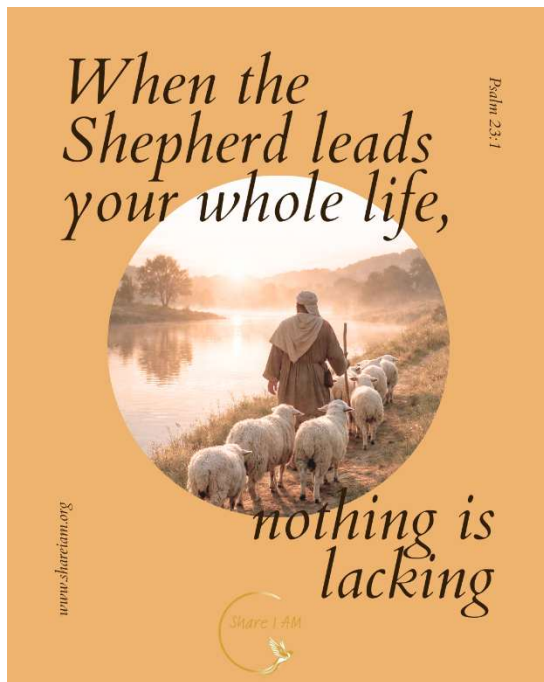




FULL CUSTODY OF THE HEART

 Psalm 23:1, “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*”

There is a subtle tragedy in the way many believers approach God, as though He were a distant relative visited on weekends or holidays. We offer Him brief moments of devotion, short bursts of prayer, or occasional gestures of obedience, and then return to the thrones of our own lives. Yet the heart of God longs for something far deeper. **He does not seek visiting hours with His children, He seeks full custody.** He desires not a corner of our lives, but the whole house.

Consider David. He was not perfect, but he belonged entirely to the Lord. God did not

merely receive David’s psalms; He received David’s days, his battles, his failures, his triumphs, and even his repentance. David’s life was not partitioned into “*God moments*” and “*my moments*.” The Shepherd held full custody of His sheep, and because of this, David experienced the kind of intimacy that makes Psalm 23 more than poetry; it became his heartbeat.

Full custody means God shapes our decisions, guides our desires, and interrupts our plans. It means He has access to the hidden rooms we prefer to keep locked. It means surrender is not a moment but a lifestyle. Many Christians live with spiritual visitation rights, close enough to feel God occasionally, yet distant enough to remain in control. But God wants something more glorious. **He wants to father us, to shepherd us, to lead us beside still waters not once, but always.**

Imagine a child who visits a parent only on weekends. The bond remains shallow, the guidance limited, and the parent’s love cannot reshape the child’s life. However, when a parent gains full custody, everything changes. The child grows, learns, and is formed by constant presence. This is what God desires, not a visitation arrangement, but abiding communion that shapes us into Christ’s likeness.

Jesus said, “*Abide in Me*” (John 15:4). Not “*visit Me*,” but “*remain*.” For only continuous nearness can produce lasting transformation.

Reflection:

- ... Have I given God full custody of my life, or do I still visit Him on my terms?
- ... What areas of my heart remain locked, waiting to be surrendered to His loving authority?