

Win the War in Your Mind (How God Helps Hurting People)

Wesley Sabio - August 20, 2023 - Psalm 23

Psalm 23 NIV - A Psalm of David

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23 was written by Israel's greatest King, King David

- David was a shepherd of his father's sheep.
- He writes Psalm 23 describing how God cared for him and how God cares for us as we go through the full range of human experience and emotions.
- David recorded the full scope of his emotions through poetry and song - many of which we have recorded in the Book of Psalms
- Psalm 23 acts as a life jacket for us when the waves of life try to pull us under.

Overall Picture of Psalm 23: God is the Shepherd who provides for all of our needs.

- Just as a shepherd cares for exactly what the sheep need, so God does for us.
- Jesus, in John 10, calls Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.
- Hebrews calls Jesus the "Great Shepherd" in Hebrews 13:20.
- 1 Peter 5:4 calls Jesus the "Chief Shepherd".
 - Putting these passages together, we learn that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, Jesus our Great Shepherd, Jesus our Chief Shepherd, takes it upon Himself to care for us.

Snapshot Description #1: Our Shepherd gives us rest.

- Rest can either be seen as something to be valued or something that gets in the way of the pursuit of something else.

- Some of us have been hardwired to view rest as a hindrance rather than a treasure.
- The Bible makes it clear in Psalm 127:2 that God gives rest to the ones he loves.
- And the rest that God gives is two-fold:
 - First, our souls can rest because our sins are forgiven.
 - Second, we can physically rest because we know that our Good Shepherd is watching over us.
 - **Isaiah 40:28 - “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”**
 - So we can stop from our work and delight in God’s ability and control. This isn’t an excuse for laziness. It’s an invitation to trust.
- Jesus brings us to a place of relief and calm - it’s the ideal place for our souls to be still, it’s a shelter in the storm, it’s a place untouched by the stress and pace of the world where we can get alone with Jesus and rest in His promises and be reassured by His presence.

Pastor Rich Villodas: “No spiritual practice can make God love you. It’s too late for that. God already loves you. But spiritual disciplines help us to live in God’s love, and offer it to others.”

Resource:

[The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer](#)

- Even when life beats us up and we’ve gone through the wringer, our faithful Shepherd is able to refresh and restore us.

Snapshot Description #2: Our Shepherd guides us.

- Jesus guides us where we’re supposed to go and He does it for His name’s sake, meaning that His glory is attached to His leading.
- Jesus will never lead us to places of sin.
- The case has been made that the anchor of this Psalm, or the gravitational pull of Psalm 23, is right here in verse 3 and that all that the Good Shepherd does is tethered to this - “for the sake of His name”. God leads His people in

righteousness because He is righteous. We now get to do what Jesus did - loving people, serving people, and pointing people to God.

Snapshot Description #3: Our Shepherd comforts and protects us with His presence.

- During times of difficulty and struggle, it's God's presence WITH us that completely changes the game.
- What we often experience during times of pain and brokenness is this feeling of aloneness, but David is reminding us that although people might leave you, God never will.
- Mark 4:35-41 - Story of Jesus WITH His disciples IN the storm
- No matter what storm you're facing, God is able to calm the storm in your life just like he was able to calm the storm for the disciples and it's not more difficult for Him to do so. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!
- God's presence with us through the dark valleys brings us comfort and peace. It's His presence with us in the storm that helps us not to fear. It's His presence with us through loss, tragedy, betrayal, and suffering that enables us to continue walking, trusting and believing that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Snapshot Description #4: Our Shepherd gives us peace.

- And God's presence through the dark valley brings us to a state of peace where we can enjoy God as He blesses and provides for us - even when we're surrounded on every side, our Shepherd gives us peace.
- The last thing we'd think of being able to do when surrounded by enemies is this - sitting at a table. David says that God's prepared a feast for us. This implies preparation, intentionality, foresight, and care. It's imagery of feasting on God's blessing and goodness and faithfulness.
- And as we're feasting on God's faithfulness, notice that He's anointing us with oil and that our cups are overflowing. That's to say, the blessing of God is on us and it's so much that it can't be contained. We're flooded with God's blessing. It's grace upon grace upon grace that we experience in God's presence.
- Our Shepherd isn't cheap. Our Savior isn't reserved. Jesus doesn't hold back. When God imparts blessings, we can be sure that we have it in full. There's no such thing as "partial" grace or "sort of" forgiveness. We don't experience "kind

of” salvation or “a little” redemption. No, in Christ, we receive the fullness of God’s riches to the praise of His glorious grace!

2 Corinthians 9:8 CSB - “And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.”

Snapshot Description #5: Our Shepherd’s provision is for now and into eternity.

- Our Shepherd’s provision is given to us now and that it extends into eternity.
- During times of hardship and struggle, let’s preach this verse to ourselves. Let’s actively remember that God’s goodness and love are with us as long as we live and that finally and forever, we will be with God.
- If our Shepherd had two sheepdogs to help Him attend His flock, their names would be Goodness and Love and it’s God’s goodness and love that are our constant companions.
- We were created to know and glorify God and to enjoy Him forever and the Bible says that in His presence there is fullness of joy and so when this psalm closes with the statement that we’ll dwell in God’s house forever, themes of joy and peace, of goodness and kindness should be the first things to come to our minds.

APPLICATION

- Our hope is only found in Jesus and in the truth of His word. In Jesus alone can we find true rest. In Jesus alone can we find true comfort. In Jesus alone can we find true peace. Sometimes we need to take the focus off our circumstances and turn our eyes upon Jesus. As the old hymn says, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”