

Psalm 23:1 The Illusion of Deprivation

A Psalm of David

Yahweh is my shepherd. I shall never lack

When it came to shepherding, David knew what he was talking about. Starting as a youth, he was responsible for the care of his family's sheep. Undoubtedly, he'd watched other young men take on similar roles for their families and could evaluate the quality of their work by the condition of their sheep. Now a man, David wrote this Psalm to describe how carefully his God shepherds *him*. He uses his own shepherding experience to illustrate God's care.

Defining Deprivation

Most English versions translate the first verse of this Psalm as “the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” But David (the author of this Psalm) uses more vivid language. He says, *Yahweh* is my shepherd, I shall ***never lack***. Never? Yes. Never. Circumstances may change, but God's shepherding heart never goes cold. Whatever the situation, David's shepherd never allowed him to lose what he needed to carry out God's plans for his life.

“I shall not lack” seemingly contradicts the world that surrounded David as well as the world that surrounds us today. David experienced situations that robbed him of comfort, status, respect, and stability. He fled to a cave to hide from the murderous wrath of King Saul. David's family relationships were fraught with rebellion, danger, death, and agitation. His own sin led to the death of his child. His fervent prayers did not save the child's life. This David - no stranger to pressure, loss, and tragedy- is the same David who wrote that he never lacked.

Centuries later, the apostle Paul – also no stranger to troubles, voiced the same truth: “And my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Both Paul and David Paul understood the vast chasm between loss deprivation. Neither equated suffering and deprivation. Both knew the God who carefully shepherds each of His sheep.

A FEW QUESTIONS

- How about you? Is Jesus your shepherd? Have you asked Him to shepherd you?
- Do you ever feel deprived? What triggers that feeling?
- How do you react when you sense you've been short-changed?
- Do you differentiate between loss and deprivation? How?
- Do you trust God's care for you?