

Psalm 23 Part 2 – Verses 4-6 The Shepherd Who Leads Me Psalms Series

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
² He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
³ He restores my soul;
He leads 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
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 runs 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.

Pray

I think one of the biggest misnomers in the Christian life – is the idea that if Jesus is leading my life it will be free of problems/ difficulties

A) Nothing could be further from the truth -

B) Study the gospels and you will see that Jesus led his disciples into storms and difficult situations – over their head.

C) But he did so not to break them but to build them up

1) Today in Part 2 of our look at Psalm 23 -we will see this principle – loud and clear.

Psalm 23 is written by David who knew a thing or two about how a good shepherd leads and takes care of his sheep.

A) David spent some years as a shepherd - Love how he begins

B) David declares: V.1 The LORD is my Shepherd!

1) Personal aspect – he is my Shepherd – not A or THE

C) BECAUSE THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD – I shall not want –

1) The idea – Satisfied – taken care - I shall not be found lacking

D) Theme of our study last week

1) Because the Lord is my Shepherd – I shall not lack rest –

2) because he leads me into green pastures and beside the still waters

Because the Lord is my Shepherd- I shall not lack life/ he restores my soul –

A) He leads me into restoration

B) When I fall he is there to pick me up – Restoration – Fixing what is broken – renewing – messed up

C) Our world tends to throw away broken things – Jesus puts a premium on Broken things

D) Jesus would be into these home restoration

shows 1) He loves to take something broken and make it beautiful

Because the Lord is my Shepherd- I shall not lack guidance because He leads me in the paths of righteousness - For His name's sake.

A) He leads me into Righteousness

B) Positional – I am made righteous – His Justification – His work on the cross –

1) He accomplished that for me – for you

C) Made Righteous in God's eyes – our sin transferred to him –

1) His righteousness – transferred to us

D) He continues to lead us into practical righteousness –

1) we call Sanctification – through his word

GOAL -For His name's sake.

A) For his name sake – is an interesting phrase –

B) The Shepherd's reputation was based on how well he led and cared for his sheep.

C) Sheep who were well taken care of –

1) That Shepherd would have a good reputation and standing in the community

D)If Sheep could talk – they would be like – proudly – that is my guy right there.

1)Others – I wish my guy was like your guy.

In a similar way – the way that the church walks – the way that the church conducts itself –

A)Reflect on our Shepherd.

B)When we are walking in the right path – when we are acting like Jesus

1)HIS NAME IS MADE FAMOUS

C)It cast a great light on his NAMESAKE

D)However – when we are not acting in a right way – our actions cast a negative stain on the name of Jesus

Reminded this week of the story of Gandhi – the practicing Hindu.

A)There was a time in his life when Christianity intrigued him.

B)his reading of the Gospels, Gandhi was impressed by Jesus whom Christians worshipped and followed.

1)He wanted to know more about this Jesus that Christians referred to as “the Christ, the Messiah.”

C)One Sunday morning Gandhi decided that he would visit one of the Christian churches in Calcutta.

1)Upon seeking entrance to the church sanctuary, he was stopped at the door by the ushers.

D)He was told he was not welcome, nor would he be permitted to attend this particular church as it was for high-caste Indians and whites only.

1)He was neither high caste, nor was he white.

E)Because of the rejection, Gandhi turned his back on Christianity.

1)Gandhi – made this statement I might be a Christian if it weren't for Christians.

Now I know we could argue – that is not fair – judge all Christians on the basis of one person who did not represent Jesus at all.

A)Gandhi might have gone to 20 other churches and had a completely different experience

B)But unfortunately sometimes – one shot is all we get to get it right

C)When we get it right – The NAME OF JESUS IS GLORIFIED!

So last time - Jesus is the Shepherd – who satisfies us – He leads us into rest - He leads us into restoration –

A)He has made us righteous in God's eyes – and He is seeking to lead us into righteousness –

B)The question remains – Will we follow?

Today we are turning our focus to the 2nd part of this Psalm

A)There is a change in the language and I want to see if you notice it

- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, 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 runs 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.

The Lord is my Shepherd – therefore I Shall not Lack Safety

A)Now verse 4 is interesting and at first glance it might seem odd

B) the same shepherd who leads us into green pastures – beside the still waters – Who leads us into rest – and restoration and righteousness

1)Also leads us into the Valley of the Shadow of death!

C)that might seem odd – that might seem like a bad thing to us. – Sounds Scarry–

1)why is he leading us there?

It was quite common for shepherds to have the sheep grazing in the lowland areas in the winter and spring months –

A)but when summer hit they would take the sheep to higher ground where it was cooler

B) In order to get to the higher elevation the Shepherd would have to lead the sheep through the Valley.

C) **The Problem was the Valleys were Dangerous – Wild animals –**

1) dark passages/ Sudden storms – bring floods

D) But to get to the MT top they had to pass through the Valley –

1) The VALLEY COULD NOT BE AVOIDED

The Same thing is true in the Christian life.

A) In order to get to the MT top – sometimes our Shepherd Jesus has to lead us through the Valley.

B) He doesn't cut past the Valley times

C) The Valley's are not meant to break us but to build us up

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:2-3

Now there is something mentioned in this Psalm about the Valley's that is so beautiful, but easy to miss! Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

A) Notice at this point the personal pronoun changes from he to you!

B) Reason: **The Lord is more personal in the Valleys!**

1) In our darkest hours is when the Lord shows up the most

C) I love the confidence that David expresses here: Even though I walk through the Valley of the ...death – **I WILL NOT FEAR – WHY?** For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

I am going through this dark time – but My Shepherd is right there

A) In the dark valley, He is not before us but beside us, leading the way and calming our fears.

B) Jesus expressed his care for the sheep – in John 10 –

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep (ALL IN.) ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know *My sheep*, and am known by *My own*. John 10:11-14

C) When the difficulties arise in your life – KNOW THIS – Jesus is right beside you –

1) The Devil wants you to think you have been abandoned – but nothing could be further from the truth.

D) The Lord is right beside you to lead you through the difficult time.

His Rod and His Staff they comfort me!

A) The Rod was a club like stick that the shepherd would use to hit predators and enemies

B) The Shepherds staff was a long curved stick

1) he would use to gather the sheep close and the pull them out of harms way.

C) **Application for us – no matter where Jesus our shepherd is leading us –**

1) we can know that we will not lack Safety

D) Because he is with us – and he has the strength – to keep us from falling

1) and all the necessary tools to take care of us.

Notice that the Psalm continues on this personal emphasis

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

Note David is not switching the metaphor here.

A) Don't get thrown by the word table here

B) See before the Shepherd would lead the Sheep up to the MT top –

1) he would go before them – and prepare a place to graze

C)He would find the right place to graze – he would go through it and make sure there were no poisonous plants

1)That grazing place would be referred to us – THE TABLE

D)Sometimes the Shepherd would create an enclosure with rocks for the sheep to sleep in at night

All of that preparation was done in the presence of the Sheep's enemies

A)The Wolves and other animals that would want to harm the sheep would watch him working –

B)It was a sign to those animals that the shepherd was claiming that territory and they had better beware

1)Trespassers would be dealt with severely

C)So the Shepherd not only would lead the Sheep into Safety –

1)He would also lead them into Joy

D)They arrived at the end of their journey through the valley – up to the MT top Mesa – where table prepared

1)They knew they were not going to lack provision

E)Their Shepherd took care of everything they needed to live on the MT for the summer months

So too David says of his Shepherd –

A)He is preparing a table before me in the presence of my enemy

B)The enemy is watching looking for where he can pull me down – but my shepherd is supplying me –

1)My Cup runs over

C)He anoints my head with oil –

1)Speaks of a daily fresh anointing that is available to us from the Holy Spirit to fulfill our calling

D)Jesus said – Not leave you orphans – but I am going to give you the HS – Help you, guide you, empower you to live for me.

1)With the Help of the Holy Spirit – my cup doesn't run dry but it runs over.

E)I am never going to be lacking as long as I am following my shepherd

1)IN the darkest moments – He supplies me with what I need to not just survive the moment –

2)but to Thrive in the moment

The World looks on at us – pays the most attention in the difficult moments –

A)Seen many times where unbelievers watch in amazement –believing going thru a tragedy

B) and ask – how are they handling this so well.

1)It is not them – it is their Shepherd who is upholding them – strengthening them

C)The time of difficulty that you would think would destroy them

1) is actually building they up – they experience his provision

D)This idea also made me think of what Caleb said to the children of Israel –

9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.” Numbers 14:9,10

E)Our bread - The difficulty is the very thing that God is wanting to use to nourish our faith as we look to him and trust in him

So our Shepherd is leading us through difficult times, he's leading us into joy. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me -All the days of my life;

A)You talk to most people and the idea of God following them - -

Aa)Thinking Wrath/ Judgment – he is out to get me

B)Yet David is saying, “Hey, those footprints you hear behind you? That's goodness and mercy.”

C)There is something chasing you.

There is something in pursuit of you Christian, but it's not wrath;

1)it's goodness. It's mercy.

D)I'll say this as plainly as I know how. To surrender to the leadership of Jesus is to surrender to goodness and mercy.

1) To rebel against the leadership of Jesus is to rebel against goodness and mercy.

Finally – because the Lord is my Shepherd I shall not lack Hope – He is leading me into confidence And I will dwell in the house of the LORD. Forever.

A) When all is said and done – my number comes up – I know where I am going. I am confident of that

B) Looking for to Heaven – Looking forward to when Jesus returns I will be with him

C) He sets up his kingdom here on earth and makes right the mess that man has made of his world

1) I get to play a part in that – I get to be a part of his kingdom here Role to play as he rules and reigns

2) PRELUDE – VS REAL STORY

But in the mean time I have a role to play right now

A) as I live as one who is following Jesus the good shepherd

B) To follow him where he leads me – FOR HIS NAME SAKE

C) MAKE HIS NAME GREAT – others can look at my life and see someone who is not stressed OUT

1) but content – I shall not want – lack

D) Someone who is not walking in fear but faith –

1) Because I am trusting in the love and care of my glorious shepherd

Jesus is the good shepherd – He loves you, cares for you and wants to lead you –

A) Question – are you willing to follow?