

April 21, 2024 - Sunday Sermon Study Guide Lead Pastor Brian Bales - The Power of a Name: *Shepherd*- Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.³ He restores my soul. He leads 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 shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23 (ESV)

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word. In the ancient Middle East sheep were symbols of wealth.

Commentary

"It (Psalm 23) has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; it has visited the prisoner, and broken his chains, and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go, too." (Henry Ward Beecher, cited in Charles Spurgeon)

- ii. "The sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, 'My.' He does not say, 'The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leadeth forth the multitude as his flock,' but 'The Lord is my shepherd;' if he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is a Shepherd to me; he cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me." (Spurgeon)
- a. He restores my soul: The tender care of the shepherd described in the previous verse had its intended effect. David's soul was restored by the figurative green pastures and still waters the shepherd brought him to. i. Restores has the idea of the rescue of a lost one. "It may picture the straying sheep brought back." (Kidner)
- ii. "In Hebrew the words 'restores my soul' can mean 'brings me to repentance' (or conversion)." (Boice)
- iii. "'He restoreth my soul.' He restores it to its original purity, that was now grown foul and black with sin; for also, what good were it to have 'green' pastures and a black soul!" (Baker, cited in Spurgeon)

DISCUSSION POINTS

1.	If fear is an invitation to feel or experience something, do you accept that invitation or decline it like yo would an invitation to a bad party?	u
	How many times in a day do you find yourself feeling fearful of something or someone?	
	• What name (s) do you have for the word <i>fear</i> as it manifests in your day-to-day living?	
	 David in Psalm 23 says that he will not fear but we can only understand fear when we have experienced it first-hand. How is David understanding the role of a shepherd in this passage and writing from a very personal perspective? 	

2.	In the ancient Middle East sheep were symbols of wealth. They are docile, needy animals that required
	the care of a Shepherd and in Psalm 23 David is asserting that God has taken up the menial task of
	shepherding and therefore caring for him as if he were like a sheep.

•	David was aware of his enemies and knew that he needed protection. This is the same David who
	as a teen fought against Goliath and took him out with a sling shot and a stone. He is the same
	David who became King and wielded the power associated with his title. Looking back at
	David's life and his experiences, how had he developed a trust in God for his provision and his
	protection?

• If even a King understands his need for God's protection how should that influence us here in a wealthy county with so many resources that provide protection and provision?

- 3. Consider when you have needed something that you realized God was already aware of even before you became aware. We each need the type of restoration that David writes about in this Psalm. While he paints a pastoral scene (one of sheep in green pastures) we should not assume that this is simply an idyllic picnic scene with sheep in the distance grazing on the hillside where David has found respite. It is more than that.
 - There were layers of rust on the once beautiful vintage car. But a Master Restorer painstakingly removed the rust before applying new paint and rebuilding the engine. The leather seats were conditioned to look like new again and when the work was finished, he drove her out of the garage and reveled in his workmanship. You may feel like that vintage car in need of work. What in your life needs the sort of restoration that only The *Good Shepherd* can offer?

•	The Good Shepherd can both rescue us and restore us from our sin, our mistakes, and our poor choices. Consider a time in your past when you needed to be rescued, how did your Shepherd both rescue and restore you in that place and time?
	goodness and mercy (hesed) will pursue us. How does the image of The Good Shepherd pursuing ive you peace (shalom) and the reassurance that David wrote about and experienced firsthand? Consider that if you need a Good Shepherd, others need Him as well. How would you share this passage with someone who does not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and Good Shepherd?
•	What part of your own story are you willing to share with someone who is in need of a Good Shepherd?
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	x, read Psalm 23 in the morning and in the evening. Reflect on the message and ask the Holy Spirit to you what it is that He wants you to discover and experience. Seek out a friend to process this with.