

Study of Psalm 23 – Part 3 - June 2, 2021

Psalm 23. Written by David, a shepherd. Draw us to The Good Shepherd.

23:1 - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 - He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: **He leadeth me beside the still waters.**

3 - **He restoreth my soul;** He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 - Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 - Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 - Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Living creatures need water. Our souls are made with a need for meaning... thirst for God. It's what draws us to Him.

Matt. 5:6 - "Blessed are they ... hunger & thirst for righteousness... filled."

"**To drink**" - spiritually – is to take in... accept...believe.

It becomes part of who you are. Know God as the Good Shepherd!

Water is obtained from the Shepherd. He knows the best sources of water.

We're often unsure... searching...

Problem is: thirsty souls will drink from any dirty source of water.

Vs. 2 – Leads me beside still water. 3 Main Sources of Water:

1 – dew on the grass.

Good Shepherd – diligent – makes sure his sheep is out & grazing

He rises early to get them to this source. Nothing pleases Him more:

Contented & at peace, refreshed & satisfied, ready for the day.

Rise early... quiet, stillness of the morning... feeds the soul. Ready!

2 – deep wells.

Africa: enormous caverns cut from sandstone. Ramps go down to water at bottom... deep cisterns w/ cool, clear water ... sheep led there.

Everything hinges on diligence of the owner & sheep following.

Some sheep stop too soon... contaminated water... parasites.

Truth: Some people don't want to be led. "drug to church"

Drugs . . . contaminated life . . . parasites that take your life.

Even some wise people have an unsatisfied thirst. Drink anywhere.

Left w/an unsatisfied thirst.

Matt 11:25 - Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."

God sometimes leads us to what seems to be a dark place. Follow me.

But He is at work in the situation. Where He leads has a purpose.

Some dark scary places give us significance; more meaning. Benefit.

Finding strength in God lasts more than just that moment. Life!

3 – springs & streams

- These are places of delight. They generally come after long nights...

Water never tastes better after working hard. Quench parched soul.

Without flood, there's no rescue. Without fire, there's no refining.

Without pain, no relief. Without testing, no belief.

- Springs rise from within. Internal joy in knowing God. Seeing Him work

Isa. 12:3 - "With joy you will draw water from the springs of salvation."

○ These highs get us thru the lows.

1 Thes. 5:18 - "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you"

● He Restoreth My Soul – vs. 3

We assume one in Shepherd's care would never be distressed

Ps. 42:11 – "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed w/in me?"

– Ex: "Cast Down Sheep" – sheep on back, can't get up. Gases build in rumen
Pathetic sight. Flailing on the ground. Lashing about... frustrated.

If Shepherd doesn't arrive, sheep will die. Essential to watch; Diligent #.

Predators look for cast sheep; easy prey. Leave the 99 to search.

Process: Right the sheep. Hold it to regain balance. Hard on Shepherd.

Cast sheep reveals the patience & tenderness of the Shepherd.

Some may think God is angry with us, fed up when we fall... Not so.

Compassion. Love. Tenderness. Patience.

Classic moment - see God's love & tenderness in the restoration of Peter.

Being "cast down" happens to perfectly healthy, good sheep. Parallels:

(1) Sheep that choose comfortable, soft-rounded spots to lie become cast.

a. For people, **danger in being comfortable**; looking for the easy way; wanting no risk, no need for strength, no demands.

i. Think you are "fine" as you are; but life is a process. Journey.

ii. God often moves us to a pasture not so comfortable, for our benefit as well as His.

(2) Sheep can be cast b/c of too much wool. Long fleece weighs 'em down.

a. We **weigh ourselves down in pride; selfish hearts; negativity; fear.**

i. Shepherd quickly shears these sheep. Not pleasant. Relieved.

b. God may take His shears to us; cutting away what holds us back.

i. Heavy wool has mats in it; mud; sticks. Not pretty.

ii. It's for our own good to be free. Shepherd brings out the best.

(3) Sheep that's too fat.

a. We also **weigh ourselves down in possessions; keeping up w/others.**

b. Think you've "arrived" or got it made; fail lean on God.

c. **Rev. 3:17** – "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

2 Cor. 4:9 – "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed"

We will have trouble, but God is there. We aren't alone. We are victors. Shepherd's desire is for the flock to be at its best.

When we're not, He will be tender, patient & kind ... Lifting us up.

Song of the week:

"You Restore My Soul" by Lauren Harris

Re-open for in-person worship – 7-7-2021