

Grace, Mercy and Peace are yours from God our Heavenly Father and Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Want]

You and I have a lot of wants in this world. Having a little baby girl, I know a little bit more about the wants of a child. She wants to be fed, but not always the food we want to feed her, she wants to be entertained, but it has to be a new toy every five minutes, and she wants to be awake even if she's screaming. It can be hard to manage the wants of a child. But things don't change when people grow up. Toddlers verbalize their wants in very basic ways. Middle Schoolers want to fit in with their friends at school, high-schoolers want to be treated more like an adult but taxes and rent are big no-nos. Ask your typical college student what they “want” to do with their lives and you'll often hear a career path. Once you're an adult though...it still doesn't stop. People want things. They want the physical comforts that life has to offer, they want vacations that are restful and fulfilling. You and I also want the “intangibles”, some peace and quiet every now and then, hobbies that are relaxing, the security of a job, a faith filled house with children who will continue to go to be Christian, the list goes on and on.

The wants that you and I have cause us to pause a little bit at Psalm 23 if we pay attention. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not.... want. Cause and effect. Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. However, if you and I were to pray this Psalm out loud and be honest with ourselves, it might sound more like, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I hope He gives me what I want”.

[Need]

Now, you and I don't have wants because we have a lack of faith. It isn't sinful for you and me to want certain things. The danger is turning these wants into a need. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" means that you and I will have all of our needs taken care of. The Shepherd provides for His people, it's the same truth that we pray in the Lord's Prayer. God gives us our Daily bread, which means that you and I are provided for in all our needs.

Jesus was sure to point this out to the people. He shows them how God has provided for the lilies of the field, how God takes care of the animals, and Christ assures the people that God cares even more for them. Christ takes the time to let them know they are being taken care of by a God who loves them dearly. God who loved them enough to send his only Son to save them.

Scripture tells us that when God first created the heavens and the Earth, everything was perfect. There was no needs or wants for Adam and Eve. God provided the very best of all creation for them. All it took to unravel the perfection of God's creation was the craftiness of the devil, the great liar who turned the eyes of Adam and Eve away from God. You and I know, just like Adam and Eve did, that God provides for our needs, and He knows our wants. You and I know that the Lord is our Shepherd.

[Deceit]

But the Devil lies to us and makes us believe the lies.

"God helps those who help themselves".

"Pull yourself up by your bootstraps"

"You've got this, God never gives you more than you can handle"

There are countless phrases that you and I listen to in times of difficulty. These are meant to be encouraging and build us up so that you and I can face the fears and difficulty in our world. You and I can find them in multiple places in our lives. They paint the computer screen as you go onto Facebook.

These words are generously applied to countless songs. The encouragement the world offers in these words are meant to inspire you and I to greater heights and to overcome adversity. And they might work! For a little while. Because this same liar then beats you down in the world. Satan runs you ragged until you feel absolutely drained.

Perhaps some of you are feeling this way now.

Satan says, “Look to yourself”, “Believe in yourself”, and slowly and surely, the Great Deceiver pulls our eyes away from our Shepherd. You and I fall into the trap.

You and I **can’t** even begin to help ourselves.

We **can’t** pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.

We **don’t** “Got this,”

If God only gave us what you and I could handle, we’d have a three hour work day, families who were both incredibly involved and loving, but knew when to leave and give you space. If God only gave us what we could handle... He wouldn’t have sent Christ.

[What God Wants]

Because Christ points us away from the things that we can handle. Christ points you and I to things that we don’t want. I don’t want to turn the other cheek. You and I struggle to comprehend the depths of forgiveness that we are meant to exchange with one another. This world tells us that we are meant to be giants! We are conquerors who don’t take junk from anyone. You and I can handle that. We think we can handle the trials of this life, and every time we need a pick me up, we can just throw in an inspirational movie like Rocky or the Blindside to remind us that we can be heroes of our own story. Every time you begin to doubt, you can turn on a song, you can hear Kelly Clarkson tell you what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.

The World lies.

What doesn't kill you makes you weaker. Christ calls us to die to self. Just as He died for you. Christ points us to the one thing we do need. Him. Christ came down from heaven to Earth, died on a cross and rose again, so that you would have all that you need. The Shepherd has laid down His life, because it was what the Father *wanted*.

God *wants* to take care of our *needs*.

God is the one who Helps

God is the one who pulls us out of the depths

God's got this.

It's what **He** always wanted.

It's what **we** always needed.

So be it.

Amen.

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As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly  
And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1Pt 4:8-9)

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