israel over and over again:

Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

And says this same thing to you today. If you seek God you shall find Him, but you must search for Him with all your heart.

God sought you with all His heart. A Shepherd must be with the sheep. A Shepherd must *smell like sheep*. God did something amazing to be our Shepherd. He *became like us*.

The Bible tells us that:

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,....

God the Father sent God the Son to this earth. Jesus Christ was **sent**, and then He was **made of a woman**. The Angel Gabriel came to a virgin named Mary, and said to her:

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name **JESUS**.

God our Shepherd would now become like us. He would take on humanity, and yet remain sinless. He would walk

and talk and be amongst us. Jesus Christ is the **Good Shepherd**:

John 10:10-11 ... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. {11} I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ... {14} I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

As the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ **laid down His life for the sheep**.

God gave His life for us. He left Heaven for us. He was born of a virgin for us. He lived in obscurity for us. He went to Calvary for us. He died for us. He rose on the third day for us. He ascended into Heaven for us. He ever lives for us.

The prophet Isaiah summarized the life of Christ when he wrote:

Isaiah 53:2-6 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. {3} He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. {4} Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for

our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. {6} All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Though rejected, Jesus the Good Shepherd ignored the rejection, and went to the Cross to die for the sins of the world, that **whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

2. Consider The Flock

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Who are God's sheep? The world would have us believe that *everyone is God's sheep*. Though it is true that everyone has the *possibility* of entering God's flock, not everyone is of God's flock.

How can I qualify to be in God's flock? First of all, I need to realize that I am not the Shepherd! I cannot be saved if I try to be the Shepherd. I cannot be successful if I put myself in the place of the Shepherd. I will never be satisfied if I try to be the Shepherd of my own life. Only God is the Shepherd!

The Shepherd stands above the flock. He sees what we - who are lower than Him - cannot see. **He sees our**

hearts. "O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my downsitting and my uprising. You understand my thoughts from afar off" (Psalm 139:1-2). God knows what we need better than we do. When we begin to *murmur and complain* as Israel did in the wilderness we are saying to God "I want to be the Shepherd". Oh Beloved, these are the words that cast Lucifer - called Satan - out of Heaven! He knows what is best for us. We are to be His Sheep.

If we are God's sheep we will come to Him. A sheep is not a beast of burden. It is not a mule or an ox or even a horse. A sheep carries no burden, but is carried by the Shepherd. "**He shall carry them in His bosom**" next to His heart.

Our Shepherd says:

Matthew 11:28 **Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

You do not need to clean yourself up to come to the Shepherd, but you do need to walk away from where you are spiritually to where He is. Turn away from this present evil world and to **come unto Him**. When we come to Jesus in faith, believing Him to be both Lord and Savior, then **He gives us rest**. Come weak, come thirsty, come wanting and come needing. But **COME** to Jesus! Come and be a part of His flock.

He is to be our Shepherd, and we the sheep. Let Him **gather you in His arm, and carry you in His bosom.**

Bring your wants, your needs to Him.

Come thirsty, believing that Jesus will satisfy your souls. The sheep is not responsible to either feed or water itself - though it should willingly drink and eat what is placed before it.

The Chief Shepherd said:

John 7:37-38 ... If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. {38} He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Here is your responsibility. Do you thirst? Recognize it, and come to Jesus. Drink of His love and of His willing sacrifice. As a sheep before his Shepherd:

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim;
In the light of His glorious grace!**

Blessed lambs, so many have fallen into pits of sin and despair. So many have burs and mud in what was once white wooly coats. So many have turned their gaze upon that false shepherd Satan who tempts - just as he tempted in the Garden of Eden - say "**Yea, hath God said?**"

Matthew 7:13-16 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

{14} Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. {15} Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. {16} Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Turn from those who would use you and abuse you, the bitter tongued young men and women who raise themselves up as gods. Turn from them, and turn toward the Blessed Savior. It is He Who laid down His life for us. There is but one

Hebrews 13:20 ... Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep ...

He shall gently lead those with young. Oh, despairing Parent, has your child found pleasure in the Prince of Hell? Is he or she basking in the glow of damnation's dark, dark light? Your hope is in Christ, in following your Shepherd. Let your children see you being led by Him. Let them see your willing submission at Church, home, in the marketplace, and at the office.

The Scripture clearly tells us:

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

Do not despair, dear Mother, and do not fear, dear Father. If you will follow Jesus wholeheartedly your children *will be sanctified*. But if you will not, if you refuse to follow the **Captain of your salvation (Hebrews 2:10)**, then you have no hope. Dear friends, it is God's purpose to save your whole household. Will you not make it your purpose to follow Him?

A sheep has hooves, not hands with thumbs. A sheep cannot clean itself, but must turn to the Shepherd to be cleansed.

Your Shepherd Jesus Christ is Himself the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. He can surely take away your sin just as He took away mine, if you but believe in Him. As Sheep stay close to the Savior and far from sin. *Know who you are.* The sow or pig may love wallowing in the mire, but the sheep - insofar as he can - stays away from filth.

1 Peter 1:15-16 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; {16} Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

God called you who are His lambs into His flock. He **gathered you with His arm, and carries you in His bosom.** Do not wallow in the mud of sin. This is where pigs belong, not sheep! You Who belong to Jesus are **carried in His bosom.** There is no filth in His arms. Rest in Him!

The strength of the local Church - the Flock of Christ - is its unity. Sheep stay within the flock and close to the Shepherd.

Jesus told His disciples to be "**wise as serpents**" they are also to be "**harmless as doves**". God's lambs are marked by their capacity to love one another, not by their ability to hate or tear at one another. As the Great Preacher **C.H. Spurgeon** once said:

"If I see any man injuring his fellows, tearing, rending, fighting, quarreling — if I see him blustering and proud — I discern at once that he is no sheep of God; for this is the mark of the Lord's people, that they when reviled revile not again, but have put on as the elect of God, bowels of compassion, kindness, and long-suffering. You will find this holy, non-resistance of evil even more in the lambs than in some of the sheep, for worldly influences frequently wear off this beautiful bloom from older professors."

People consider sheep to be *simple*, and the world considers the Christian sold out for Jesus to be simpleminded. No matter! The foolishness of God is better than the wisdom of man. We will rest in the arms of Jesus!

He loves you, and carries you where you can hear His heartbeat. You are not carried on Christ's back, as if you were a burden, but in His arms and close to His heart. You are precious to Him, for He paid a great price for you.

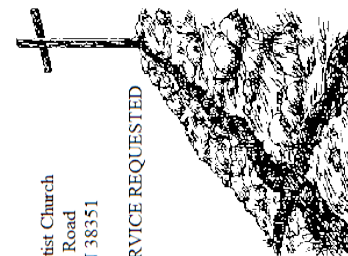
Finally, Sheep *know* that they are Sheep! Do you know that you are Christ's? If you are double minded at this point then your life will never be at peace. **A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.** Better to be wholeheartedly sold out for Jesus, or wholeheartedly on the side of the world. All riding the fence will do for you is give you a sore bottom! As it is written:

2 Timothy 2:19 ... The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

The Lord knows those that are His. Jesus said "**My Sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me**" (John 10:27). The Sheep know their Master, the Master knows His Sheep. He leads, and we follow.

FOCAL Isaiah 40:11 He shall ... **gently lead those...**

If you are not being led of God then you must ask yourself, "Am I one of His?" If you are not certain, then today is the day of salvation. Call upon the Name of Jesus. Believe that He gave Himself for your sins. Believe in Him, for **whosoever believeth in Him will never be ashamed.** May God strengthen and guide you through His Word!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FOCAL Read Together Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

1. Consider The Shepherd

Isaiah 40:11; Psalms 37:25; Psalms 23:1-2; Matthew 5:45; Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 40:12; Proverbs 8:17; Exodus 13:18, 21; Jeremiah 29:13; Galatians 4:4; Luke 1:31; John 10:10-11; Isaiah 53:2-6 _____

2. Consider The Flock

Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28; John 7:37-38; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:15-16 _____
