

# He Makes Me Lie Down

by J.R. Miller

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of rest as a divine provision for renewal and spiritual growth, guided by the Good Shepherd's wisdom.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Rest in God"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the necessity of rest in the Christian life, drawing from Psalm 23:1-3, where the Lord, as our Shepherd, leads us to lie down in green pastures and restores our souls. He argues that our first duty is not always to be active but to embrace moments of stillness, which can lead to spiritual nourishment and renewal. Miller highlights that true service to God sometimes requires us to pause and reflect, allowing us to grow closer to Him and to better serve others. He encourages believers to trust in the Shepherd's wisdom, recognizing that rest is not a waste of time but a vital part of our spiritual journey. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper understanding of peace and the importance of cultivating a restful spirit in our busy lives.

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## Transcript

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."  
Psalm 23:1-3

Life is not all activity, work and service. Sometimes our first and highest duty is to REST. We are not to be forever pressing on, although the way is long and the sun is sinking toward the west. Sometimes we must stop and lie down a while. We do not care to lie down. We would rather keep on our way. We are reluctant to tarry. We think we would be losing time, if we turned aside into the shade of a great tree and rested an hour. It seems to us, that every minute that is not filled with activities--is a minute wasted. We have not learned that we may serve by standing and waiting, and that at times we make greater advances by lying down--than we could have done by pressing on. So we too often chafe when we are not permitted to hasten forward.

Then the Shepherd makes us lie down! It ought to be quite reason enough to silence all demurring and all question, and to make us altogether acquiescent, that it is our Good Shepherd who bids us lie down to rest awhile. He knows what is best. He never wishes us to waste time or to be loiterers. We may trust his goodness and wisdom, whatever he would have us do. If rushing on were our duty for the hour, he would

not call us to rest.

Henry Drummond says, "To be willing, is a rarer grace than to be doing the will of God. For he who is willing may sometimes have nothing to do, and must only be willing to wait; and it is easier far to be doing God's will--than to be willing to have nothing to do; it is easier far to be working for Christ--than it is to be willing to cease working. There is nothing rarer in the world today--than the truly willing soul; and there is nothing more worth coveting--than the will to do God's will."

We need not trouble ourselves, therefore, to seek to know why the Good Shepherd wants us to lie down. His will should satisfy us, and we need not give a moment's thought beyond that, to find out why. Yet we can think of reasons.

We may need rest, even though we do not think we do. We are swept on by our earnestness and our enthusiasm, and when we are not aware of it--our strength has become depleted. The best thing we can do then--is to stop to rest until our exhausted energies are renewed.

God has mercifully provided resting places along the way. What would we do if there were no nights set in like quiet valleys between our busy days? The Sabbaths, too, tell of the divine gentleness toward us in ordering a day of rest after six days of toil. Those who decline and miss this Sabbath mercy of God, do not know how they are robbing their own lives of blessing and good. Were it not for the rests provided along the way--we never could hold out to the end.

Sometimes also the Good Shepherd makes us lie down--that he may feed and nourish us. Once the Master said to his disciples, "Come apart into a desert place, and rest a while," and the reason given was that there were many coming and going, and they had no time so much as to eat. No doubt many earnest Christian people need now and then--to be made to lie down in order that they may find time to eat. This is true oftentimes in a physical sense. There are men who are so driven by the pressure of business, that they fail to find time to provide for their bodily needs. At length, nature exacts the penalty--and those who might have lived on for many years, if they had learned the secret of conserving their strength--are laid aside in the midst of their years and their usefulness. It is needful for our bodily health--that we lie down at proper times.

Then the same is true in spiritual life. Some of us think that we would sin, if we were to rest even a few hours in our busy weeks. We have so cultivated our feeling of responsibility for the helping of others, that it seems to us we should never rest even for a moment, because on every hand human need and sorrow beckon and wait. But we forget that we must take time to feed ourselves and to keep ourselves strong--if we would continue to help others. We forget that we need to receive--before we can give; to be blessed--before we can be a blessing; to be taught--before we can teach. The busy day that does not get its quiet time with the Master--has been a lost day!

Whenever the Good Shepherd makes us lie down--we may know it is in order that he may give us some new blessing. This is true, for example, when he leads us into a sick-room and draws the curtains upon us. He does not intend the days or weeks we spend there, to be wasted. The work we do on our worldly affairs, is not by any means the only work of life, or the most important. We are not here merely to plow and sow and reap, to build houses or bridges, to keep books or set types, to navigate ships or to make money. These occupations are right enough, and we should be diligent in our calling, whatever it is.

But we are here to grow godly into men and women, to be fashioned into the likeness of Christ, to learn to do the will of God. When we are called away from our common occupation for a longer or a shorter time--it is doubtless because there is something that needs to be done in us, something that is more important than the pieces of work outside, which we would do if we were to continue uninterruptedly at our tasks. If we would remember this always when we are made to lie down--it would help us to be patient and joyously obedient.

There is a blessing waiting for us in the quiet room into which we are led. There is a lesson set for us which we are now to learn. As a song-bird is shut up in a dark place to learn a new song which it could not have learned in the light--so in our withdrawal into the shadow, we are to be taught some new sweet song in the night, which we may sing ever after in the ears of sad and weary ones. And no price is too great to pay, for the privilege of learning to sing even a single note which will bless the world.

No sorrow is too great to endure--if it reveals to us some new beauty in Christ, or brings out in us some new feature of Christ-likeness. Or it may be to get to know our Master better that we are called away for a time from our rushing life. A good man who had been sick at home for several weeks, said that he was compensated by the opportunity he had--of getting acquainted with his wife and children. This is rich compensation, indeed, for love is better than money. The best of all friends is Jesus Christ, and it is worth our while to drop all our tasks for a time to get into closer, sweeter, more intimate friendship with him.

It would be well for us if we were to cultivate more diligently--the quiet, restful spirit. Peace is one of the great key-words of the Christian life, and peace means restfulness, reposefulness, the absence of all care and anxiety, and self-mastery which restrains all inordinate ambition. The man who has not learned to be quiet, and to rest without fretting and chafing--has not yet found the secret of peace. There are many who are never happy, unless they are in the whirl of business or of gaiety, or of the world's strife. Far more really happy, is he who has learned to sit down amid the beauties of nature, and find enjoyment in flowers and bird-songs.

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