

The Hungry Sheep

The sheep's stomach rumbled. It wasn't a gentle, almost hungry rumble, but a growling, twisting rumble that shook the sheep's body. He needed to find something to eat. He trotted into the windswept hills and looked for something to eat.

All around him, dust blew into the air. The little tufts of grass were all spiky and dry. The hungry sheep nibbled on a few of them, but the sharp, dry stalks cut his mouth and dried out his tongue. He couldn't eat grass like that, so the hungry sheep kept searching. But no matter how far he searched, he couldn't find any grass that he could eat.

All that dry grass made him thirsty. The sheep heard the rumbling of a river. He followed the sound to the banks of a roiling, muddy river. His hooves sank into the mud as he tried to get close enough to the water to drink. When he could take a few sips, the muddy water tasted bad and made his stomach hurt, so the thirsty sheep kept searching. But no matter how far he searched, he couldn't find any water that he could drink.

The hungry and thirsty sheep collapsed in the dust. He couldn't find anything to eat or drink. Hopeless, the sheep looked for help. The Shepherd leaned over him. "Come with me, my sheep. I have green grass and still waters."

The sheep followed the Shepherd. The Shepherd led the sheep to a pasture that had been carefully tended by the Shepherd so that the grass grew green and lush even though it was surrounded by wilderness.

The sheep munched happily on the grass. The tender stalks felt good in his mouth and filled his stomach. The sheep had never tasted grass that good and green.

When the sheep was filled, the Shepherd led him to the well set in the middle of the pasture and surrounded by a stone wall. The Shepherd showed him the gap in the stone wall and guided him down the winding stairs that led down into the depths of the well. At the bottom, a round pool held the clearest water the sheep had ever seen. The sheep knelt and slurped at the water. It was cold and sweet. It soothed his aching mouth.

When he was done, the sheep lay down in the green grass because he felt safe in the Shepherd's care. And in the Shepherd's green pastures beside the still waters of the well, the sheep was always filled.

Questions to think about:

1. Read Psalm 23 and Matthew 5:1-12 by yourself or with your parents. What is the connection between these passages?
2. In the area of Palestine, grass had to be tended and watered by the shepherds to make it green. Wells had to be dug and stairs built to them so the sheep could drink. What can we learn about how our Shepherd actively provides green grass and clear water for us?

