

**“I Will Dwell in the House of the LORD Forever!”**

- 👁 **What a dwelling!**
- 👁 **One Way in**
- 👁 **Immerdar...**

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

Through the eyes of Christian shepherd Phillip Keller we have seen how Psalm 23 follows a full season in the life of a sheep. From the well-watered pastures of springtime, the shepherd led his flock to summer high country. Now as the early snows drive them down from the mountains, the sheep anticipates going back to the peaceful winter haven of home.

This homecoming reminds me of something the Holy Spirit inspired Isaiah to write (35:10<sup>2</sup>): ***“The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”*** On the Last Day earth’s “pursuit of happiness” will be over, and all believers in Jesus will discover that happiness was always pursuing them. At last happiness will catch up. As surely as Jesus lived and died and lives again, each of Jesus’ sheep can say: **“I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever!”**

👁 **What a dwelling!**

What a year! The sheep has grown so close to his strong, gentle Shepherd, he wants nothing to change. Our Good Shepherd promises: ***“Because he loves me, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*** (Psalm 91:14-16)

Are we as proud to belong to Christ? Can each of us say, “It doesn’t matter where ‘here’ is, as long as Jesus is **dwelling** with me”? After He has helped us ***“in the day of trouble,”*** do we remember to ***“honor”*** Him (Psalm 50:15)? Do we tell our friends how carefully and wonderfully He has protected and provided for us? Or do we stop coming to worship Him as soon as the storm is past?

Our Good Shepherd’s heavenly homecoming will be unlike any on this sin-cursed earth. ***“As it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.”*** (1 Corinthians 2:9f) In the Creator’s ***“new heaven and new earth”*** (Revelation 21) God’s ***“covenant of peace”*** will give absolute security in a land without wild beasts, insects, disease, crop/bank/marriage failures or famines of any kind. No enemies, no threat, no scorn from unbelievers – all thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. These eyes will see God living with us and ruling over us in His own exquisite way. (Ezekiel 34:25-31; 37:24-28). **What a dwelling!**

Jesus assures us: ***“In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am....<sup>6</sup>...“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.”*** (John 14:2-6 EHV). Can you say this with certainty? **“I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever!”** Only if you know the ...

<sup>1</sup> Keller, Philip. *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. (pages in parentheses) Zondervan, 1970. Final in Summer Sermon Series.

<sup>2</sup> Undesignated passages NIV84. EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version, 2017. NPH: 1-800-662-6022. Or at Amazon.

## 👁️ **One Way in**

The sheep across Phillip Keller's fence suffered year round from a heartless master. Infested with disease, parasites and scab, they turned their bony backs to the cold fury of winter wind and looked with longing at the lush pastures on Keller's side. During the extreme tides at Christmas time, they would sneak down the tidal flats and around the exposed end of the fence to finally feast on that rich green grass they had coveted so long. But their decrepit digestive systems would rebel and leave them helpless like limp old sacks. Keller once wheeled three of these pitiful creatures in a wheelbarrow back to their cruel master. Heartlessly that neighbor took out his killing knife and slit their throats. He just did not care.

What a picture of Satan. Countless millions die daily under his cruel ownership. They don't know the **One Way in**. And Satan does everything he can to keep anyone from finding out. We constantly pray for his defeat whenever we say to our heavenly Father, "***Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***"

Sheep entering Jesus' pasture their own way are doomed to a wretched end. If they refuse to come under His control and ownership, being baptized "***in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,***" they sicken their sinful hearts on the Word which they twist rather than believe. In the end the Shepherd of souls can only turn them over to their own deadly desire – like "Mrs. Gad-about." (#1673)

Our time of grace on earth is so vital, seconds numbered. Jesus who says, "***I am the gate for the sheep***" (John 10:7), commands, "***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near***" (Matthew 4:17). We and our children must all repent of quarreling, sinful choices, materialism, greed – before time runs out. "***Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.***" (2 Corinthians 7:10 NIV84) Through the blood of Jesus, our Good Shepherd, heaven's gates open wide. "***Come now, let us reason together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.'***" And this is so helpful: "***In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.***" (Isaiah 1:18; 30:15 NIV84).

Psalm 23 is so much more than awesome poetry. This Hymn of Praise to Divine Diligence brings us to the lush, green pastures of our Good Shepherd's eternal care. On His side of the fence we follow in absolute and earnest certainty: "***I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever(more)!***" Luther's German...

## 👁️ **Immerdar...**

We could say, "I will dwell in the presence of the Lord forever." (Amplified Bible) Our Good Shepherd is always present and the sheep always wants to be in full view of his owner. Recall the Aaronic Blessing: "***The LORD look on you with favor....The LORD turn His face toward you...***" (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV84) "The sheep owner's presence guarantees there will be no lack of any sort;...abundant green pastures;...still, clean waters;...new paths into fresh fields;...safe summers on the high tablelands;...freedom from fear;...antidotes for flies, disease, parasites;...quietness and contentment....A successful Christian walk can be summed up in one sentence. 'Live ever aware of God's presence.'" (144f)

The *Child's Garden Of Song* (out-of-print CPH): *Thou, God, seest me in whatever I do. Oh, make me obedient and loving and true. Help me to treat playmates and friends as I should, and always to do and to say what is good. At work and at play make me happy to know, that Thou seest me wheresoever I go.*

My grandfather once related a war story about this point. When his son, my uncle, returned from the Korean War, he confided in his father that the most comforting thought soothing his soul amid battlefield explosions was this: "Thou, God, seest me." Wherever you go, living in God's presence is peace and tranquility for time and eternity. Emmanuel, God with us...***Immerdar***...forevermore. Amen.