

J.J.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD
PSALM 23

ANNOUNCEMENT :

- Birthday Celebrants for November

2 Tony Frias, Pher Nillas, 3 Bexy, 10 Nedy, 12 Joy Corpuz, 14, Mica and Delia Mateo 18, Giovanni 23, Irene Gallora, 24, Mimi Mancao, 26 Melanie Corpuz

COMFORT FOOD : When we arrived here as a family in Canada, I didn't even know where to work. Praise the Lord that I got this job at a big I.T. firm in Mississauga. My first boss, who is now a Christian, brought me and her team to a restaurant. When she ordered, she ordered, "Shepherd's pie". It's the first time during that time that I've heard this dish. I asked her why did she order shepherd's pie. She told me that's her comfort food.

Today, by God's grace, I will be preaching on my all-time comfort passage in the Bible. Everytime I recite this and read this, it just gives me so much comfort. Guess what is it?

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David

*1 The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.*

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.*

*3 He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.*

*4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I 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 have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.*

*6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Prayer

BACKGROUND :

This is a very personal psalm for David. How do we know? Because he himself is a shepherd.

Benefactor : *The Lord is my shepherd*

Those who will benefit from this psalm **are the ones who follow the Lord.** "my" shepherd.

Beneficiary : "sheep" as we study this psalm, we will know the characteristics of a "sheep" and how it compares to us humans.

One thing about sheep, they are not the brightest of animals, they are not the bravest of animals, they are not strongest of animals.

Example : We hear sports teams like, "Toronto Raptors, Philadelphia Eagles, Chicago Bullls..." But you will not hear a sports team like Brampton Sheep or Mississauga Lambs. Imagine if they rename the Toronto Raptors into Toronto Sheeps

Benefit : *I shall not be in want* - Heb. "chacer" means "lack", so it means when we follow Christ, we shall never be in "lack". We will always be full.

NIV *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

John 10:10 "I came that you might have life and have it to the full." (You know why?

You'll find out later at the end of the sermon.)

What does the shepherd provide for the sheep?

I. THE LORD PROVIDES SATISFACTION

Sheep features : Sheep are not hunters. They do not hunt for their own food. They get the finest and best food when the shepherd leads them to it.

a. He satisfies our physical needs

v. 1a "He makes me lie down in green pastures."

Picture it : It's a picture of contentment. Sheep lying down in the grass, pag nagutom, kain

Application : God's provision is always there.

Example : I have so many stories of God's provision in our lives and I have a few favourite ones. Some of you already know that my most favourite one was when Chicay was giving birth to our youngest Mica. I went to full time pastoring and was just starting my own ad agency at that time in the Philippines. You know in the Philippines, you pay for everything even your medical expenses. We have our doctor friend and we asked her how much for a regular delivery (Zak and Bexy were normal delivery). This was in 2005, so she said, prepare P30,000. So we prepared 30k. But the problem is, on the night of her labor, they needed to do a Ceasarian section. That means, 30k will become 60k. I don't have the other 30k. Before Chicay went to the operating room, we looked at each other and we said, "God will provide". The following day, a client of ours who we did a project months ago and was having difficulty paying, called our partner and said, that he will now pay that day. You know how much? 33k. You might said, "Wow, may sobra pa." You know why God provided 33k? 30k for the hospital dues and 3k for tithes.

b. He satisfies our spiritual needs

v. 1b - 2a "He leads me beside quiet waters."

Picture : Sheep are easily scared. They easily panic when there's a disturbing noise like the bark of a dog or the sound of a rushing river. That's the reason why the shepherd has to bring them to a "quiet" stream so they would drink. They would not drink in a noisy river because they are afraid.

Application : Just like us. We easily panic. We are easily scared. We panic if we think we're going to lose a job or if we can't find a job. We panic if the doctor comes back to us with not so good news and etc. The reason why people are stressed is because they panic, they are easily afraid.

What's the antidote to panic or stress?

Look carefully :

He "leads" me... the psalmist didn't say "He brings".

Application : It means in order for us to have "peace", we should follow the one who leads.

John 10: 3 The watchman opens the gate for him (the shepherd), and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

How do you hear God's voice? By reading and meditating on His Word.

What's meditating on His Word? It's thinking and reflecting on His Word all the time.

How do you do that? It's just like worrying. What? Yes. What do you do when you worry? You think about what you worry about all the time. It's in your thoughts all the time. Meditating on God's Word is thinking about His promises all the time.

Application : So instead of reciting and thinking about your worries. Recite and think about God's promises!

When we arrived here in Canada, we stayed in a basement apartment and I posted Bible verses everywhere - in the bathroom and in the rooms and in our door so we can see and think about God's Word all the time. Why? It's because we know by God's grace, starting a new life here in Canada, there will be a lot of anxieties, but instead of worrying (which is thinking about the things that might happen bad in our lives), we meditate on God's promises.

What happens if you follow the Lord and listen to His voice?

v. 2a He restores my soul.

Hebrew "restore" "showb"? If something needs to be restored, it means it was lost.

Explanation : Tagalog term : "Nawalan ng loob." Opposite of "nawalan ng loob" is "palagay ang loob". **In English**, "you've lost heart, you've lost courage, you've lost confidence, you've lost hope."

In short, our Lord will give you "shalom", peace. Shalom means "being whole", you're complete even if the world around you is not ok.

That's the promise of the Lord if you trust in Him and always think about Him and His Word.

Isaiah 26: 3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! (NLT)

II. THE LORD PROVIDES DIRECTION

Sheep feature : Sheep have good peripheral vision for their protection but they don't have good depth perception, meaning, they have a hard time seeing in front of them.
v. 2b He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

The key to understanding this verse is to understand the meaning of righteousness.

Etymology : tsedeq "the right thing to do."

When the Lord guides you, He will guide you in the right thing to do.

He will not guide you to what will make you happy at that time. He will not guide you to do something wrong or evil. He will guide you to do the right thing.

Illustration : There was a man who talked to his pastor and said that he believed the Lord is guiding him to leave his wife for this other woman because God wants him to be happy. That's not the guidance of the Lord.

Two questions :

1. How does God guide you?

He guides me in paths

Etymology : paths "magal" worn-out trail; there's a trail because it was already stepped over by other people...it means...it's the sure and right way!!!!

In short : God wants to guide you in the sure way. So since it's called paths of righteousness. The right way is always the sure way.

Jeremiah 6: 16 This is what the Lord says:

*"Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.*

2. How do you know if it's the right way?

- If it's God's way. How do you know if it's God's way? It's in His Word.
for His name's sake.
- If it gives glory to God....that's why *for His name's sake*

Quote : God's way is always the right way but it's not always the easy way but it's always the sure way.

Illustration : You know what I said about sheep being near-sighted. That's why they have strong flocking instinct. Or they like to follow other sheep. But here's the problem, if they follow other sheep and if there's no shepherd, it's dangerous. In 2005, Eastern Turkey 400 sheep fell to their death on a 15 meter ravine because one sheep tried to cross it and the other sheep followed. In fact, 1,100 sheep fell. The other survived because the bodies of the other sheep who died cushioned the fall.

It's just like men, we love to follow other men and we listen and follow their ways when God is saying, I want to lead you. I am the good shepherd. That's why the Bible is full of verses saying, "to be led by the Spirit", "to walk in the Spirit"
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4665511.stm>

How do you know you are following the right path or being led or walking in the Spirit??

Remember what I said earlier on reading and meditating God's Word. That's why you'll know.

And Here is the Lord's promise :

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

The lamp during that time acts like a flashlight to guide you . God will guide you step by step. So if you're making a big decision, remember to do it step by step.

You plan and have a goal but let God guide you step by step.

Proverbs 16:9 We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

That's why it's important for us to walk with the Lord. Here's His promise when you walk with Him.

Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Sheep feature : One of the traits of sheep is they have excellent hearing. They can direct their ears in the direction of the sound. (Maybe that's why we can easily hear chismis a mile away). God will always want to lead us with His Word, and we hear His whisper in our hearts. The only problem is we are stubborn, we do not want to obey.

Observation for Psalm v. 4 and next : A change of subject from third person to first person (e.g. from "He" to "You")

1. Just like our relationship with God, it gets more personal as we get to know Him
2. We feel God's closeness/presence in times of intense trouble/suffering.
"I will fear no evil for YOU are with me."

III. THE LORD GIVE US PROTECTION

1. He protects us from our anxiety.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.

Explain "the valley of the shadow of death." Sheep are afraid of sudden changes. If you look into the Israeli wilderness landscape, it has deep valleys, meaning the mountains cast a shadow on the valleys. In the eyes of the sheep, AS IF THE SUN WAS BLOTTED OUT.

Application : Just like trials, biglaan. But they are just shadows remember.

"I will fear no evil for you are with me."

Why should we not be afraid? BECAUSE GOD IS WITH US.

Quote : And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart." Spurgeon

To really get the meaning of this verse...

Let's understand the word "evil" first in Hebrew

Etymology : ra; as a noun, distress, misery, injury, calamity, evil

But as an adjective... it means from a comparison perspective... from worse to Worst...

In short, the Lord is saying.... You do not have to fear even the worst that might happen to you...BECAUSE I AM WITH YOU.

Listen to this story :

The devil, according to legend, once advertised his tools for sale at public auction. When the prospective buyers assembled, there was one oddly shaped tool which was labeled "Not for sale." Asked to explain why this was, the devil answered, "I can spare my other tools, but I cannot spare this one. It is the most useful implement that I have. It is called Discouragement, and with it I can work my way into hearts otherwise inaccessible. When I get this tool into a man's heart, the way is open to plant anything there I may desire."

You have to remember one of the secret weapons of the enemy that a lot of Christians do not know is discouragement.

Discouragement is NOT from God. You will never read anything in the Bible that God discouraged His people. In fact, read what our Lord said to Joshua when they were about to enter the Promised Land.

Joshua 1: 7 "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be

prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Again, our Lord Jesus Christ...He will never leave you nor forsake you.

2. He protect us from our adversary

Your rod and your staff they comfort me.

We have TWO great adversaries :

First Adversary : Satan and his personnel:

Application : *"Your rod"* - in the valleys, doon nag-aabang ang robbers, lions, wolves...but the Good Shepherd is there to drive them away.

Second Adversary : Self and our pride :

Quotation : "I have seen the enemy and it is me."

"Your staff" - it's a long stick with a shaped hook at the end.

Illustration : Malabo ang mata ng sheep, kaya madaling mapahiwalay.

It is used for two things :

1. To gently tap the sheep if it's straying away from the flock
2. Or if a sheep falls of a cliff, he uses the staff to hook him up.

WHAT GREAT ASSURANCE IF THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD

John 10:27-29 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

That's why the Psalmist can say, "Your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

IV. THE LORD GIVE US RECOGNITION

Note : One of the needs of man is to be recognized. That's one of the greatest feelings in the world. There is a reason there are award ceremonies. That's the reason why we like watching Oscars, Grammys, Famas and etc.

How does the Lord give us recognition?

1. The Lord rewards our struggles

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"

Etymology : table “sulha” it means, not just any table...that's A KING'S TABLE where they serve a lot of food and the best food...

Picture it : He is preparing a the king's table...a fiesta right in front of the enemies. Is that normal? **Feasting is equal to celebration. Celebrating a harvest or a victory.**

Illustration : During a best of seven, the team who wins four games clinches the championship. Usually when a team has already won 3 games, the arena will prepare balloons to drop from the rafters. Why? It's anticipating that their team will win.

Now, if we follow the Lord, (since He is our shepherd), whatever struggle you are undergoing right now, in the end, **God will make sure you will be victorious, you will win, you will be eating from His table, having a feast, celebrating the fruits of your hardwork and struggles.**

Application : It means whatever you are undergoing through today, if you keep on following the Lord...**you will be victorious in the end.**

Why?

Romans 8:36-37 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Illustration : why "more than conquerors", Jeric Soriano explains it "Pacquiao doing all the boxing... all the conquering and when he goes home, he gives the prize to his wife." Christ was the one who already did the battle for you.

Remember, it's His battle... He's the one fighting for you.

David the one wrote this Psalm is very familiar with this. Remember, he said that when he was facing Goliath.

1 Samuel 17: 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Why? How can you be sure of that?

2. The Lord reveals His sanctified.

"You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows."

Illustration : The anointing of David as king.

Application : The Lord chose David even if it look likes he is the least deserving. It means God chose you. You are here right now because God chose you to be here to hear this Word.

It's because you are chosen by God. You will have the victory. No one touches you because you are chosen by God.

Zechariah 2:8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—

Nothing will touch you, nor destroy you.

Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Application : Just like Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego...they went into the hot furnace. But when people looked inside they did not see three but four...it was the Lord! And they came out and did not even smell of smoke!

The Assurance That God Will Fulfill All Our Needs

"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."

1. Surely - emphasis

2. goodness and lovingkindness will follow me. - follow "radaph" pursue, hunt, chase you

How do we receive that goodness and love? Let's make it easy for the pursuer to get us. Let's surrender to Him.

3. all the days of my life - all not some - the blessing is for today.

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

SUMMONS

How do we get benefits of Psalm 23

SURRENDER OUR LIFE TO JESUS AND FOLLOW HIM.

We need to follow the Lord. Look at the promise of the Lord in John 10

John 10: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Earlier, I shared with you, why you will live life to the full...here's the answer.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

This means, we are following the One who loves us so much. What's the proof? He gave his life for us.

Zak will sing a song...but make this your prayer.

S.G.D.