

Psalms 23-25 – Thursday, July 19th, 2018

- I have to confess that I am somewhat intimidated when it comes to teaching the 23rd Psalm, and this for a number of reasons.
- This is one of the most powerful and profound not to mention well-known Psalms and even passages in the entirety of scripture.
- It's for this reason that this Psalm rises to the level of needing an introduction as it relates to the impact it's had through history.

One commentator said it best this way, "It 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."

Another commentator of the 23rd Psalm wrote, "Millions of people have memorized this psalm, even those who have learned few other Scripture portions. Ministers have used it to comfort people who are going through severe personal trials, suffering illness, or dying. For some, the words of this psalm have been the last they have ever uttered in life."

Psalm 23 -- A Psalm of David. 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.

- As I combed through this amazing Psalm in preparation for tonight's teaching, the Lord ministered something powerful to me.
- It's a Psalm that reassures us as God's people during those situations in life when we are prone to be discouraged and despair.
- What follows are 11 such reassurances that I would like to share, all of which speak to our lives with the Lord as our Shepherd.

- 1) I'm the sheep, and the Lord is my Shepherd Who always protects me in my vulnerability, and directs me in my susceptibility.
- 2) Because the Lord is my Shepherd there will never be a time when I will ever lack or have a need that He will not provide me.
- 3) My Shepherd keeps me so safe that I'm able to lie down in lush pastures in which to eat, and still waters from which to drink.

Philip Keller in his book, "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23," has some very interesting insight into the difficulty with sheep lying down. He writes that sheep do not lie down easily, and will not unless four conditions are met. Because they are timid they will not lie down if they are afraid. Because they are social animals they will not lie down if there is friction among the sheep. If flies or parasites trouble them they will not lie down. Finally, if sheep are anxious about food or hungry they will not lie down. Rest comes because the shepherd has dealt with fear, friction, flies, and famine.

- 4) When I fail and falter, He restores my soul and in redirecting me, leads me back onto the path of righteousness for His sake.
- 5) Whenever I'm going through a very dark valley in the shadow of death, I will not be paralyzed by fear of any evil or danger.
- 6) He is always with me especially when in the valley of despair because in order for there to be a shadow, there has to be light.

Charles Spurgeon of this says, "Death in its substance has been removed, and only the shadow of it remains. Some one has said that when there is a shadow there must be light somewhere, and so there is. Death stands by the side of the highway in which we have to travel, and the light of heaven shining upon him throws a shadow across our path; let us then rejoice that there is a light beyond. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot stop a man's pathway even for a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy us." ... "It has an inexpressibly delightful application to the dying; but it is for the living, too ... The words are not in the future tense, and therefore are not reserved for a distant moment."

- 7) My Shepherd always comforts me with His rod and His staff, which makes me to feel safe and secure no matter the situation.
- 8) My Good Shepherd loves me so much that He will discipline me whenever I wander away into dangerous and deadly places.
- 9) My Shepherd will prepare a table in the midst of my enemy so I'm able to feast and be nourished sufficiently and peacefully.

Once again, I think Spurgeon says it best, "When a soldier is in the presence of his enemies, if he eats at all he snatches a hasty meal, and away he hastens to the fight. But observe: 'Thou preparest a table,' just as a servant does when she unfolds the damask cloth and displays the ornaments of the feast on an ordinary peaceful occasion. Nothing is hurried, there is no confusion, no disturbance, the enemy is at the door and yet God prepares a table, and the Christian sits down and eats as if everything were in perfect peace."

- 10) The Lord as my Shepherd will give me victory over the enemy and anoint my head with oil to overflowing with the Holy Spirit.
- 11) Not only will goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life here and now, but I'll dwell with Him in eternal life forever.

F. B. Meyer - "We are well escorted, with a Shepherd in front and these twin angels behind!"

Psalm 24 -- A Psalm of David. 1 The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. 2 For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters. 3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. Selah 7 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

- Psalm 24 is a very interesting Psalm when it's understood in the context of the two Psalms before it, Psalm 22 and Psalm 23.
- Psalm 22 is about Jesus redeeming us, Psalm 23 is Jesus shepherding us, and Psalm 24 is about Jesus coming back for us.
- The reason I point this out is because it speaks to how the entirety of scripture paints a picture of Jesus Christ and the cross.

G. Campbell Morgan - "By our calendars, yesterday He passed through Psalm 22. Today He is exercising the office of Psalm 23. Tomorrow, He will exercise finally the authority of Psalm 24."

Psalm 25 -- A Psalm of David. 1 To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. 3 Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. 4 Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. 5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day. 6 Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD. 8 Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. 9 The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. 11 For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. 12 Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. 13 He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth. 14 The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant. 15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net. 16 Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted. 17 The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses! 18 Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins. 19 Consider my enemies, for they are many; And they hate me with cruel hatred. 20 Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You. 22 Redeem Israel, O God, Out of all their troubles!

- Psalm 25 is known as one of the acrostic Psalms in the sense that it's a literary and poetic way of adding beauty to the writing.
- Among the acrostic Psalms are 9, 10, 11, 25, 34, 37, 112, 119, and 145 and as such they're all easier to memorize in Hebrew.
- Be that as it may, this Psalm is a plea to God from David for help in the midst of the treacherous enemies that are against him.