

## Reflections on 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 shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalms 23:1-6 ESV*

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. John 10:11 ESV*

God is in charge. We need to surrender to the shepherd. Instead of going our own way we must follow Him. Everyone of us is totally unique. Advertising tells us that we need more. It is geared to make us feel unworthy or deprived if we don't get what we want. Psalm 23 says, "I shall not want." This means that with the peace of God in our hearts we can rest in the shepherd's care knowing that He loves us.

You don't have to be afraid anymore. Trust that the Good Shepherd will watch over you.

Contentment is a state of heart and mind not dependent on what we possess. It begins inside of us. We need to pre-commit to contentment. Green pastures and still waters are vivid pictures that show us restful places that God wants to take us. We are given a break, a time of refreshing both inside and out. God wants us to stop and rest. Put down as many burdens as you can. Give yourself time and space to heal.

Do you have a sorrow that is stealing your peace? Take it to God in prayer. Trust that He will help you.

He restores my soul. God can take a life that is in disarray and hopelessly broken and put it together again. God invites us to come to Him, to confess our sins and seek His forgiveness and restoration. It's not simply all about us. It's about God leading us along a path of righteousness. It is a path of joy knowing that we are where we belong. Life isn't only about what happens. How we look at what happens and react to it is just as important. This is facing reality with boldness, not being afraid because God is with us. The shadow cannot hurt us. Our shepherd is walking beside us. He has said He will be with us.

What good can God bring out of our sorrows? His rod and staff bring comfort. He corrects us out of love. He prepares a table before us. He takes pleasure in caring for us. Don't run away from the enemy. We can feast in the face of the enemy. Refuse to let the enemy set the agenda. Jesus feasted in the presence of his betrayer. God loves us so much that he doesn't just feed us, but also anoints us and comforts us.

Do you have something you are running from? Don't let the enemy set the agenda for your life.

When we trust that what we have is enough we learn that what we have is more than enough. We have an abundance that makes us want to share. Our cup overflows. Do not give problems more than their due. There are things in life that disaster and disease cannot reach. Maybe they can ravage the body but they have no claim on the soul. The joy begins when we anticipate the destination.

What destination are you heading for? What is most precious in your life?

*"For I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18* When catastrophes overwhelm us we realize that we're not going to fulfill our lifelong dreams. We need to realize that the eternity that God has planned for us is so much more than anything that we will ever know on earth. Whether our days are many or few they are all in the hands of the Lord.

Treasure the good that you have instead of running in fear. Let your heart overflow with thankfulness.

*Dear Lord, we all face many enemies and want to run and hide. Give us the courage to stand firm in adversity and face difficulties bravely. We know that it is not by our strength that we will overcome, but by Your grace and power that the battles can be won. Help us treasure each day that You give us knowing that on earth our days are numbered. Fill us with Your joy and peace. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*