

My Shepherd...

JOHN 10 : 27 ~ 30

MAY 12, 2019

A famous Christian speaker was coming to town. Many people packed into the hall to hear him. He began to speak about theological and spiritual topics, much to the amazement of the crowd. They were intently listening to every word he spoke. He spoke with perfect diction and eloquence and possessed a commanding presence on the stage. At the end of his speech, the crowd gave a wildly enthusiastic applause that lasted quite some time. To the delight of his crowd, he came back on stage and delivered his trademark encore: Psalm 23.

The speaker welcomed the applause. Yet, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed an old man with a cane walking down the center aisle towards the stage. Soon enough, this old man found himself on the stage walking towards the center. At first, the speaker was taken aback by the audacity of this old man. But then looking at the old man's meager appearance, he no longer felt a threat to his performance.

When the two shook hands at center stage, the old man asked, "May I recite that psalm for the crowd?" The applause started to slow down, and curiosity arose about this unexpected event. The speaker asked the crowd to take their seat and offered the old man his spot on center stage. The house lights dimmed. The spotlights focused. The old man stepped to the microphone that a stagehand had just placed. Nervously, he introduced himself. The speaker could feel the vibe of the room fill with a combination of interest and discomfort. With his raspy voice, the old man began to recite Psalm 23, "*The Lord is my shepherd*"

When he was done, there was absolute silence in the hall. Not a sound was heard nor movement made for several moments. Then, a sniffle from the back corner and then another. A woman started sobbing in the front row. The crowd did give a standing ovation, but it was not wild with enthusiasm, but rather one of relief and heartfelt gratitude. It was an uncanny response of awe and amazement that shocked the speaker. He rejoined the old man at center stage and asked him, *“How did you do that? I’ve traveled all across the world and spoke on the most famous stages, and never once have I seen the crowd respond like that. What did you do?”* With a twinkle in his eye, the old man responded, *“You see, sir, you know the psalm and you know it very well. But I know the Shepherd, and I know him very well.”*

This story shows the difference between knowledge – like that of the speaker and wisdom as of the old man — not that these two are diametrically opposed to each other. Knowledge is born from books and lectures, wisdom from reflection on experience. The pursuit of knowledge offers the possibility of success and power; the pursuit of wisdom offers only struggle, accompanied later by respect.

Knowledge helps us to know our world. Wisdom leads us to know God and oneself. We strive for knowledge. We pray for wisdom.