

## “He Leads Me Beside Quiet Waters”

- 👁 **Dew on the grass**
- 👁 **Deep wells**
- 👁 **Springs and streams**

In the name of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, dear sheep:

Did you know that sheep are 70% water? Have you heard that sheep can go for months without actually drinking water if their shepherd knows when and where to lead them? Did you know a shepherd sometimes has to dig his own wells, but that sheep are often afraid to drink from them? And how about the sheep that prefer polluted water? Let’s discover the significance of our soul-satisfying Shepherd: **“He Leads Me Beside Quiet Waters.”** Jesus knows there is healthy water in the **Dew on the grass**. He provides water clean and pure in **Deep wells**. He scouts **Springs and streams**. Skillfully He leads me.

### 👁 **Dew on the grass**

Ever tried walking on the grass in early morning? Soaking feet for you! Now look closely at the silvery droplets of dew. That’s a prime source of pure water for sheep. Shepherd Phillip Keller says sheep can go for months without actually drinking as long as the grass is heavy with dew. A good shepherd will rise early or stay out in the moonlight to let his sheep enjoy the **Dew on the grass**.

In your Christian life have you discovered the **Dew on the grass**? Isaiah the prophet described this for his own soul: The LORD **“wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.”** (50:4 NIV84). What sweet serenity comes from this “quiet time” in the early morning stillness. Men and women of faith drink in God’s Word, reading, then meditating on it through the day.

“In my mind’s eye, I can see my flock again. The gentleness, stillness and softness of early morning always found my sheep knee deep in dew drenched grass. There they fed heavily and contentedly. As the sun rose and its heat burned the dewdrops from the leaves, the flock would retire to find shade. There, fully satisfied and happily refreshed, they would lie down to rest and ruminate through the day. Nothing pleased me more.”<sup>2</sup>

And so my Master finds pure delight as I rise early in His Word. He wants to tell me my sins are forgiven, that yesterday is forgotten, that His promises and compassion are new again this morning, that His mercies never fail. In early morning stillness my Shepherd **“Leads Me Beside Quiet Waters.”**

### 👁 **Deep wells**

There can be no doubt that human souls are thirsty. Just look at the multitude of ways people try to satisfy their need for meaning in life. Some plunge into sports, work, or family in hopes of finding purpose and fulfillment. Your heart is a God-shaped vessel. Only God can fill it to quench your soul.

What about us? Would the LORD our Shepherd have to say of us? **“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken**

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, Philip. *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970. Available from NPH, 1-800-662-6022. Also at Amazon / Audible Books. Fourth in Summer Sermon Series by Pastor Mark A. Cordes.

<sup>2</sup> Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

*cisterns that cannot hold water.*” (Jeremiah 2:13 NIV84) Broken cisterns leave us thirsty and restless as Augustine said, “Our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” The Good Shepherd keeps calling, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* (Matthew 11:28–30 NIV84)

Instead of broken cisterns our Good Shepherd provides **Deep wells** like the ones Keller recalls along East African rivers. Huge caverns were dug into the sandstone with steep paths leading down to cool, clear water. The sheep did not always want to go down into that darkness until they heard their shepherd calling them as he bailed water, skin glistening with sweat under the scorching equatorial sun.

Likewise, it is not always a pleasant experience when the Good Shepherd leads me to quiet waters. They often lie at the bottom of some deep, dark place. I cannot see what’s down there. I can only hear my Shepherd reassuring, calling me by name, “Come, follow me. I’m already here. And I will stay with you. Though you cannot always see the **Deep wells** I am providing, just trust me. I’m working hard to show you my purpose in your life, the one reason you are still on earth: *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.* (John 10:16 NIV84). I want to use you to lead them to the water of life eternal.”

### 👁 Springs and streams

But how often aren’t we like stubborn sheep who refuse to be led? We don’t want to put ourselves under the care of a shepherd as if we know where to find water. One flock kept stopping on the trail as their shepherd tried to lead them to clean, pure mountain **Springs and streams**. But the polluted mud holes along the way were right there. Those sheep did not mind the manure and urine left by passing flocks. They had no way of anticipating their delayed reaction to parasites and liver flukes in the water.

“What foolish sheep,” we say. Yet the ecumenical movement has convinced countless Christians of the same sheepish reasoning: “It doesn’t matter what church you go to,” they insist. “Religion is just interpretation.” Sheep come out of those churches complaining about their experiences, yet many will not allow themselves to be led to the unpolluted **Springs and streams** of God’s pure Word. But can ecumenical reasoning work in real life? Can we allow children to drink from mud holes? If you only drink muddy water, you won’t know any better. Overlooking false doctrine does not seem to hurt anyone, but then comes the delayed reaction as the parasites of error infest the next generation: broken homes, ruined lives, thirsty sheep – sin-dead souls.

But what about finding your own resources? NPH Bill Ziche writes: “As the synod’s publisher, we...see...disturbing changes in the overall Christian publishing world....What people read often reflects ...and...*shapes* what they believe. We know...the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith through God’s Word. We must also acknowledge the evil...Satan can exert through the words of man...[Beware]...of books promoted as “Christian”...today...by news and entertainment sources to dilute the definition of Christianity by categorizing it with other religions or marginalizing it as...‘spirituality’...self-realization, inspiration, self-help prayer procedures....” Code words like “self” describe sheep without a shepherd.

*“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters”* (Isaiah 55:1), says the dear Holy Spirit. Jesus says the Holy Spirit leads us into truth (John 14-17). That’s why we have our own Northwestern Publishing House for pure, clean water in *Meditations* and *Forward in Christ*. Leave behind the mud holes of false teachings and false shepherds as our LORD warns: *“Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”* (Romans 16:17 NIV84) The LORD satisfies our thirst as *“He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.”* (Psalm 103:3 NIV84) Drink in His pure Word and follow Him...**“Beside Quiet Waters.”** Amen.