

Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
- 3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Even 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 overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

A very popular Psalm...many recognize it...some have it memorized...here is some more information about the depth and strength that is squeezed into these 6 verses. This is a Psalm "for the living"; it is guidepost for daily life and a stronghold for trouble.

v. 1 --- "my shepherd" - Our Lord is very personal...people freely call Jesus, "My God". He is ready and able to draw close to us whenever we reach out to him.

--- "I shall not be in want" - God promises to meet our personal needs. David writes, "I shall"; not maybe or I hope, or I will...he boldly states, "I shall not" and "he is my (personal) shepherd". Our God longs for us to enter into that close relationship with him.

vv.2, 3 --- "makes me lie down in green pastures" - God directs, guides and provides for us, almost as if we were his sheep and he is our Shepherd leading us into well-watered pastures with choice spongy, green grass to eat.

--- "leads me beside quiet waters" - Sheep are very much afraid of rapidly flowing water; they quickly back away from rapids or swift currents. God knows our fears and anxieties and leads us away from those difficulties in life, unless he has already prepared us for those challenges.

--- "refreshes my soul" - God is all about building us up, making us new again and preparing us for refreshing times with his Holy Spirit and with his people. Make sure to set time apart for these opportunities in your life.

Refreshing times with God at Trinity:

Trinity Website: www.trinityupc.com

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v. 4 --- "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" - It does not matter how scary or stressful our lives get, God is still available to help us through anything that life throws at us. The "rod" is to

protect us from danger and terror...the "staff" is there to rally us to himself and to provide direction in our daily lives.

v. 5 --- "You prepare a table"..."You anoint my head with oil"..."My cup overflows" - These symbols are to assure us and encourage us that God looks after us and provides for us, even in bad times: the anointing of the head is an outward sign of the inward favor of God upon his people...the cup overflowing is a figurative statement assuring us that God's blessing is enough for us, that God has great plans for us, and that God is not done with us yet - in fact, he has great plans for us in the future.

V. 6 --- "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life" - I love this entire Psalm, but especially this last time. The Goodness and Mercy here is referring to Jesus and our daily walk with him. Yes, he is this goodness and mercy that follows and goes along with us, all of our lives. Middle eastern shepherds led their sheep from behind and from the middle of the flock, using the staff to provide direction from within the flock, a gentle nudge here and there. The sheep knew the shepherd and he knew them, they spent their lives together. Jesus leads us like this today, as our goodness and mercy walking among us.

Pastor Jim