

# The Shepherd Model Based on Psalm 23 and its Implementation for a Christian's Life


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## ABSTRACT

As the Lord Jesus stated, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” The primary responsibility of shepherds is to serve in Matthew 20:28. The shepherd's basic role is that of a servant; the word servant is derived from the Greek word *doulos*, which means slave. In this sense, the ministry of shepherding is a ministry of service; the shepherd serves as a leader, a father, a prophet, a priest, and a head for the flock or congregation that God has committed to him, in addition to being a servant or slave. As a role model for his flock or congregation, the church pastor's role must be evident. The goal of this article is to broaden the shepherd model based on Psalm 23, which represents the functions of a Christian life. The duty of the shepherd is highlighted as we examine the identification and biblical usage of sheep and shepherds. The role of the shepherd is to care for his congregation, based on Psalm 23:3, by guiding them to the right path, besides also providing goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of the church shepherd is very important for the survival of the sheep or congregation. Sheep without a shepherd are the same as a ship without a rudder, so the ship will be tossed by the waves, and its direction and destination will not be clear. Sheep without a shepherd are the same as playing football without a goal, not knowing the goal of dribbling the ball. Regarding the role, Sugiyono (2009) said the shepherd must be able to be a father to them all. The pastor not only pays attention and becomes a father to them but must also pay attention to church servants or church workers because they support the services in the church. A shepherd must be able to shepherd all the flock of sheep (Sugiyono, 2009, p. 66). Calvin stated, “A shepherd should have characteristics that are inseparable from him as a shepherd, namely volunteerism, self-devotion, humility, and setting a good example in educating God's congregation” (Rupa', 2016). Ingouf (2009) emphasises that one of the duties of the pastor is to care for church members so that the congregation they shepherd can grow in Christ Jesus (Ingouf, 2009, p. 39). The role of the shepherd is to be a leader. Wongso (2009) explains that every person who is trusted as a shepherd is someone who has a position as a leader (Wongso, 2009, p. 1). Another role of the shepherd is to guard the safety of his sheep. The responsibility to fully maintain the safety of the sheep is not an easy job, and therefore, as a shepherd, he is obliged to care for, protect, and ensure that his sheep are safe according to what he does (Hermanto, 2021).

Sheep have been a central part of the economy since the very beginning. In Genesis 4:2, it is said that: “Abel, the son of Adam, worked as a shepherd of sheep.” Figures in the Bible such as Abraham, Isaac, Moses, David, and Amos were shepherds (Genesis. 12:16; 26:14; Exodus. 3:1; 2 Samuel. 7:8; Amos. 1:1). Shepherds in the literal sense of the past and present, carry out a call of duty that requires many demands. The shepherd must look for grass and water in dry and rocky areas (Psalm. 23:2), must protect the flock of his shepherd against bad weather and wild animals (Amos. 3:12), must search for and bring back every sheep that strays (Ezekiel. 34:8; Matthew. 18:12). If his duties required the



shepherd to be away from the camp, then he carried all his main needs in a bag (1 Samuel. 17:40, 49), and the tent became his accommodation (Acts. 1:8).

Pastoral care is part of practical theology, which places emphasis on the practice of pastoral service rather than theory. Theological experts have tried to formulate the meaning of shepherding, including Thurneysen saying: "Shepherding is a special application of the Gospel to individual members of the congregation, namely the Gospel message which in church sermons is conveyed to everyone" (Storm, 2014, p. 1).

So shepherding is a job carried out by the 'shepherd' towards the flock (congregation). In carrying out this task, the shepherd must have the right goals and motivation so that the shepherding task can be achieved in accordance with the will of the Father in heaven. The shepherd's main tools were a club to drive away wild animals, a long stick whose function was to guide or save sheep, and also a sling to throw stones at attacking wild animals (1 Samuel. 17:34–37). Shepherds are not always men. There are also female shepherds, for example, Rebekah (Genesis 29:9) and Jethro's daughters (Exodus 2:16). Ideally, a shepherd must be physically strong, willing to make sacrifices, and be selfless.

Theologically, the term shepherd refers to intensive care and maintenance actions carried out by someone who knows no time or situation and cannot be represented by another person. The Bible Dictionary explains that shepherding was a very important task in Israel for maintenance. This lies in a person's dependence on sheep (livestock). The explanation above confirms that the term 'shepherd' can be understood from two sides; the first refers to the task of caring for and caring for livestock and domestic animals. Secondly, in a spiritual sense, it refers to the task entrusted by the Father in heaven to someone to be a nurse or keeper of human souls.

The term "shepherd" in the Hebrew Bible, namely Psalm 23:1, is "Ro'i" from the word "Ra'a," which means an activity of giving food to a flock, grazing or letting his pasture animals eat grass in the wilderness; care for, look after or take care of livestock and guard, also protect livestock from the threat of wild animals. Below, the researcher explains the word *shepherd* found in Psalm 23:1.

The word "shepherd" comes from Hebrew (Ro'i), from the verb *qal*: to pasture. tend; hiph: to pasture (2) *qal*: to associate with; hith: to associate self (3) *piel*: to befriend, (verb *qal* participle masculine singular construct suffix 1<sup>st</sup> person common singular homonym 1). In the New Testament, namely John. 10:11, the word "shepherd" according to Strong's g4166 is: ποιμήν (poimén); Noun, Masculine Singular; Definition: a shepherd; hence met: of the feeder, protector, and ruler of a flock of men (Browning, 2011, p. 116).

Sembiring and Simon (2020) state that shepherd in Greek uses the word *poimen*, which means a feeder, protector, and guide. But the term pastor today is someone who leads the congregation, directing its spirituality. Therefore, the pastor is a special person. If he is gifted and called to this ministry, it means that God has told him to look after His people (Sembiring & Simon, 2020).

In historical records in the Bible, the profession of being a shepherd is a very old profession. Abel, son of Adam, chose to work as a shepherd (Genesis 4:2). The same work was carried out by Abram as a successful livestock entrepreneur by employing many shepherds, then continued by Isaac and especially Jacob, who had to start working as a shepherd for Laban's livestock. (Genesis 13:8, 26:20; 30:31, 36; Hosea 12:13.)

A shepherd refers to someone who is in charge and responsible for looking after livestock. Douglas tries to interpret the word shepherd literally, which refers to past and present times, namely a task that carries a calling with many demands, and that call is as old as Abel's call (Genesis 4:2) (Douglas, 2011, p. 330). The person entrusted to carry out duties as a shepherd is someone who has a leadership position. Wongso said that pastoral theology is also called the science of pastoral leadership (Wongso, 2009, p. 12).

Ziglar (2006) states:

*"Do a little more for your business or work, for your best times. Give more time to other people who need your help, give a little more focus to one important change in your life. Take more time to train your mindset, and even give something more to your best attitude and also to planning your future."* (Ziglar, 2006, p. 140)

David Bennett, in *Metaphors of Ministry*, points out that, in the Bible, "The image of the shepherd is one of the few that is applied exclusively to leaders" (Bennett, 1854). Many times in the Old Testament, Yahweh is described as the shepherd of His people (Psalm 23:1; Ezekiel 34:31). In the Gospels, Jesus Christ is described as the good shepherd, the good shepherd is written in the New Testament with the sentence *poimen ho kalos* and in Hebrew New Testament *ha roe ha tov*: There is no better teacher or model of leadership.

## 2. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods because qualitative methods help provide rich descriptions of phenomena. Qualitative research not only fulfills the researcher's desire to get an overview but also helps to get a more in-depth explanation (Sofaer, 1999).

Creswell (2013) mentioned several characteristics of good qualitative research, including:

1. Researchers use procedures to get the right data,
2. Researchers limit research within the assumptions and characteristics of a qualitative approach,
3. Researchers use a qualitative approach in their research,
4. Researchers start research with one focus,
5. Research contains detailed methods, appropriate approaches in data collection, data analysis, and research reports,
6. Researchers analyse data using separation of analysis into several levels,
7. Researchers write persuasively so that readers can feel the same experience.

This research uses a library research approach (Sarwono, 2006). In general, library research is collecting information and data with the help of various kinds of materials in libraries, such as the Bible, books, documents, notes, magazines, journals, and historical stories that relate to the required data and can ultimately be used as a theoretical basis and a means of analysis aligned with the data collected (Sugiyono, 2012). The function of qualitative studies of literature review research becomes important when data from research has been collected so that data and theories can be analysed so that they become relevant for the role of the shepherd based on Psalm 23:1–6.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Pastoral Arts

The art of shepherding is something that must be learned over time and measured by one's followers. The focus of pastoral care is on the person being served and not the person leading or shepherding. Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd and I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for my sheep"* (John 10: 14–15).

Michael Youssef, in his beautiful book, *The Leadership Style of Jesus*, answers the following question: What makes a person a good shepherd?

*"For the shepherd, the reward comes from seeing his sheep content, well-fed, safe, and thriving. His energies were not spent merely on making a reputation for himself but on supplying the sheep with the best grass in the most fertile pastures, on storing food for the winter, and on finding clear water. The good shepherd spares no effort in providing shelter from the storm. They are constantly on guard against cruel enemies, diseases, and parasites to which sheep are so susceptible. From dawn to dusk, these good shepherds selflessly dedicate their days to the well-being of their woolly followers. They don't even rest at night; they sleep with one eye and both ears open, ready to jump and protect their possessions at the slightest sound of trouble."* (Youssef, 1986, pp. 35–36).

The word *pastoral* or *shepherding*, in general, is a service to a group of people who believe in the concept of Christ. According to the New Testament Bible, the word shepherding comes from the Greek verb "to shepherd," namely:

1. **βοσκει** (*boske*; shepherd, found in John 21:15,17).
2. **ποιμναινε** (*poimaine*; shepherd, found in John 21:16) (Putranto, 2002, p. 3).

The word **βοσκει** (*boske*) is an imperative sentence (command sentence) that comes from the verb **βοσκω** (*bosko*), which literally means "to look after and care for and pay attention to a flock of sheep eating grass." Meanwhile, the word **ποιμναινε** (*poimaine*) is an imperative sentence that comes from the verb **ποιμναινο** which literally means "to feed a flock of sheep." So, grazing is not just about feeding but also caring for, nurturing, and paying attention to the sheep that are being grazed.

Apart from the Greek words *boske* and *poimaine*, there are two other words in the New Testament that are also translated as shepherd, namely **επισκοπος** (*episkopos*; overseer or observer) and **πρεσβυτερος** (*presbuteros*; elder). The main guiding verse for the position of the shepherd is Ephesians 4:11 (Hagin, 1992, p. 70).

In his farewell message to the elders of the church in Ephesus, Paul said, "Therefore take care of yourselves and all the flock, for you have been appointed by the Holy Spirit as overseers to shepherd the church of God which He acquired with the blood of His own son" (Acts 20:26). The elders are the shepherds of the congregation (De Pree, 1989, p. 10).

In the early church, they lacked ministers of God. That is why they appoint an elder to oversee a particular congregation. From these elders, God raised up shepherds and overseers. So we have seen

and confirmed that overseer or elder is the same position, namely the position of a shepherd (Hagin, 1992, p. 71).

Signs of a shepherd's extraordinary leadership appear especially among followers. Are followers reaching their potential? Are they studying? Serve? Did they achieve the expected results? Do they change by grace? Resolve conflict? In other words, are the sheep thriving? Are these sheep motivated to grow and carry out the mission of the Lord Jesus so that many souls are won and the church grows? Michael Youseff also said:

*"One of the characteristics of good leaders (pastors) is that they prepare other people (the congregation) to take over. They not only prepare their followers to 'do well' but also prepare the people (congregation) to do everything they do themselves."* (Youssef, 1986)

In the Old Testament, when Jacob reflected on his relationship with God at the end of his eventful life, he spoke of "God who has been my shepherd all the days of my life until now" (Genesis 48:15). This is an extraordinary statement from someone who has experienced the bitterness and sweetness of life, even though most of the bitterness is the result of his own actions. In the Old Testament, they rarely spoke of God as a "Shepherd". Only Genesis 49:24, Psalm 23:1, and Psalm 80:2 are direct references to God by this name, but evidence that they looked to God as their shepherd can be found everywhere in the Old Testament. The image of a shepherd in no way exhausts the breadth of God's ministry to His people. To this picture must be added the picture of God as Father, described in a very moving way in Hosea 11:1–11. God not only calls His people to freedom (verse 1), but He also pours out upon them the love, longing, pride, and gentleness that characterise the love of parents for their newborn children (Tidball, 1998, p. 36).

### 3.2. The Shepherd's Role is to "Guard" the Sheep

The role of the pastor in "guarding" his congregation is a must. The shepherd must not be far from his sheep and know his sheep. The role of a shepherd is very important. He not only meets the needs of the sheep by giving them food and drink but also protects them from enemy threats. The shepherd always looks after his sheep; that is why, from the sheep's side, he will feel safe as long as he is beside his shepherd. David said: *"I am not afraid of danger, because you are with me or guard me."* (Psalm 23:4). Guarding means waiting, protecting, nurturing, supervising, and maintaining the safety of his sheep. David realised that his relationship with Yahweh was not a symbiotic relationship of mutualism, a mutually beneficial relationship between two parties. David's relationship with God far exceeded David's own needs, and that is what is called intimacy. David wanted to explain that Yahweh, who he described as the shepherd, was the God who always guided David's life, always walked with him, and fulfilled whatever his needs were.

#### 3.2.1. Make Sure the Sheep are not Afraid

The shepherd is always with his sheep. The goal is so that the sheep are not afraid and so that the sheep feel safe. The word "not afraid", written in Psalm 23:4, is taken from the Hebrew *lo ira*, (no, not—the negative particle).

1. *qal*: to fear
2. *niph*: to be afraid
3. *piel*: to terrify
4. (2) *qal*: to shoot w/arrows
5. *hiph*: to shoot
6. *hoph*: to be watered—verb *qal* imperfect 1<sup>st</sup> person common singular homonym.

The weapons used by shepherds at that time were clubs and sticks. The function of clubs and sticks was as weapons against wild animals and weapons against enemies or people who wanted to steal their sheep. The phrase "I am not afraid" describes that the sheep feel safe in the protection and care of the shepherd. And that is the role of the shepherd so that all his sheep do not feel afraid, whether in the pasture or in the pen. In the New Testament, Jesus watches over his sheep or those who believe in him so that they do not perish (John 17:12). The Lord Jesus watches over his sheep or those who believe in him, so that they remain one, just as the Father and Jesus are one (John 10:30, 17).

The shepherd looks after his sheep and always carries a mace and stick. The mace serves as a shepherd's weapon to protect the sheep from predators who try to attack the flock. While the stick generally has a curve, it is used to pat gently so that the sheep do not deviate from the flock.

#### 3.2.2. Carrying a Mace

To maintain security, both for the safety of the sheep and for the safety of the shepherd himself, the shepherd carries a club and a staff. The aim of this is to ward off wild animals that will pounce on and devour the sheep, be they lions, bears, wolves, and wild animals. Clubs and sticks were not only



used to ward off wild animals, but were also used to fight people who wanted to steal their sheep. The word *gada-mu* uses the word <sup>ij.b.vi</sup> (sivtekha) from the root word *jb,ve* (shevet) in the form of the noun common masculine singular construct suffix 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular. Nouns in a singular masculine community express something that is absolutely real. The mace is described with the word *Thy rod*, which means “His stem.” *Rod* in the Indonesian English Dictionary means (1) stalk, fishing rod, (2) whip, (3) beam, and (4) measure of 5.02 meters. 36 Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary defines *Rod* as a long, thin, straight piece of wood or metal (Bull, 2009). Meanwhile, KS-ILT uses the word *entertaining* to explain mace. A mace is an object owned by a shepherd to protect his sheep. Barth and Claire (2009) wrote that a shepherd defended his possessions against opponents using his club. A mace is a weapon that is usually made of wood covered with steel. The mace (short stick) became a weapon of defense or discipline, symbolising Yahweh's strength, power and authority (Gen. 21:20; Job 9:34). From the basic material of this mace and also its size, the mace can be said to be a strong object, resistant to enemy attacks when Yahweh acted to protect His people, who could resist, Like a shepherd protecting his sheep. Yahweh's protection is truly real for His people. Protection can be expressed through correct teaching. Currently, there are many false teachings that seem to be the Word of Yahweh. A pastor must provide true teaching according to the word (1 Timothy 4:16). The goal is so that the congregation does not go astray and the congregation's faith continues to be strengthened and grow.

### 3.2.3. Carrying a Stick

The shepherd uses a staff to guide and protect his sheep. Likewise, Yahweh uses His power and authority to protect His people from the enemies and dangers they face. The word for your stick uses the original language *umisantekha* particle conjunction *waw*, meaning “and”, which functions to express parallelism or connection. 39 Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary translates staff with the words All the workers employed in an organisation are considered as a group (All the workers employed in an organisation are treated as one group). In the KJV, the word support (of every kind) means support of all kinds. KS-ILT describes the stick with the word comfort (Bull, 2009). So, staff here can be interpreted as a tool that helps the shepherd to shepherd. Yahweh has a staff that guides the people of His pasture. It is His staff that provides direction, guidance and a way for His shepherd's people to lead a righteous life in Yahweh. To protect the sheep from predators, the shepherd will carry two tools, a staff and a club in Psalm 23:4, one weapon shaped like a club and the other shaped like a hook used for protection. A stick is literally a piece of stick carried or used by someone who travels, shepherds and elders (Gen. 32:10; Ps. 23:4; Zech. 8:4). Metaphorically, the rod symbolises power, both human (Gen.49:10) and divine (Aaron's rod). A rod (a long, slender stick with one end curved) was used to bring the sheep closer to the shepherd, guide them on the right path or save them from trouble. With a long staff, He guides His friends, gives signs to go forward or stop, points the way, and warns the sheep who want to stay away. 42 This staff is very useful for shepherds. Henry wrote Your rod and Your staff, which refer to the shepherd's staff, or to the staff under which the sheep passed when they were counted (Lev. 27:32), or to the staff with which the shepherd drove away the wolves that would scatter or frighten the sheep. The shepherd is referred to as the owner of the staff, a symbol of his authority. With the rod, he would discipline his sheep, checking whether they were sick and also defending and protecting them. The shepherd's rod is the same as the king's rod. The basis of his authority does not lie in his position but in his abilities, which in turn are determined by his ability to show empathy because his sheep cannot communicate with him. Therefore, the task of the shepherd requires a subtle combination of authority and care. A pastor has a staff, namely the Word Lord. The rod makes it easier for the shepherd to carry out his task well and direct his sheep to the right path (2 Timothy 3:16).

A good shepherd, when he looks after his sheep and sees that his sheep are lost or his congregation never goes to church again, then the shepherd will search until he finds them because one congregation is very valuable in front of the shepherd because from this one sheep, will give birth to new sheep or the sheep will reproduce.

### 3.2.4. Your Rod and Your Staff, Comfort Me

The word comfort in the original language uses the word *yenakhamuni*, which means to comfort (pleasure/comfort) in the form of the verb piel imperfect 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix 1<sup>st</sup> person common singular. A 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural masculine verb that expresses an action that is currently occurring and will continue to actively occur. Some versions use the word comfort. Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary translates comfort as making someone feel less unhappy or worried (make someone feel less unhappy or worried) (Bull, 2009). Preiffer and Harrison (2009) explain that it is the guidance of the shepherd that comforts me, strengthens me, and gives certainty to my life. Thus, Yahweh comforted the people He brought home from exile (Isaiah 40:1, 10–11). Likewise, Jesus called the Spirit, whom He would send, the Comforter (John 16:7). 45 A pastor must always be ready to provide comfort to

the congregation. Whatever the situation in life, the most important thing is how the role of a shepherd provides comfort and motivation to the injured, injured, and those who have experienced disaster. This is a characteristic of the shepherd's role in looking after his sheep or the congregation he shepherds (Preiffer & Harrison, 2009).

### 3.2.5. *Why do Sheep or Congregations Need to be Looked After?*

First, so they will not be afraid, Psalm 23:4a says: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil, for you are with me." The world is full of challenges, and congregations may face health, financial, or relationship problems at any time. This is what is called the "valley of darkness" in life! The good news is, in the valley of darkness, we "walk", not "stay" or "stop". This shows that the valley of darkness is "temporary"! There is an expiration date for every believer's problem. The challenges that congregations face today may be insignificant tomorrow. When walking in the valley of the shadow of death, the sheep is not left alone. Yahweh, the good shepherd, is always "with" His sheep. God is ready to help and save His beloved sheep. This is a guarantee that every problem, no matter whether it is heavy or light, will be resolved! The Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, also promises that He will be with us always until the end of time or all time. (Matthew 28:20)

The sheep or congregation are not always in the valley of darkness because they only pass through it, and they are safe because they pass through the valley of darkness or the valley of the shadow of death together with the shepherd. No danger can threaten their lives if the sheep walk with God. God will guard and protect them.

Second, Why do sheep need to be looked after so that they can be comforted? Psalm 23:4b says: "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." The club and staff symbolise Father Yahweh's presence and protection. When the sheep see their shepherd carrying the club and staff, the hearts of the sheep feel comforted and calm. In another verse, David says: "Show me a sign of goodness so that those who hate me will see and be ashamed because You have helped and comforted me, O Yahweh" (Psalm 86:17 (ILT3)). Not only David but the prophet Isaiah also felt comfort from Yahweh; Isaiah 49:13 (ILT3) says: "Sing, O heavens, and rejoice O earth, let out a shout, O mountains, for Yahweh, has comforted His people and will have mercy on His poor people." The congregation is not afraid or scattered and does not seek refuge elsewhere; the pastor must "guard" them. The role of a shepherd is critical; he not only fulfils the needs of the sheep by giving them food and drink but also protects the sheep from threats from enemies, threats from wild animals, threats from false teachers, false teachers and false prophets.

### 3.2.6. *Role of the Shepherd: Caring for the Sheep*

The role of the pastor (opus dei) is to "look after" the congregation or the sheep entrusted to him by God. To maintain means to look after and take good care of, to maintain from the word (maintain), which also means endeavour; educate well; save, protect and deliver or escape from danger (Harianto et al., 2023). God calls a pastor to lead the congregation entrusted to him and not to own it. The pastor must have the opinion that the congregation he shepherds are people who are very valuable in the eyes of God, just like the Lord Jesus Christ, who considered the lost sheep valuable and looked for it and even abandoned the other sheep (Matthew 18:12–14), as follows Also, a pastor must respect the congregations he pastors. A church pastor must understand and pay attention to the needs of his congregation and get to know them more closely because a church pastor's job is to look after every member of the church or what is often called the congregation. Ingouf (2009) emphasises that one of the duties of a pastor is to care for church members so that the congregation they pastor can grow in Christ Jesus (Ingouf, 2009).

The pastor is responsible for cultivating, nurturing, and directing God's people lovingly. The process of caring for a congregation is a form of maturation. David wrote that through the rod and staff, he found comfort because he realised that God was his shepherd who would not allow him to be immature (Psalm 23:1–6). The pastor must allow the congregation to try to solve their problems without dependence on the pastor. The maturation process can be carried out by allowing the congregation to try to deal with its problems. The role of the shepherd is to care for his congregation, based on Psalm 23:3, by guiding them to the right path and providing goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6).

#### 3.2.6.1. *Guiding the Sheep to the Right Path*

Psalm 23:3 says, "He leads me on the right path." Yahweh Guides the Steps of His people; David said, "He guides me", meaning Yahweh directs David's steps along His chosen path. So personal was this divine guidance, as if David were the only sheep in His care. These "paths" are represented in the plural, indicating their comprehensive nature. It covers every area of David's life, including his personal, family, and work life. No part of his life is excluded from this "path." Every choice and action he took had to be done on a clearly marked route.

The same thing applies to the life of Christians or sheep. Every step of life's journey must be on God's path. There are no shortcuts or alternative routes, whether the congregation is at home, at work, or with family, so the pastor always leads on the right path.

"Leading in the Path of Righteousness", Yahweh's guidance is always on the path of "righteousness". This represents practical righteousness or personal holiness. David knew that Yahweh would never lead him into sin. Instead, he would be directed away from evil, David could never blame God for any moral failures in his life. Responsibility and accountability always lie at one's own feet.

When David fell into sin with Bathsheba, his decision was certainly not the result of Yahweh's leadership. This intentional act of sin was David choosing to go his own way, deviating from the "way of truth" determined by God.

"In His name's sake," David declares that God guides His sheep "for His name's sake." In the Bible, a person's "name" represents their entire being. This is a summary of their character and reputation. This says that everything God does is to magnify His own "name." This self-exaltation of His greatness is His highest motive. Ultimately, everything God does is to glorify Himself.

Specifically, Yahweh is glorified when people follow His leadership in "the way of righteousness." His "name" is exalted when His character is manifested in people's lives. Seeing His holy character reflected in His people shows His glory.

At the same time, whatever most glorifies Yahweh produces the greatest good for people. These two realities, God's glory and the good his sheep do, never conflict or compete with each other. They work in perfect harmony with each other. That which most glorifies Him is that which works for the greatest good of people.

The true path, or path of truth, is marked by the Scriptures. John 17:17 says: "Your word is truth." The real "way of truth" that leads to the Father in heaven is Jesus (John 14:6).

#### 3.2.6.2. *Providing Food for the Sheep*

The role of the shepherd in caring Apart from guiding his sheep or the congregation to the right path, he must also provide food for his sheep (Psalm 23:5). Sheep are sometimes released into the pasture to eat the grass directly in the green pasture but during the rainy season or winter, the sheep cannot be outside to look for food; they have to stay inside. When the sheep are in the pen, the shepherd provides food or food for them. The word prepare in the original language uses the word ta'arokh, which means to prepare. In the verb form, Qal is imperfect 2nd person masculine singular. The verb that expresses an action that is not fully completed means "will", an action that is in progress or an action that will be expressed (Preiffer & Harrison, 2009). The NIV uses the word prepare.

Meanwhile, the KJV uses prepare to arrange things. The psalmist introduces a second metaphor to further express the belief. The atmosphere changes to show the psalmist as an honoured guest in Yahweh's house, enjoying the hospitality characteristic of the East. He is under God's protection. In these verses, the psalmist shows his close relationship with Yahweh. Barth and Pareira write that the psalmist was received as a guest: a banquet was provided, and dishes were prepared (literally: table/dining mat). Anderson said You have provided for me everything that concerns life and godliness. Everything is important for both body and soul for now and eternity. External things do not limit the relationship and are not limited by time. But everything is eternal, not limited by anything. A pastor is serving, not being served. Service is not only done now or when in church, but the scope of service is broad and not limited by space and time. The pastor must prepare the best spiritual and physical dishes for the congregation (Anderson, 1972).

"You prepared a meal for me, in front of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5). David's statement shows that Yahweh, as the shepherd, provided a meal for him in front of his opponents. In the King James Version, the word "enemies" is in the plural form (enemies = enemies)! This shows that sheep really have a lot of enemies! Being a Christian and a righteous person does not mean that they will be loved by everyone! On the contrary, there will be many people who will be hostile and opposed to them because they follow, obey, and serve God! For example, in Paul's life, even though he was a very pious apostle, he experienced a lot of hostility and opposition (Acts 24:5).

Notice the words "pestilence" in Acts 24:5. The Greek word used is "loimon", which can mean pestilence, epidemic, or disturbance. That's why the NIV translates "troublemaker", which means "mess-maker". The facts show that wherever Paul was, there was chaos (Acts 9–28). However, Paul did not cause chaos; he only preached the good news of the Gospel, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. The chaos can come from outside or from within; remember that in Jesus' group, there was Judas Iscariot! All this shows that in the sheep's life, there are many scary things. But the sheep still must not be afraid because:

First, The Shepherd will accompany and protect us, in Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of darkness, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

Second, Yahweh can bless us in the midst of difficulties and enemies. Psalm 23:5: “You have prepared a meal for me, in the presence of my enemies; You anointed my head with oil; My cup is overflowing.”

Who was David's opponent? They were people who, in various ways, wanted David's destruction. They were a threat ready to ruin David's life. But what did Yahweh do for David in such a situation? He provided food for David, David trusted Yahweh to look after him, Yahweh protected him, and Yahweh looked after him in the perfection of His love and faithfulness. Providing a meal in front of opponents is an expression of Yahweh's perfect care for His sheep or His congregation. David believed that Yahweh would never leave him; in fact, he would always reveal His miraculous, steadfast love (Simpson, 2005).

How calm and peaceful would this life be if we could live a life like David's? Trusting Yahweh and then entrusting our whole life to Him. Everything that happens in the lives of sheep can never be separated from God's intervention. And His intervention always brings goodness to His pet sheep, even when the sheep feel their lives are under threat; when there are those who, in various ways, plan the destruction of His people, believe and entrust our lives to Yahweh, then He will guard and nurturing in His perfect love.

Yahweh is preparing a meal for the sheep to enjoy in the presence of their enemies. Providing food can include serving, entertaining, giving wisdom, uplifting, restoring, exalting and blessing. And all this was done in front of the enemies of His church. They will see for themselves that sheep will be healed of illnesses, blessed financially, restored from broken relationships, accepted and loved by people who once rejected them, reunited with people they love, promoted in their careers, and experienced breakthroughs in life. Businesses experiencing a doubling in harvest or employment are being treated preferentially and placed in a place and position of honour. When the congregation relies on God, He is the one who will “fight” for his sheep until his enemies fall under his feet (Matt. 22.44). Therefore, do not be afraid of facing many enemies or problems because Yahweh will provide a meal for His sheep or His beloved people in the face of His enemies.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd, also provides food or necessities needed by His disciples. In Matthew 6:31–33 (ILT), the Lord Jesus said:

“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What will we eat, or what will we drink, or what will we wear, because the Gentiles are after all these things, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. However, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

The role of the shepherd is to care for his sheep or the congregation he shepherds by anointing his head with oil so that his cup will overflow. The word anoint is the word distant, which uses the English words to make fat, which means to make fat, and thou anointest means to anoint, give ointment, or give holy anointing ceremonies in the verb form, piel perfect second person masculine singular. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular verb expresses an action that has been actively carried out in the past. The NIV uses the word anoint, while in the KJV, it is a fat. Preiffer and Harrison confirmed that his head was anointed with perfume. Every need is satisfied in full. Based on this belief, every moment of his life will be full of Yahweh's abundant blessings. The greatest blessing will be intimate fellowship with Yahweh through constant worship of Him (Selderhuis, 2007). Life experience in Yahweh's blessing has been established since ancient times. Barth and Pareira also emphasise his head being anointed with olive oil according to the custom for the holiday (Ecclesiastes. 9:8; Psalm. 133:2; Matthew. 26:7; the same custom was known in Ancient Egypt) and his chalice being filled repeatedly with wine, so that it abounds (Ecclesiastes. 9:7; Psalm. 36:9).

It is clear that this anointing has occurred before. When someone has been anointed, the guarantee of God's blessing and care will continue to be real for Yahweh's shepherd people. For example, a prophet and judge in the Old Testament era was Samuel, who anointed David. Samuel anointed him king, which was a sure sign of the blessings he would receive. A pastor is given the task of blessing the congregation. The pastor is Yahweh's representative who continues to bring the congregation to Yahweh. When someone believes in Yahweh, then he receives a guarantee of safety from Yahweh. A shepherd is tasked with bringing the sheep or congregation towards maturity in Yahweh and blessing every life of the congregation.

### 3.2.6.3. Give Kindness and Mercy (Psalm 23:6)

The phrase “mere goodness and mercy will follow me” often expresses the idea that Yahweh's love and protection are always present, even in times of difficulty and misery. This verse continues to be a source of comfort and inspiration for believers. The meaning of this phrase can be interpreted in several ways. Some believe that it refers to the idea that God's blessings and goodness will always be present in their lives, no matter their challenges. Others interpret it as a promise of protection and guidance from Yahweh, who will always be there to guide them on the right path.



The phrase “goodness and mercy will follow me” is a powerful reminder of the eternal nature of Father Yahweh’s love and grace. This verse speaks about God’s never-ending love and concern for His people, who will always follow them and guide them to eternity. The phrase “will follow me” shows that these blessings are present at this time and will continue throughout one’s life journey. This speaks of Yahweh’s never-ending nature of love and care, which is not limited by time or circumstances.

The phrase “goodness and mercy will follow me” is a strong statement of faith in God’s care and protection. It speaks of His unending nature of love and concern for His people.

The phrase “Goodness and mercy will follow me” is a promise of Father Yahweh’s protection. The word “follow” in this context means to pursue. Thus, this verse declares that God’s goodness and mercy will always accompany, pursue, and protect believers from danger.

The phrase “Goodness and mercy will follow me” also conveys the assurance of God’s love and care. The word “virtue” refers to Yahweh’s goodness towards His people. The words “mercy or mercy” refer to God’s mercy and forgiveness towards His people. “Goodness and mercy will follow me” is a powerful reminder of Yahweh’s love, protection, and care for His people. It offers the assurance of God’s presence and care in the lives of those who believe in Him, whatever the challenges they face; believers can take comfort in the knowledge that God’s goodness and mercy are always with them, pursuing them and providing for them.

Psalm 23:6 writes, “Mere goodness and mercy will follow me.” The word virtue comes from the Hebrew *tov*, (1) a good thing, benefit, welfare, (2) pleasant, agreeable, good—noun common masculine singular absolute homonym. Moreover, the word “mercy” from Hebrew means and, so, then, now, or, but, that—particle conjunction, and the word “mercy” from Hebrew *khesed*, goodness, kindness—noun common masculine singular absolute homonym. Virtue and mercy are evidence of the shepherd’s love for the sheep, as his sheep or proof of Yahweh’s love for His people. The role of a good shepherd is always to provide mercy and goodness to his sheep. He must give this goodness and mercy throughout the life of his sheep or forever. With confidence in Yahweh’s mercy, David rejoices, being grateful for the present and anticipating the future when he will return and live in Yahweh’s house, forever meaning long days that depict eternity. The psalmist believes he will forever be with Yahweh, who always gives him goodness and mercy.

The psalmist David personally experienced how good Yahweh as a Shepherd was to him. David was a shepherd in his youth, and he often had to face wild animals to guard and defend his flock. David felt he was like a sheep being looked after by a good shepherd, namely Yahweh. This verse applies to David and all the “flock” of the Great Shepherd. In John 10:11, the Lord Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd.” This statement makes it even more apparent that Jesus declared Himself as Yahweh, who is described as a shepherd in the Old Testament, both in the Psalms and the book of Isaiah.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

First, The book of Psalm 23 is a popular chapter among Christians. This article, which consists of six verses, is often discussed in church sermons. Not only that, this article was also used as a hymn. Psalm 23 itself is contained in the Old Testament, the chapter with the passage “Yahweh is my shepherd” (ILT). This describes Yahweh’s inclusion and help for His sheep or His chosen people. Psalm 23 contains great meaning for every Christian. The sentence “Yahweh is my shepherd” was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. In John 10:11, the Lord Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd”. The Lord Jesus is the good shepherd; He knows his sheep, and the sheep know Him. Just as Yahweh’s Father knew Jesus and Jesus knew His Father (John 10:15).

Second, the role of the shepherd in “shepherding” his sheep or the congregation he shepherds is very important because without shepherding, the sheep become wild. Shepherding really determines the life of the congregation. Pastoring congregation members means understanding them in their daily lives, both in the family, in society, in the nation and state, in the church, and in the world of work.

The role of the shepherd in “looking after” his sheep or the congregation he shepherds is very useful. David said: “I am not afraid of danger because You are with me or guarding me.” (Psalm 23:4). Guarding means waiting, protecting, nurturing, supervising and maintaining the safety of his sheep. Why do sheep or congregations need to be looked after? First, so that they are not afraid, Psalm 23:4a says: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear any evil, for you are with me.” Second, so that the sheep may be comforted, Psalm 23:4b says: “Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

The role of the shepherd in looking after his sheep or the congregation he shepherds is very necessary; looking after means trying, taking good care, educating well, saving, protecting, and delivering or escaping from danger. The role of the shepherd is to care for his congregation, based on Psalm 23:3, by guiding them to the right path, besides also providing goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6).

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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