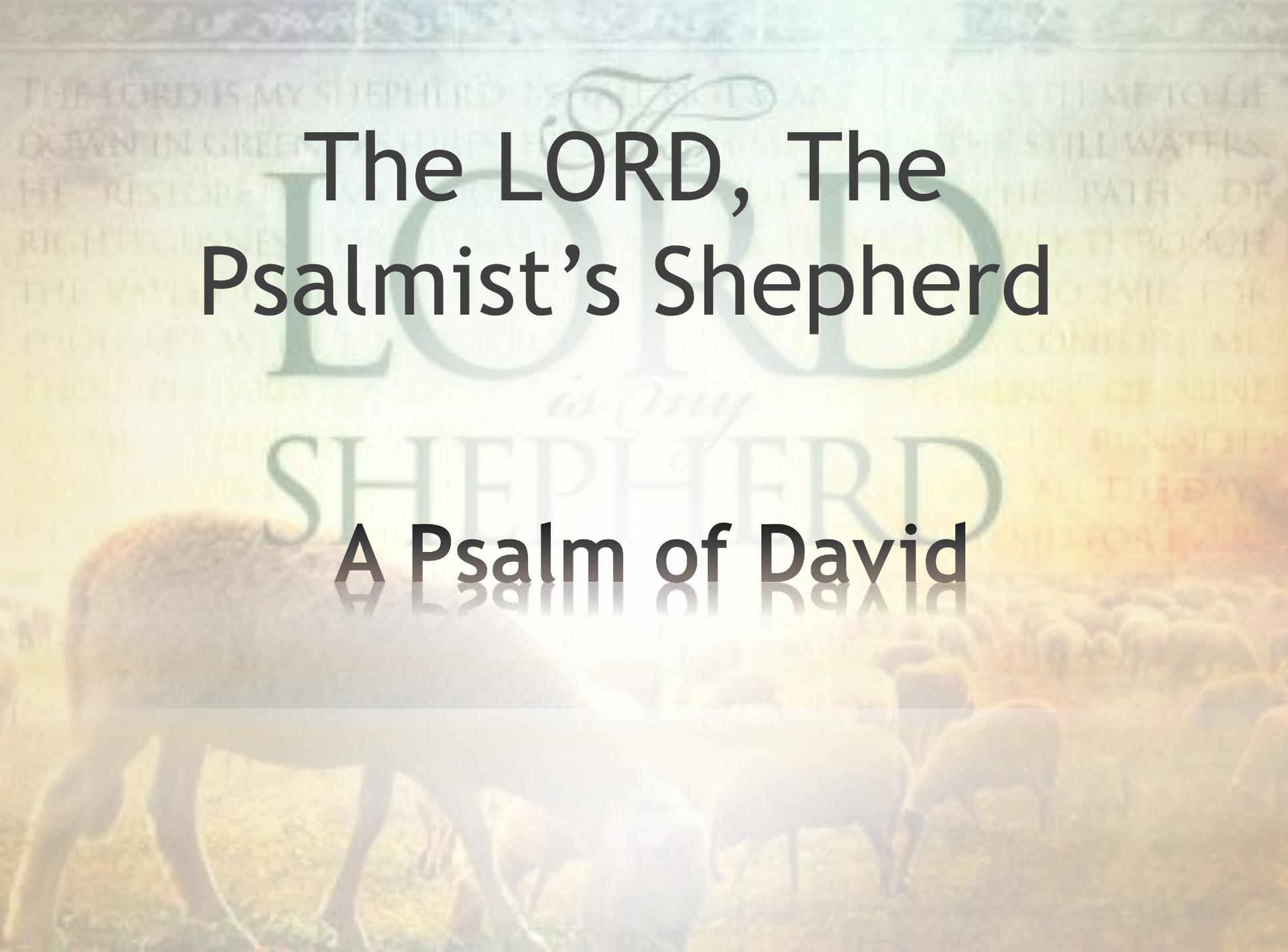


Psalm 23

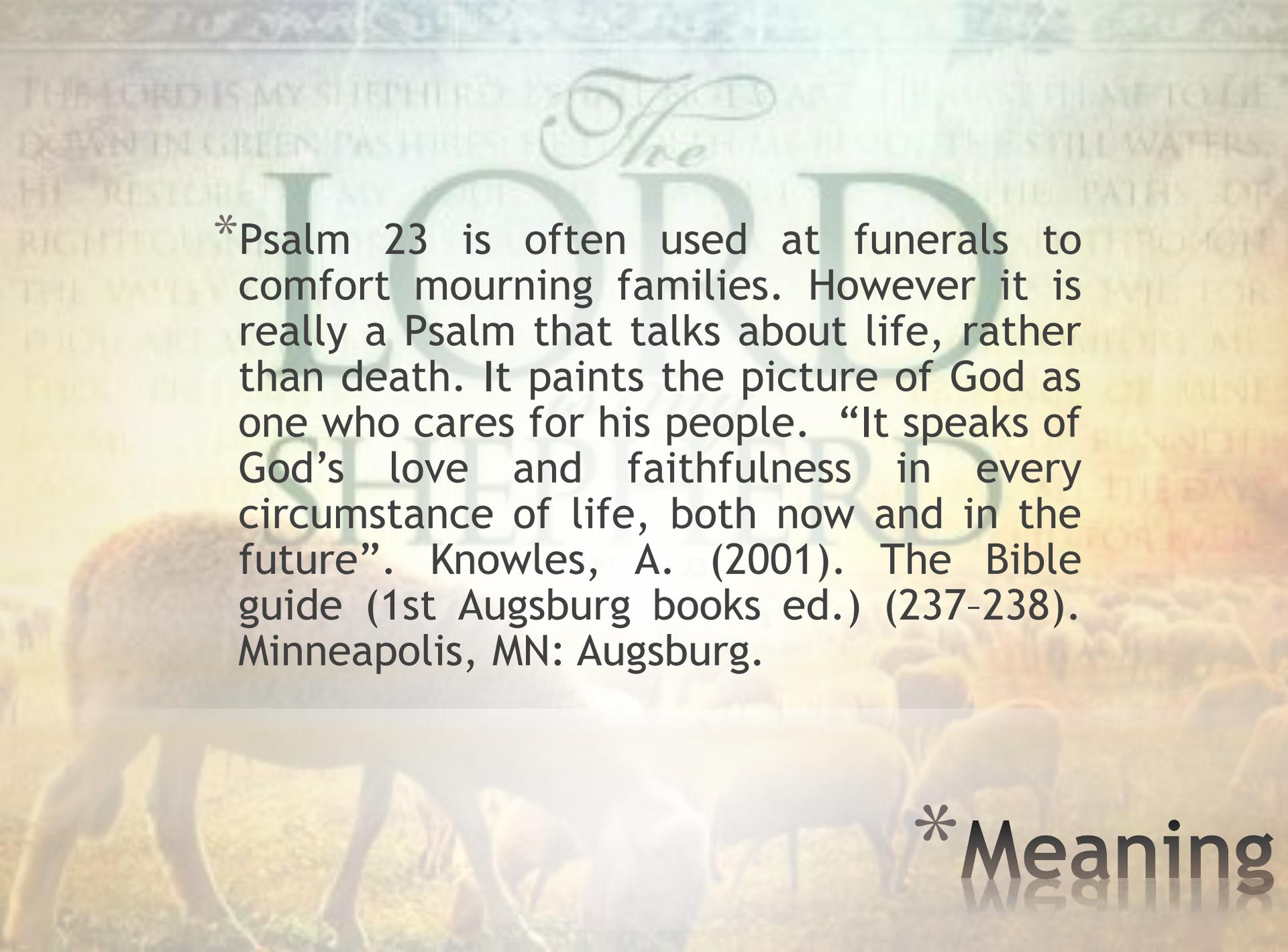


1. Jesus as the Good Shepherd--Provider
2. Green Pastures and still waters- Jesus gives us rest
3. Fear No Evil - Jesus guides us and protects us
4. Anointing with Oil - Jesus prepares us for the journey.



**The LORD, The
Psalmist's Shepherd**

A Psalm of David



*Psalm 23 is often used at funerals to comfort mourning families. However it is really a Psalm that talks about life, rather than death. It paints the picture of God as one who cares for his people. “It speaks of God’s love and faithfulness in every circumstance of life, both now and in the future”. Knowles, A. (2001). The Bible guide (1st Augsburg books ed.) (237-238). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

***Meaning**

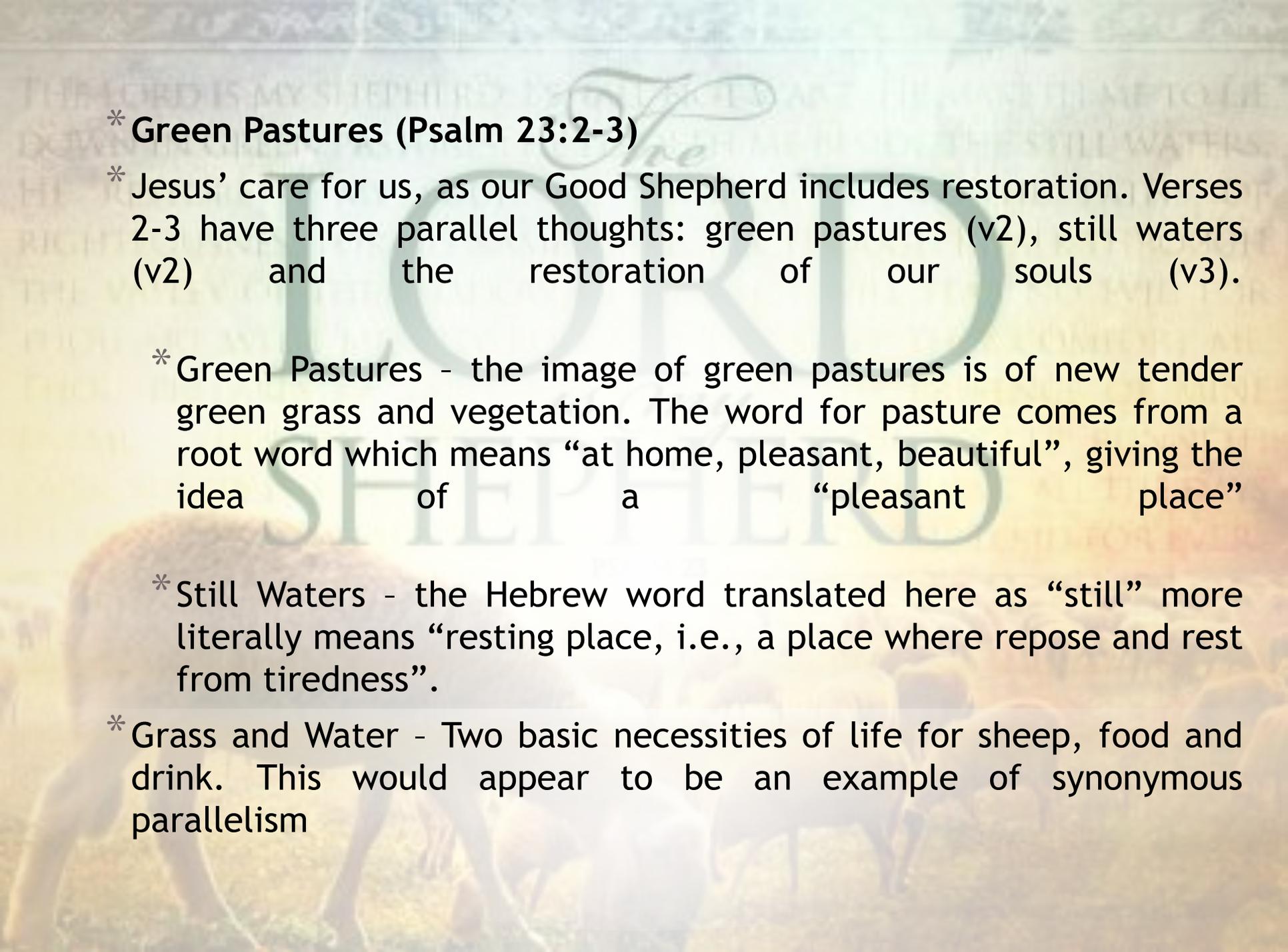


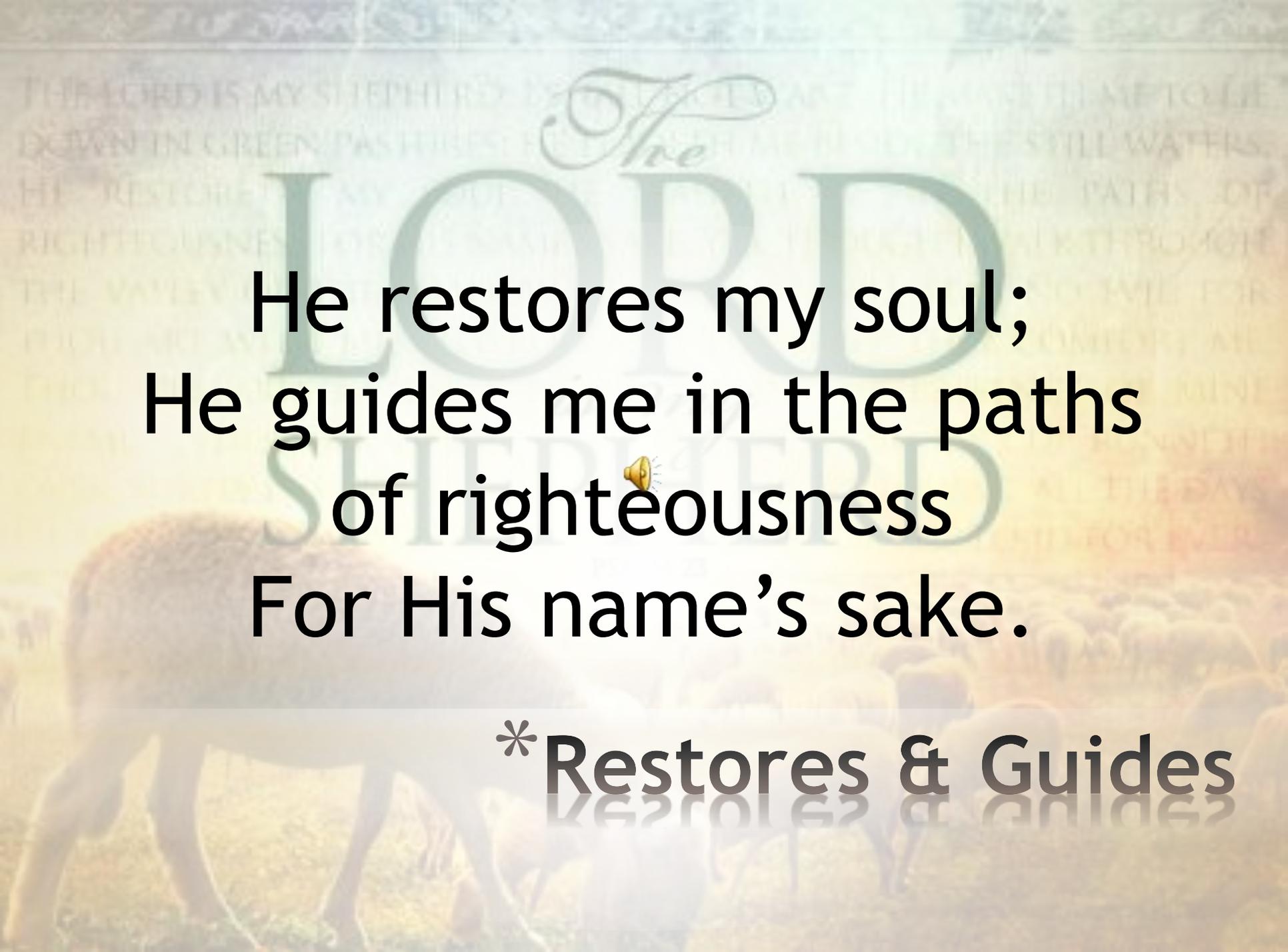
The
LORD
is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

The LORD is my
shepherd,
I shall not want.

*Provision

- 
- * **Green Pastures (Psalm 23:2-3)**
 - * Jesus' care for us, as our Good Shepherd includes restoration. Verses 2-3 have three parallel thoughts: green pastures (v2), still waters (v2) and the restoration of our souls (v3).
 - * Green Pastures - the image of green pastures is of new tender green grass and vegetation. The word for pasture comes from a root word which means “at home, pleasant, beautiful”, giving the idea of a “pleasant place”
 - * Still Waters - the Hebrew word translated here as “still” more literally means “resting place, i.e., a place where repose and rest from tiredness”.
 - * Grass and Water - Two basic necessities of life for sheep, food and drink. This would appear to be an example of synonymous parallelism



The LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES
HE RESTORE

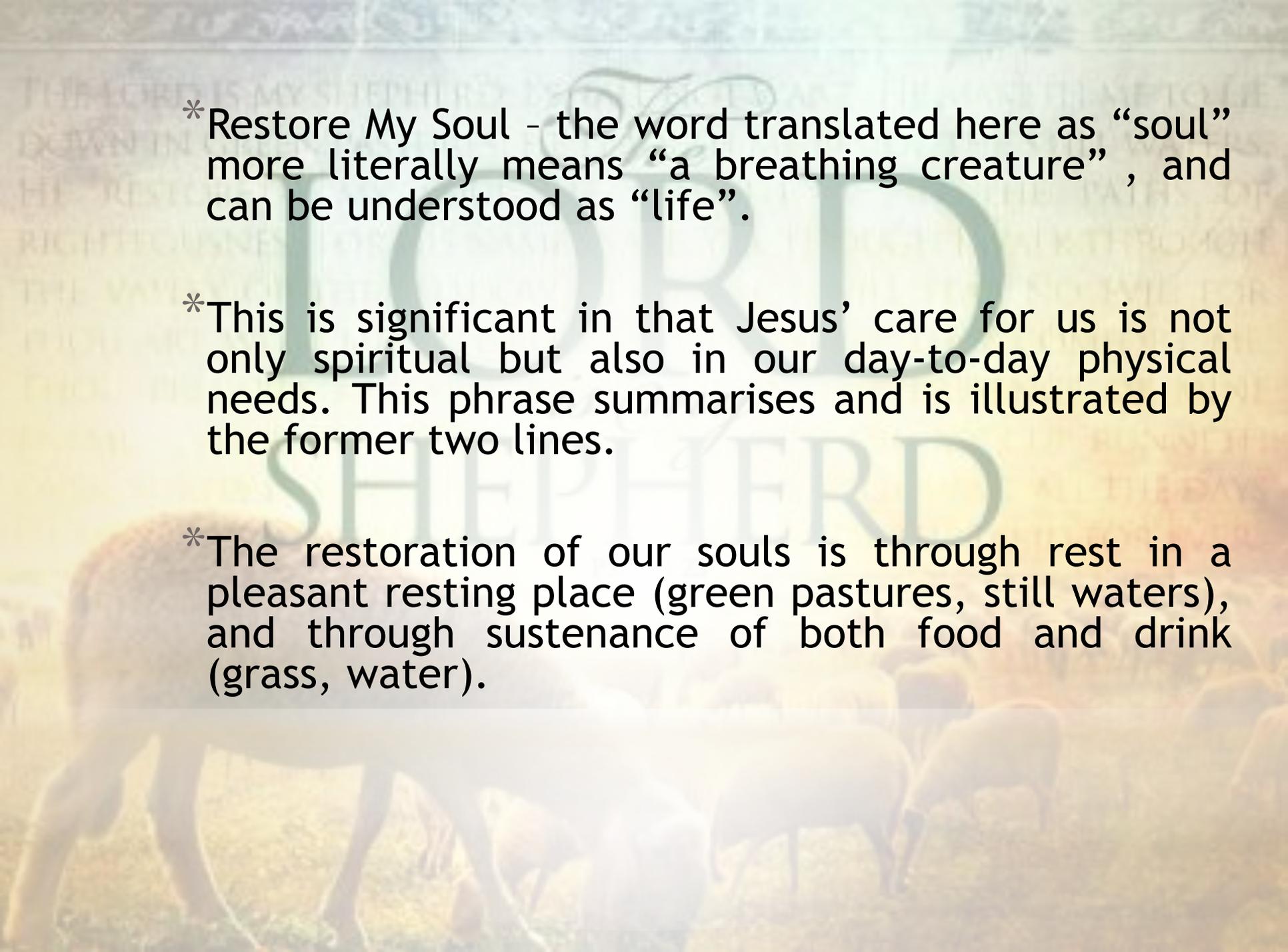
The

LORD

SHEPHERD

He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths
of righteousness
For His name's sake.

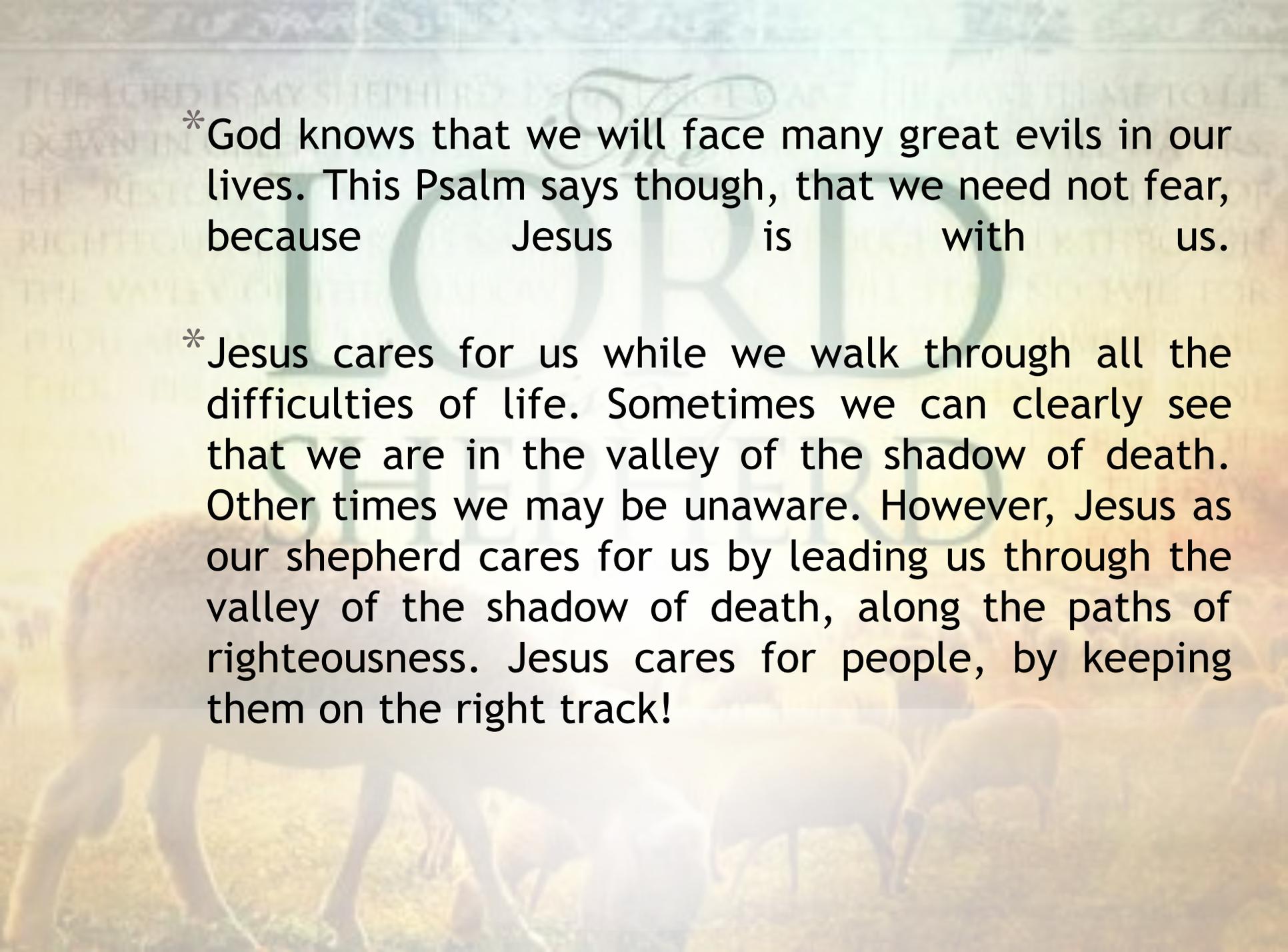
*Restores & Guides

- 
- *Restore My Soul - the word translated here as “soul” more literally means “a breathing creature” , and can be understood as “life”.
 - *This is significant in that Jesus’ care for us is not only spiritual but also in our day-to-day physical needs. This phrase summarises and is illustrated by the former two lines.
 - *The restoration of our souls is through rest in a pleasant resting place (green pastures, still waters), and through sustenance of both food and drink (grass, water).



Even though I walk through
the valley of
the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are
with me;

*Protects us



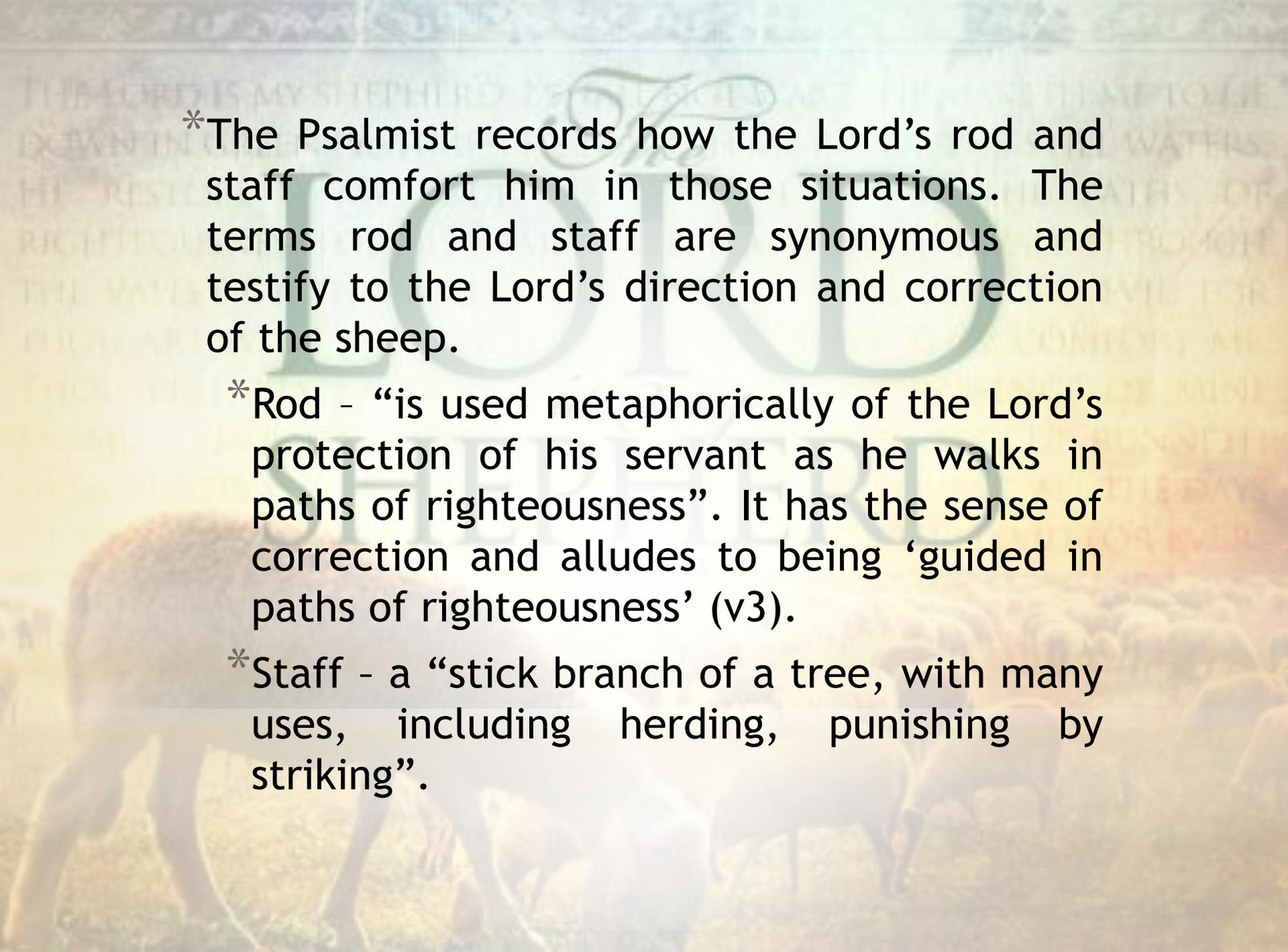
*God knows that we will face many great evils in our lives. This Psalm says though, that we need not fear, because Jesus is with us.

*Jesus cares for us while we walk through all the difficulties of life. Sometimes we can clearly see that we are in the valley of the shadow of death. Other times we may be unaware. However, Jesus as our shepherd cares for us by leading us through the valley of the shadow of death, along the paths of righteousness. Jesus cares for people, by keeping them on the right track!



The
LORD
Your rod and Your staff,
they comfort me.

***Comfort**



*The Psalmist records how the Lord's rod and staff comfort him in those situations. The terms rod and staff are synonymous and testify to the Lord's direction and correction of the sheep.

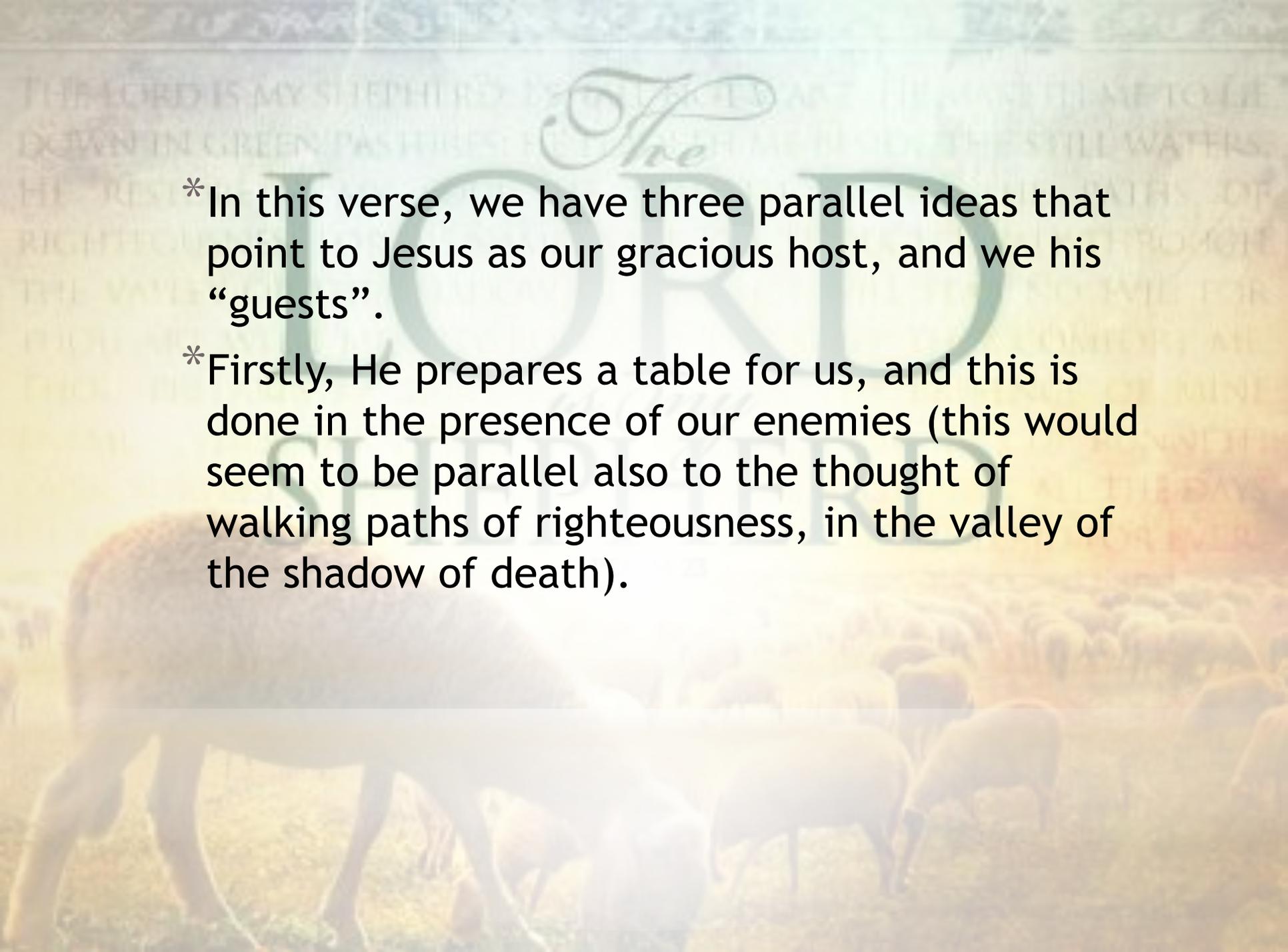
*Rod - "is used metaphorically of the Lord's protection of his servant as he walks in paths of righteousness". It has the sense of correction and alludes to being 'guided in paths of righteousness' (v3).

*Staff - a "stick branch of a tree, with many uses, including herding, punishing by striking".



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

***Prepares us**

- 
- * In this verse, we have three parallel ideas that point to Jesus as our gracious host, and we his “guests”.
 - * Firstly, He prepares a table for us, and this is done in the presence of our enemies (this would seem to be parallel also to the thought of walking paths of righteousness, in the valley of the shadow of death).



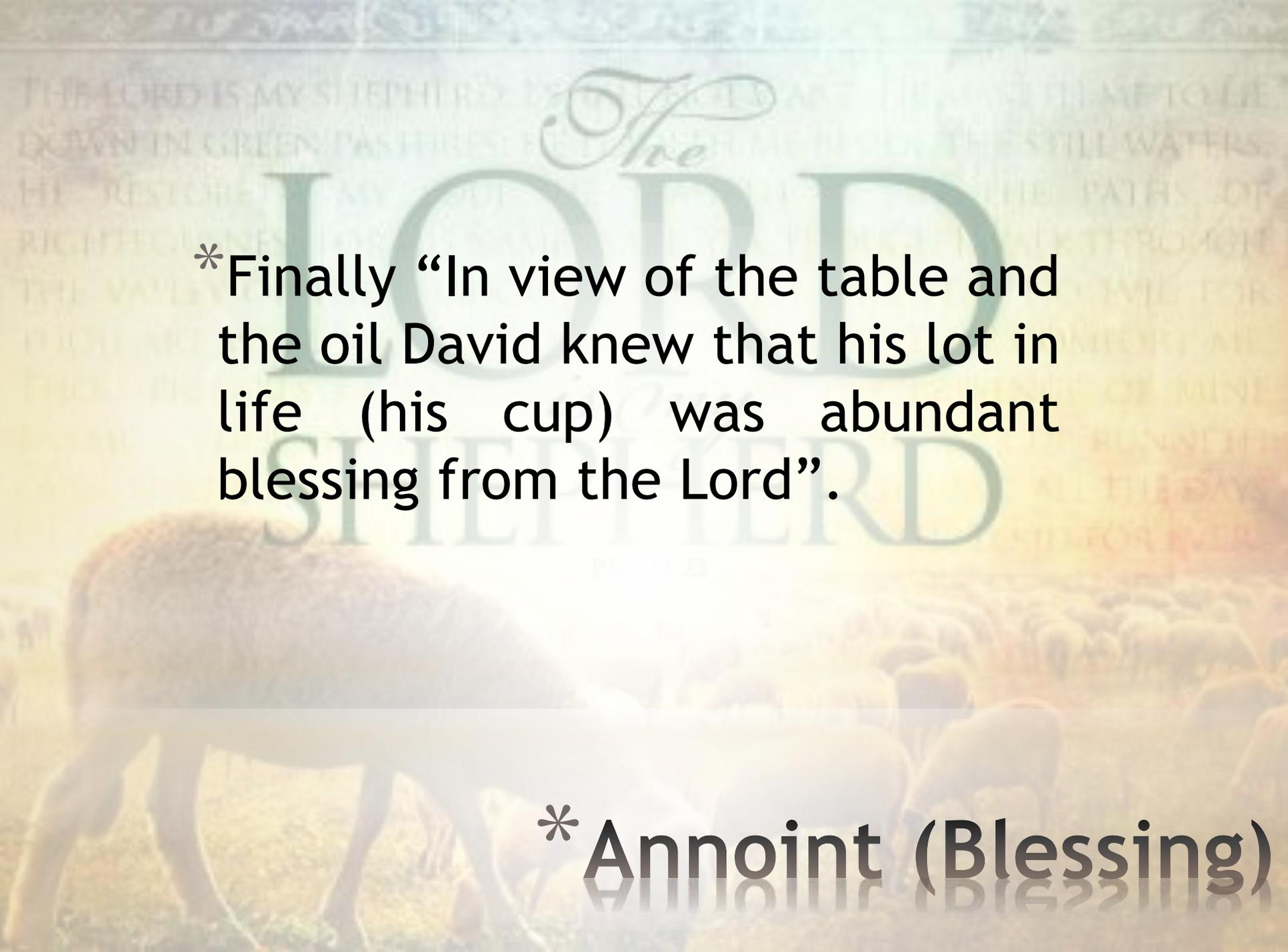
**You have anointed my head
with oil;
My cup overflows.**

***Anoints us (Blesses
us)**

*Similarly, anointing was something that you did for your guests. It was a “ceremony of preparation for a feast”. The rituals of hospitality in the Ancient Near East were a very important part of their culture. It was shocking for a host not to provide such a welcome to their guests (Luke 7:44-46).

*“The Psalmist represents himself as an honored guest of the LORD, who prepares a table for him, hospitably anoints him, and pours out for him such an abundance that his cup overflows”.

*Anoint



*Finally “In view of the table and the oil David knew that his lot in life (his cup) was abundant blessing from the Lord”.

*Anoint (Blessing)

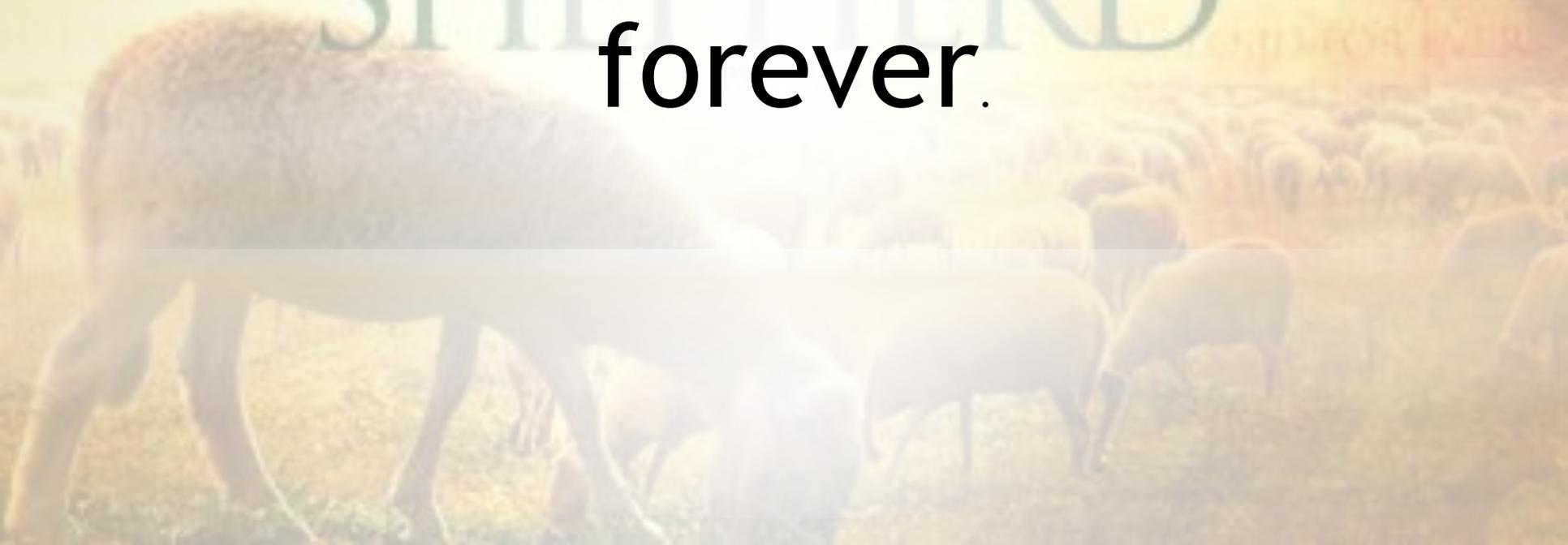


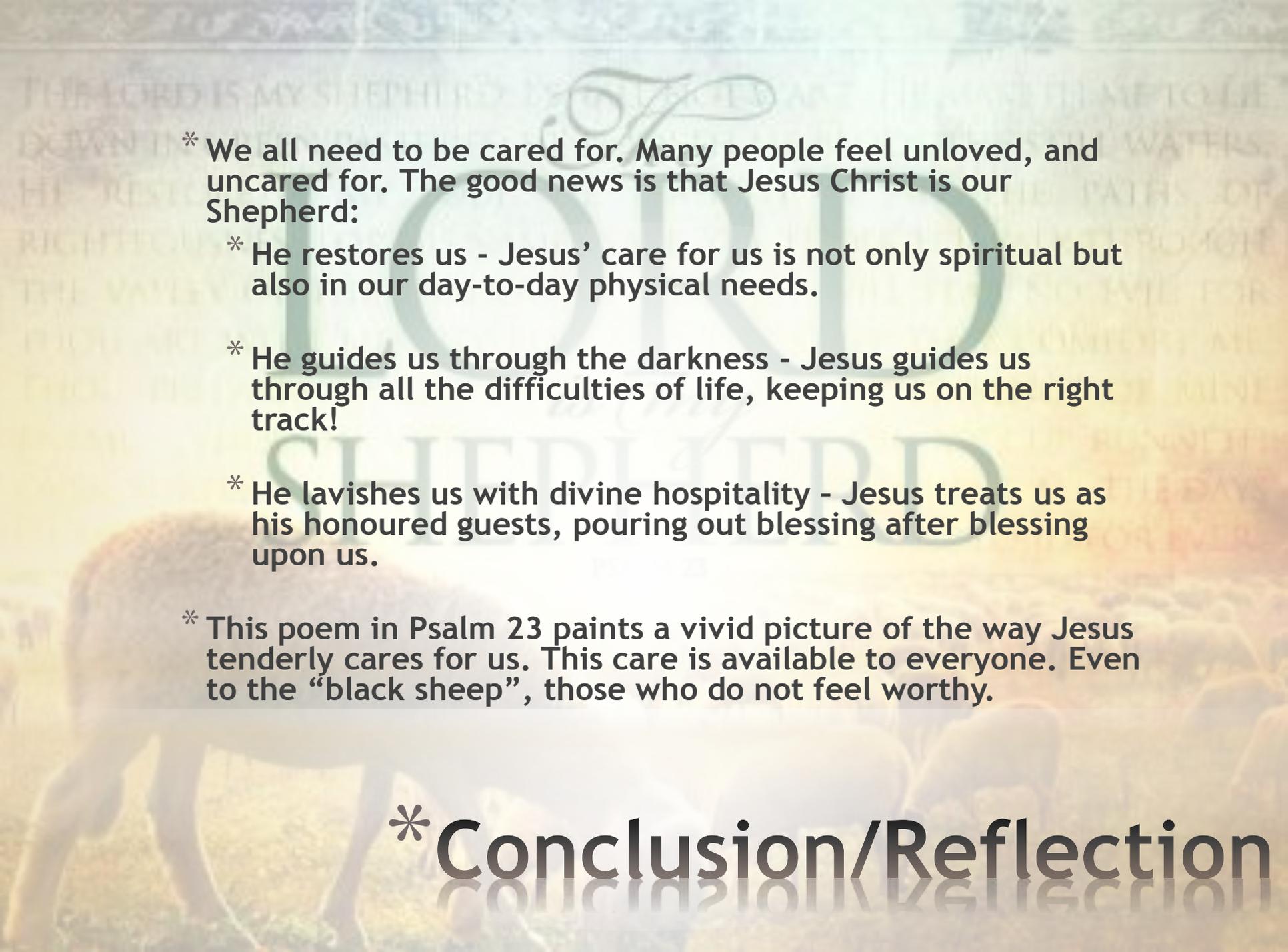
Surely goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life.

***Blessing for the Journey**

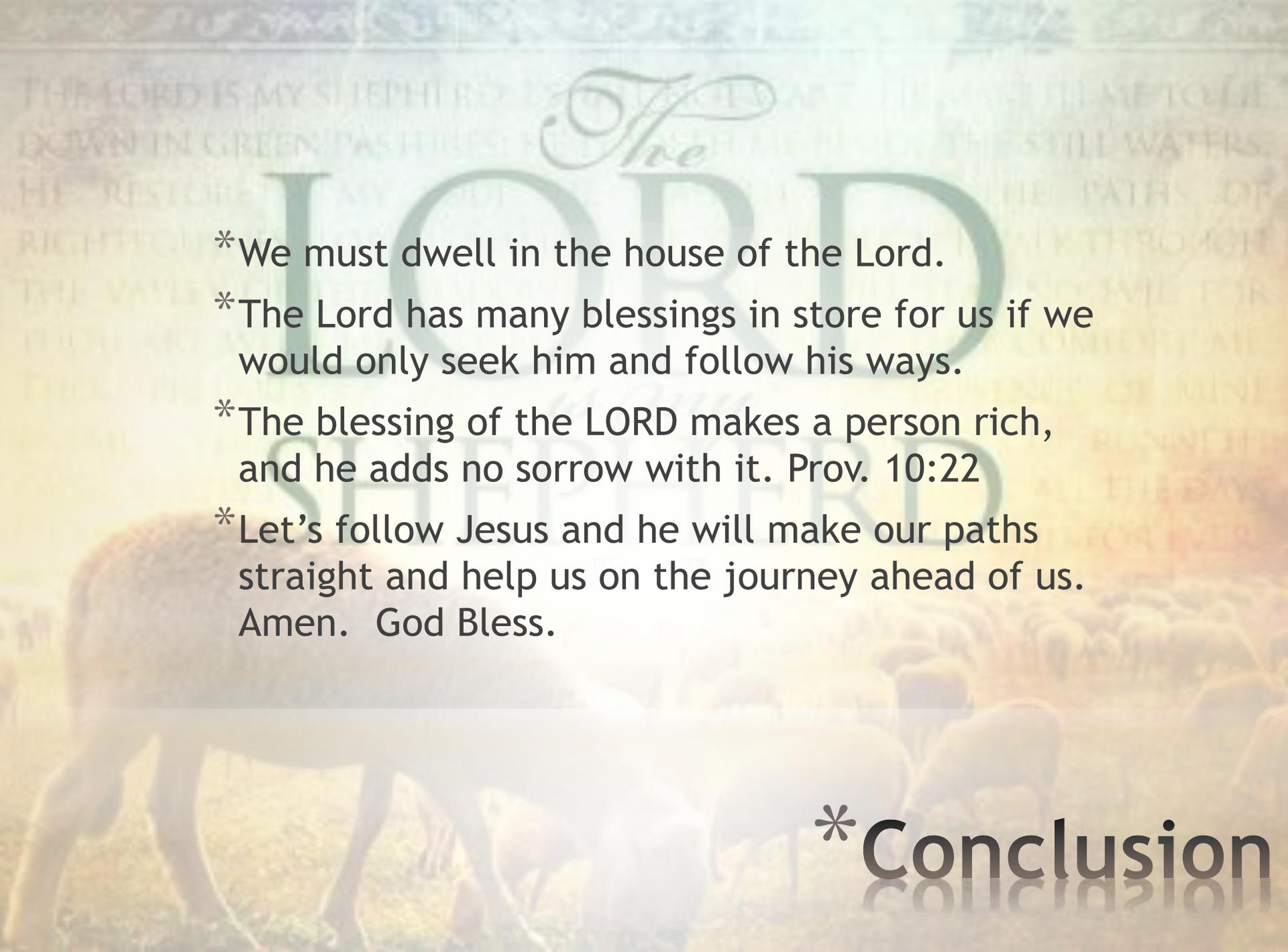


And I will dwell in the
house of the LORD
forever.

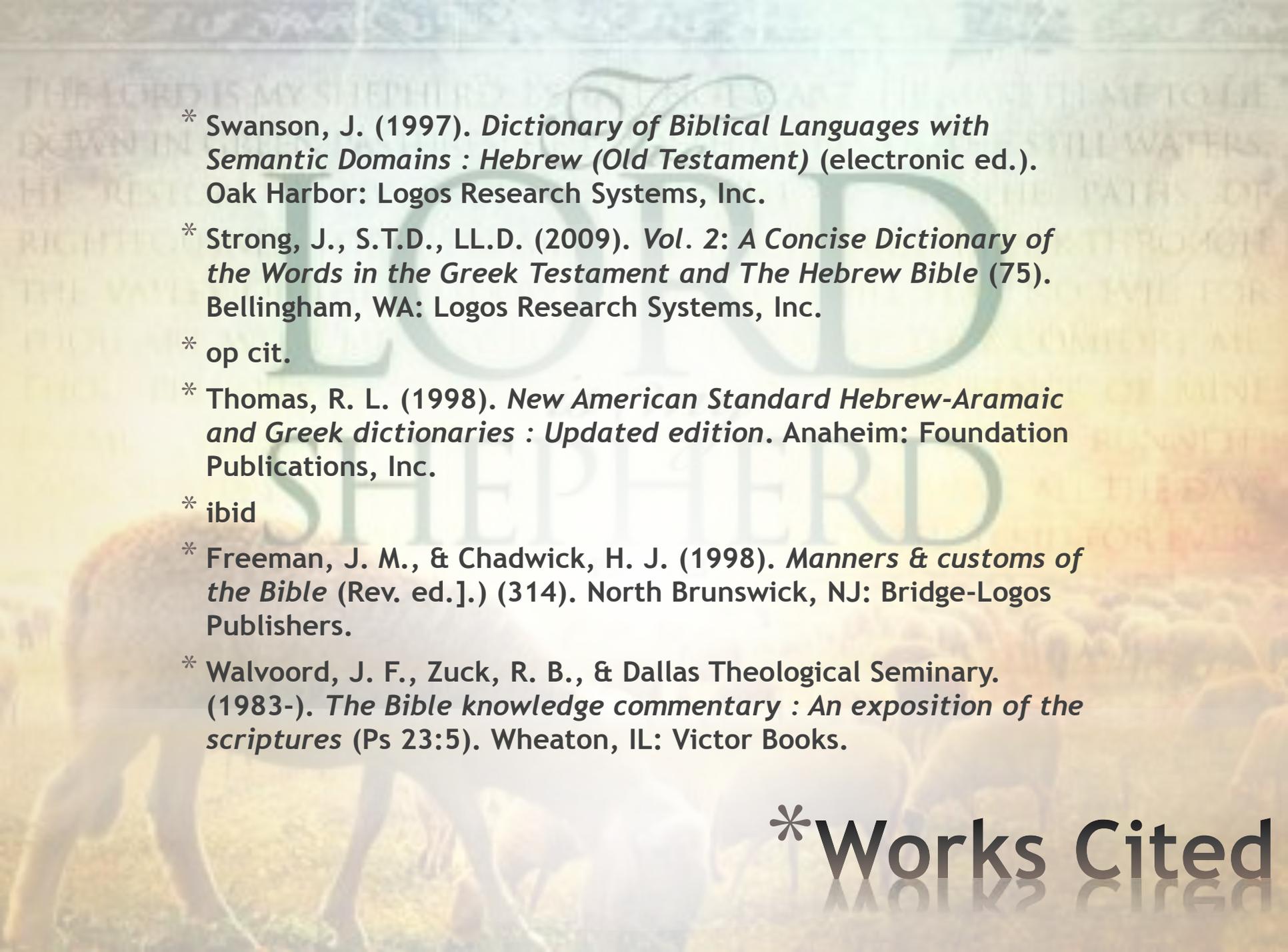


- 
- * We all need to be cared for. Many people feel unloved, and uncared for. The good news is that Jesus Christ is our Shepherd:
 - * He restores us - Jesus' care for us is not only spiritual but also in our day-to-day physical needs.
 - * He guides us through the darkness - Jesus guides us through all the difficulties of life, keeping us on the right track!
 - * He lavishes us with divine hospitality - Jesus treats us as his honoured guests, pouring out blessing after blessing upon us.
 - * This poem in Psalm 23 paints a vivid picture of the way Jesus tenderly cares for us. This care is available to everyone. Even to the “black sheep”, those who do not feel worthy.

* **Conclusion/Reflection**

- 
- *We must dwell in the house of the Lord.
 - *The Lord has many blessings in store for us if we would only seek him and follow his ways.
 - *The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich, and he adds no sorrow with it. Prov. 10:22
 - *Let's follow Jesus and he will make our paths straight and help us on the journey ahead of us. Amen. God Bless.

*Conclusion

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