

FINDING FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD... TOGETHER!



Gathering at 502 Pike Street, Superior MT

TITLE: Reasons to Be Thankful, Pt 3
TEXT: Psalm 23:1-6
DATE: 20 November 2022

Let's Begin Together with Some Opening Thoughts

1. "News Flash": Thanksgiving is all about giving thanks and the giving of thanks is best when it flows out of a sincerely thankful, grateful heart."
2. Like much in life, we can "*fake it till we make it*," and the truth of this matter can only be honestly known within our own hearts and minds. So, today ... in this week of Thanksgiving are you ready to express thanks to God out of a sincere, thankful, grateful heart?
3. What do we... what do you have to be thankful for? As it turns out, everyone who has personally been born again into the forever family of God has a great deal for which to be thankful.
 - Throughout the Bible we find a vast resource of reasons for being thankful to God. In recent weeks from our journey through the Gospel of John, we found the first reason to be thankful in **John 7** with Jewish celebration known as The Feast of the Tabernacles.
 - It was at the conclusion and climax of this annual 7-day celebration in Jerusalem attended by thousands of worshippers that Jesus stood up and cried out His offer of salvation as recorded in **Jn. 7:37-39**:

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.

³⁸ He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹ (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

4. From these verses last week, we began to list "*Reasons to Be Thankful*" which first is that *Jesus Is The Source of Life* and then, secondly, that *Jesus Is The Source of Abundant Life*.
5. Last week, then, we stepped aside from the *Gospel of John* to the Old Testament passage of *Psalm 23* which points to and pictures in this *Thanksgiving Season*, our *Third Reason to Be Thankful* which is that Jesus is not only *The Source of Life*, *The Source of Abundant Life*, but also that He is our personal *Shepherd we can Follow Through all of Life*.
6. Looking at *Ps. 23* we find that it is a **Psalm of David** that declares **God as The Great Shepherd** who intimately cares for His "sheep" and equips His "sheep" to do the work of His ministry. He is that Shepherd, who prepares us to do Kingdom work, noted in *Heb. 13:20-21*:

²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

²¹ Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
7. Ok, so this Thanksgiving season, we're examining *Ps. 23* and will glean *several benefits* we have in following our Shepherd. Listen, the truths from *Ps. 23* can only result in one response: "Thank You, Lord!" and *isn't that what Thanksgiving is all about?*

First Benefit of our **Third Reason to Be Thankful** as a follower of our Great Shepherd is that according to **Ps. 23:1-3**, while *we are living in the pastures of everyday life*, our Shepherd, Jesus, adequately cares for us, His sheep. Before we look at the 2nd benefit, re-visit these verses:

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.

Second Benefit of our **Third Reason to Be Thankful** as a follower of our Great Shepherd is that according to **Ps. 23:4**, while *we are following our Shepherd through the various valleys of life*, our Shepherd, Jesus, constantly remains by our side ... *He never leaves us alone.*

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.

- A. Every valley that we must walk through in these crazy times is filled with uncertainty, fear, and danger. There is only one Source of Peace and Protection and that comes through the abiding, powerful presence of our Shepherd, Jesus, our Lord.
- B. A passage from **Heb. 13:5-6** comes to mind here:

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
- C. Listen, as born-again children of God *we can*, and *we should* be thankful all the time because as followers of our Shepherd in the pastures of our everyday lives we are *adequately cared for* and secondly, as we live through the various valleys of our lives, we know that *our Shepherd never leaves us; we are not facing life alone.*

- D. Wiersbe Quote: *"In the dark valley, he is not before us but beside us, leading the way and calming our fears. The "vale of deep darkness" represents any difficult experience of life that makes us afraid, and that includes, of course, death. Sheep lack good vision and are easily frightened in new circumstances, especially when it's dark; and the presence of the shepherd calms them.*
- E. Expositor's Quote: *The idiom "shadow of death" portrays death as a deep shadow or as deep darkness. This imagery is consistent with the shepherd metaphor because the shepherd leads the flock through ravines and wadis where the steep and narrow slopes keep out the light. The darkness of the wadis represents the uncertainty of life. The "straight paths" at times we need to go through the wadis, but God is still present. The Shepherd who guides is always with the sheep. The presence and guidance of the Lord go together. He is bound by His name ("for His name's sake") to be present with His people (Exodus 3:12).*
- F. There's one final point we need to make and it's about the "rod" and "the staff."
- The "rod" was a bat like piece of wood, much like a Billy-club that the shepherd could use in defending the sheep against attacking beasts; it was lethal when necessary.
 - The "staff" was also known as the shepherd's crook which was used in assisting the sheep in any number of ways. It was also known to be used by the shepherd to count and examine his sheep each evening as they were led to pass under the staff one by one.
 - Needless to say, the presence of the shepherd, with his rod and staff, provided a clear sense of peace and security for the sheep; which, by the way, certainly garnered a sense of thankfulness within those sheep.
- G. Wiersbe Quote: *"It gave the flock peace knowing that the shepherd was there and was equipped for any emergency. He is 'Emmanuel... God with us' (Matt. 1:23). Jesus is not a hireling who runs away at the sight of danger; He is a true Shepherd Who lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:11-15). God's sheep have 'peace with God' (Romans 5:1) and may*

enjoy 'the peace of God' ([Philippians 4:4-7](#)) as they trust Him. Through life, as we follow the Shepherd, we will have many and varied experiences (valleys), some of which will be very trying, but none of them will ever take the Lord by surprise. We may trust Him and have peace. The closer we are to our Shepherd, the safer we are and the more His peace will fill our hearts."

CONCLUSION

1. This Thanksgiving week, as in every week, we who know Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour ... our Shepherd, have reasons to be thankful!
2. **[Psalms 23](#)** has already given us two reasons to be thankful. 1st: **[Ps. 23:1-3](#)** shows that while *we are living in the pastures of everyday life*, our Shepherd, Jesus, adequately cares for us, His sheep; and 2^{ndly}: **[Ps. 23:4](#)** shows that while *we are following our Shepherd through the various valleys of life*, our Shepherd, Jesus, constantly remains by our side, *He never leaves us alone*.
3. Thanksgiving is more than a national holiday for the child of God; it is a spiritual response to a loving Father ... a loving Shepherd. This week, spend some time with your loved ones, if possible and for sure spend some time with the One who loves you ... and thank Him.

INVITATION

Jesus is calling you to find all you will ever need!