



Psalm 23

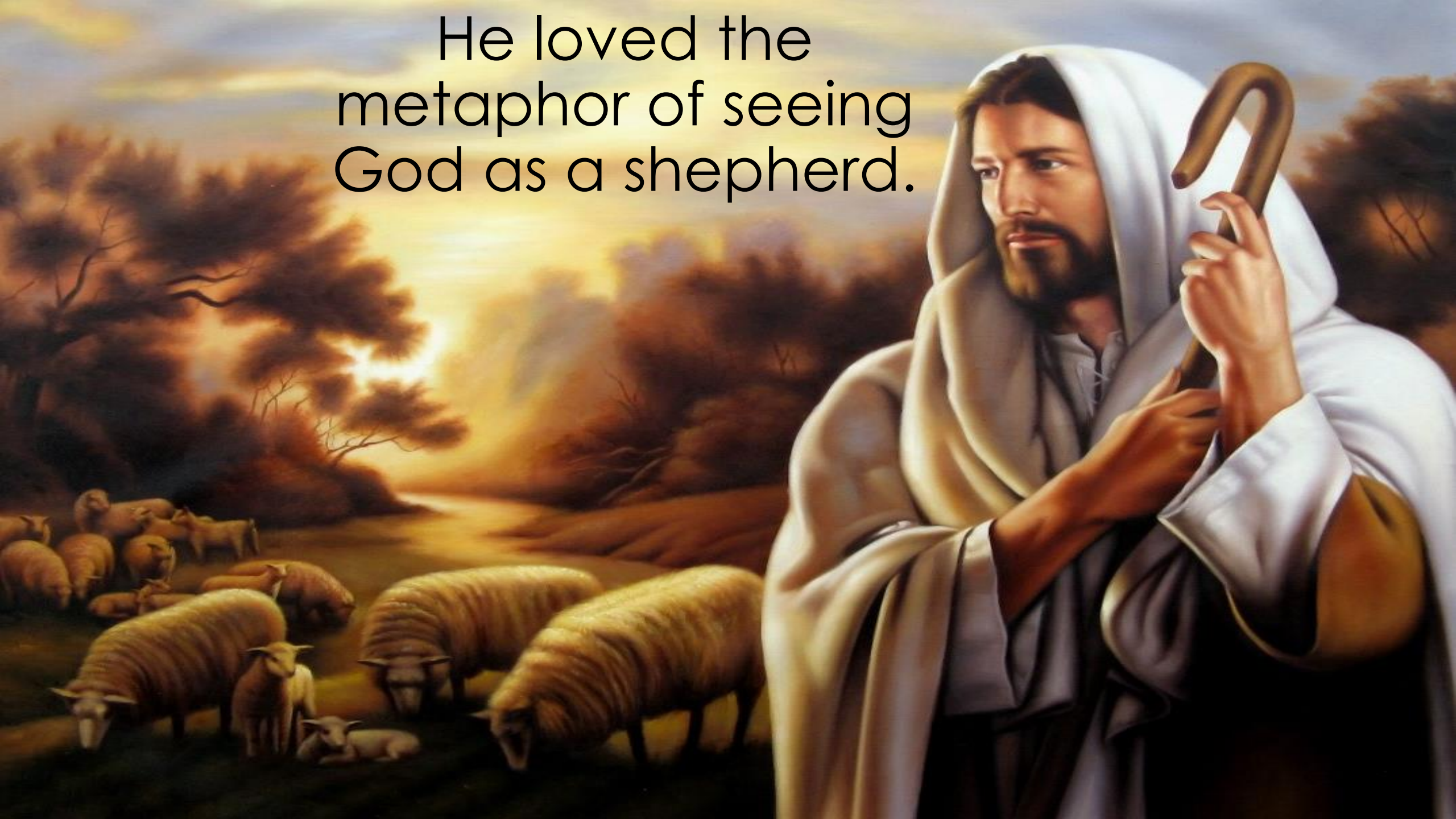
Elements Class

April 3rd 10:45am

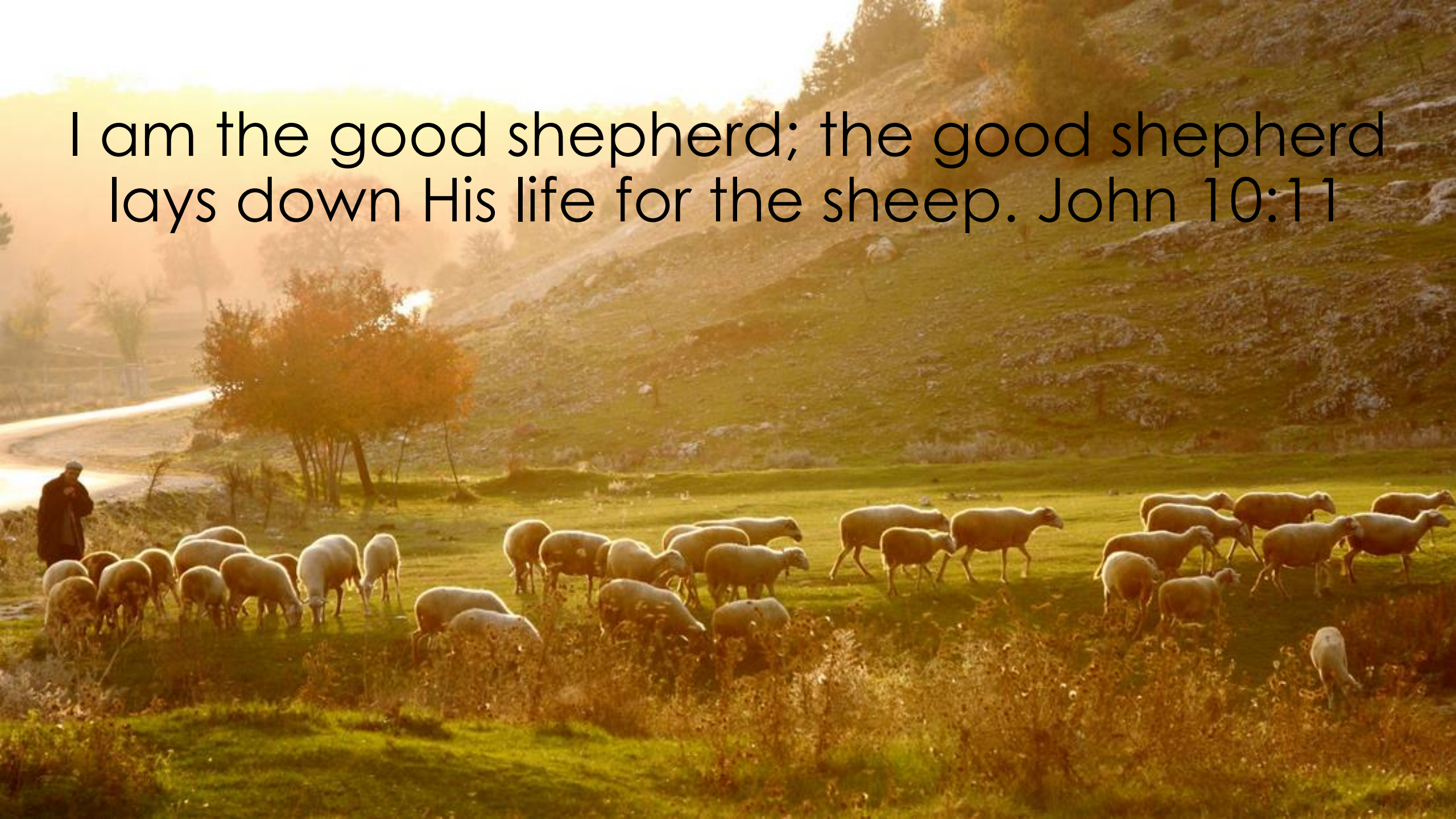


David grew up & worked as a shepherd;
so he is a professional when it comes to
sheep & shepherding.

He loved the
metaphor of seeing
God as a shepherd.



I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd
lays down His life for the sheep. John 10:11



The shepherd's job is to care for his flock, making sure they are safe, nourished and happy. Sheep are vulnerable to danger from wolves and other predators; they cannot run very fast, and they are not always smart enough to avoid danger.



The sheep need a shepherd to take them to fertile areas to graze, to protect them from predators and other hazards, and keep them together so they don't stray from the group.



(1) The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.



The Lord is my shepherd.

The metaphor of the psalm is that God is like a shepherd (*and believers are like sheep*). He helps us to find food, water, work, love, friends and all that we **need**. He also protects us from evil. He also gently (*or firmly*) prods us when we step out of line and **deviate** from the way set in the Bible.

I shall not want.

This is a very powerful statement. David means that those who trust in God will have everything they need if they allow God to be their daily shepherd. We may not have everything we want, but we will be cared for, loved, and provided for very well...

I shall not want.

Most importantly, our Shepherd himself will make it so there is nothing else to be desired, because we have him.

(2) He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.



(3) He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.



***He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.***

Sheep require a lot of green pasture to graze, eat, rest upon and plenty of water to drink. At a basic level, this means that God will **provide** all of our food and other needs.

He restores my soul.

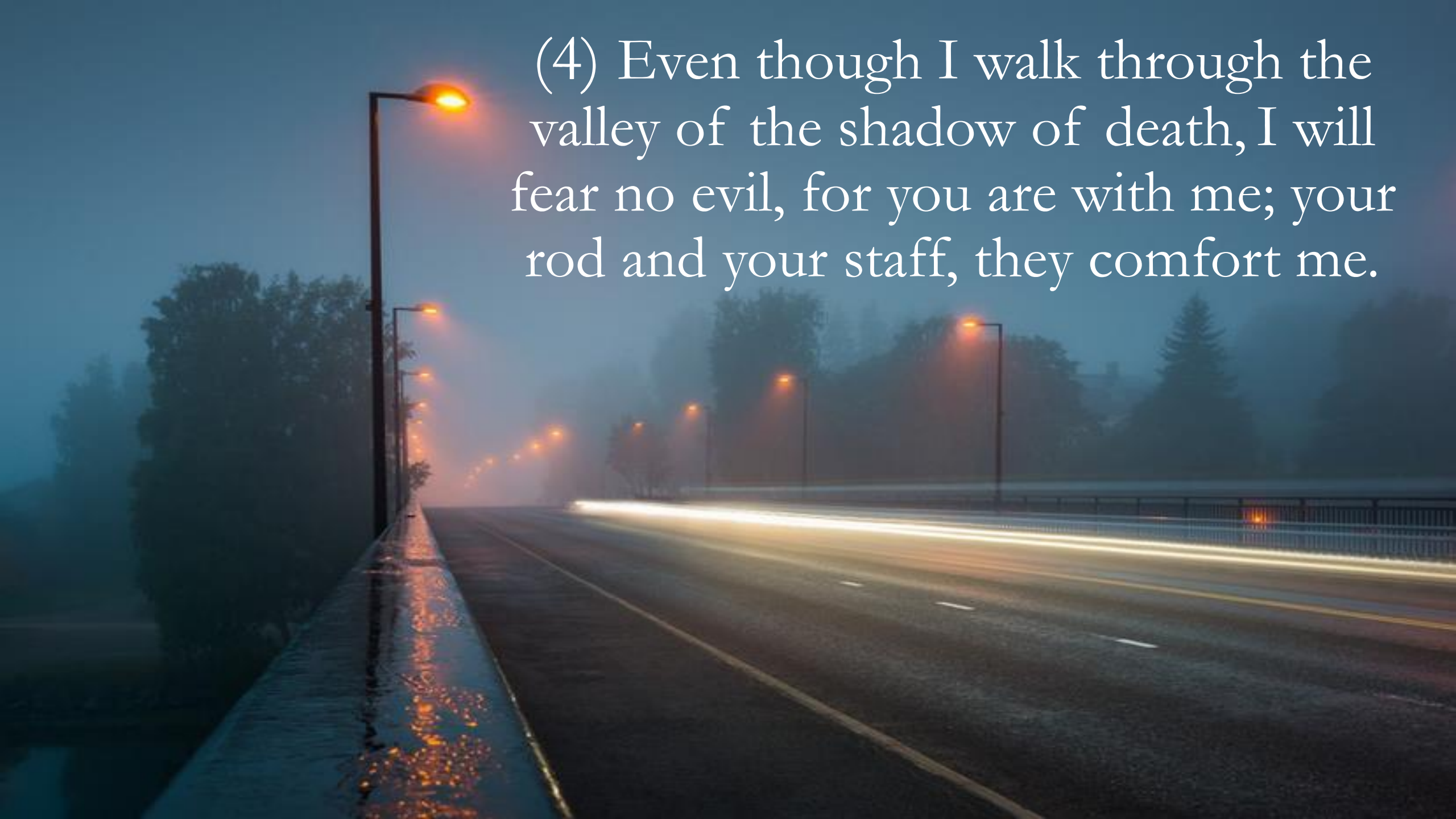
On a deeper level, it means that God provides **nourishment** for the body, the mind and the soul that is wholesome, healthy, and necessary for our growth and **development**.

***He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.***

You are not your own, you **belong** to the shepherd.
Your life exist **for him** and his purposes.

His primary job is to lead you down a path of refinement, a path of obtaining physically/daily what he has already given you spiritually/eternally...his righteousness.

(4) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.



Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...

You may walk in **difficult** territory in your life. In fact, I promise you that you will walk through **much** difficulty during your life! However, you need not fear, for the Lord is with you. He has **promised** never to leave or forsake us. He has promised that he is with us, even until the end of the age.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Shepherds carried a rod and a staff to guide the sheep and to ward off wolves or other predators that would harm the sheep. You may get prodded or pushed, at times, ***and it is for your good.*** It may be for your protection and to keep you on the path. The rod and the staff are in fact there to comfort us by knowing that we are cared for and loved.

(5) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.



***You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies...***

You and I will encounter “enemies”, or forces that do not want us to continue on our journey. They will do anything they can to separate us from the path and the shepherd. God will guide us to victory, even though he tells us that there will be many enemies ever present.

...you anoint my head with oil...

Anointing the head with oil was a practice in biblical days that was used to honor a person and to dignify a person. It means that not only will you be fed or cared for in the presence of your enemies or accusers, but you will be honored and dignified or deeply respected, as well.

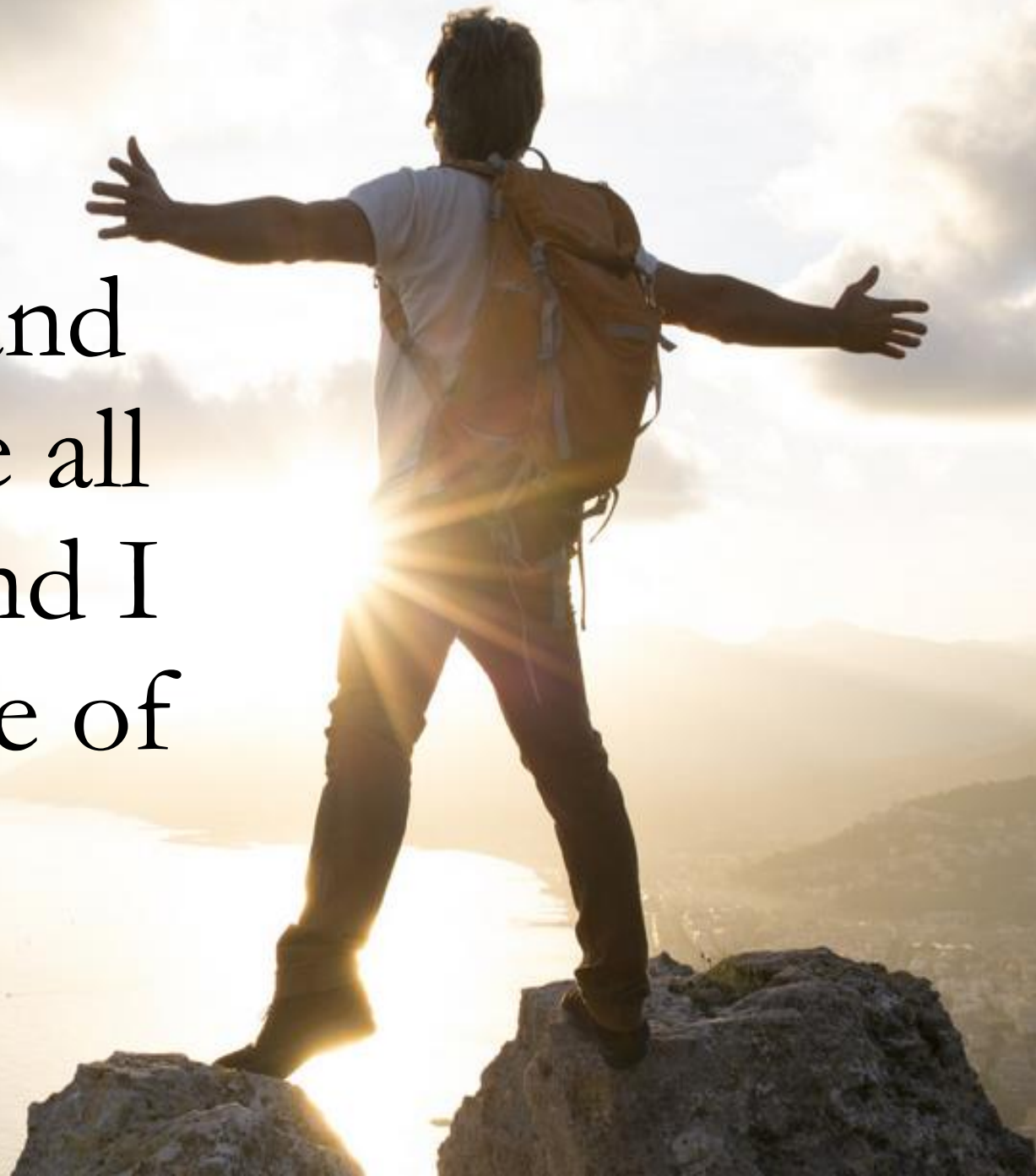
...you anoint my head with oil...

Kings and rulers were anointed as well. David is telling us that our shepherd has the authority to anoint us as Kings and Queens and give us authority to rule...which in fact God will do with believers in the kingdom to come.

...my cup overflows.

This phrase means that I am given even more than I could ever need or could ever use. The words form a very powerful image of a cup of wine that overflows continually because there is so much of it. It means I am truly, abundantly loved and cared for beyond even my needs or wants....hence why “I shall not want”

(6) Surely goodness and
mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life, and I
shall dwell in the house of
the LORD forever.



***Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life...***

This is a statement of future, eternal,
never ending protection, forgiveness, favor
and satisfaction. The word **surely**, means **“certainly”**
or “positively” without a doubt. Without a doubt the
sheep, the believer, will experience goodness and
mercy for always and ever.

Goodness

The word goodness means ‘everything good’ or in real context ‘everything for the good’ of the believer. The ‘good’ the believer is expecting may not match/be in line with the ‘GOOD’ that God knows is best. But one thing is for sure, God is certainly purposing good; holy, righteous, godly good for his sheep-all the days of their eternal existence.

Mercy

The use of the word mercy is interesting. It reveals to us that at times we will sin, or will not think, act or speak correctly (*in line with God*) while here on earth. So this prayer/psalm does not say we will be perfect. Quite the opposite. What it does say is that if we allow the Lord to be our shepherd, or guide we will be treated mercifully and will be forgiven.

Favour

The actual word used (cheched: kheh'-sed) is defined as “covenant loyalty”. So literally David is saying, God’s goodness and mercy, promised in his covenant and based on his faithful character will follow him all the days of his life.

***...and I shall dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.***

The reason that David is confident that goodness & mercy, or happiness & grace will follow him all the days of his life is because he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever...and David has realized that is the only place where true goodness & mercy are.

**...and I shall dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.**

*As with much of this Psalm and others, there is a literal and
figurative interpretation/application to the text.*

(1) Believers will gladly live forever in
the physical house of the Lord that
Christ is preparing for us...

***...and I shall dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.***

(2) But also it means to keep one's attention focused on the Lord, living in moment by moment faith in the word of God, submitting to the will of God's. The words "to dwell" means "to abide", which means to remain, to reside, to be one with. Just as Jesus said "abide in me." And this abiding will ensure that goodness & mercy will follow...

***Abiding with the Shepherd **leads to →**
goodness and mercy.***

It would be easy to over look that David is saying throughout the Psalm that: following the shepherd, listening to his leading voice etc. is the very way that the sheep are lead into goodness and mercy.

*Abiding with the Shepherd **is** →
the goodness & mercy.*

The goodness and mercy we receive as believers
is actually the ability, permission, access
to abide with God, the shepherd.
That is the good thing.

God is the Gospel...

The truth is that God is the greatest good, of all the good things that the gospel (the cross etc) accomplished/purchased for us...and when we finally realize this and partake...our cup will run over.