



LifeChange Study of Psalms

Lesson 6 (Week of March 22, 2020)

The Point: God is a Shepherd to those who follow Him.

Prevailing Thought

Let go, and let God Lead

Worship Time

Giving of thanks, offering praise, sharing wins. (Platform - Zoom)

Opening Activity/Discussion

Share in the chat:

Share in a very short sentence where do go or like to do to be revived, reenergized.

Transition

Background

A Psalm of praise penned by David - Why is David praising God

During the time of David, sheep is a major part of the economy. And, during his days as a lad, he tended to sheep. David knew that sheep grazed in mostly dry, rocky, semi-desert areas where patches of grass grew. In these areas, were dangerous steep cliffs. Even the most stable, sure footed sheep could slip and fall to its death. Also, in these areas water sources are scarce. Therefore, the shepherd had to closely lead and guide the sheep from one area of grass to another and one water source to another. David knew that a shepherd had to know the terrain well enough to know where to lead the sheep so that they would not overgraze and destroy the pasture. David also knew that for the sheep to benefit from such a dangerous environment they had to follow the lead of the shepherd.

By the time David is writing this Psalm of praise, some believe that he has been in distressed situations; such as being, persecuted by King Saul. And, now he is King and flourishing on the throne. In his reflection, he looks back and tells us about the goodness of God during the rough times. He is saying to us let me tell you how God kept me as a shepherd keep sheep. How he kept me from falling, how he didn't let foot slip, how he fed me when I was hungry and gave me water when I was thirsty in a dry and weary land.

Word Time and Discussion

Read Psalm 23.

Vs 1 - David opens with the Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. Some versions say I have all that I need.

Q. Why does David refer to God as a shepherd versus friend, refuge, strong tower or rock? He knows what it takes to be a shepherd. It speaks to God being omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent in the lives of His children.

Q Why does David say he shall not want, or he has all that he needs? Is he talking about now that he is king and sitting throne? No, God has always provided David with what was best for him and not with what David thought was best. For example, in the battle between David and Goliath, God provided David with a slingshot and stones versus typical gladiator equipment. Cross Ref: Phil 4:19 God supplies all your needs...

Vs 2 – He then says, He *makes (maketh)* me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters. Some versions say, He *lets* me lie down.

Vs. 3 - He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Q. In light of knowing what we know about the terrain of where sheep had to graze, what is significant about this verse? The rough, dry environment is not conducive in producing such provisions.

Q. Have you ever experienced a rough, dry time in your life and now in your reflection, you realize that God was always provided? Are you experiencing rough, dry times right now? Your rough time could be from being tired from the different challenges life brings or being tired like the prodigal son who was living a life contrary to the will of his father, his shepherd.

When we Let Go and Let God Lead us to green pastures and still water. (Not a fire hose that is blasting you in the face, but still waters.) He restores our soul. He gives us rest. And, He is glorified; particularly, when others see God's children prospering during barren times.

Vs. 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.

Keeping the text within context of the passage regarding the care of a shepherd, David is speaking about his soul coming close to the grave and his desire not to die during his troubling times. Like the sheep not wanting to slip to their death, David does not want to die at the hands of Goliath or King Saul. So, he tells us here that he has no fear because he is relying, trusting the Shepherd. Luke say in the New Testament, He gives light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). Let go and let God Lead

The shepherd keeps us by using His rod to correct and discipline us. Solomon speaks about the rod in Proverbs 13:24 "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." By the way, this verse is not referring to whoopings. Rods were used to prick

the sheep to get them back in the fold, to untangle them from various snares, to stop them from fighting each other. He would also use the rod to defend the flock from predators. The staff had a curved end that the shepherd used to hook around the neck of the sheep to lead them back to himself when they would go astray.

Q. Have you experienced God using His rod and staff in your life and then have an epiphany, by coming to the realization it was for your comfort?

Vs. 5 - You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Bible Scholars listen to David. He is telling us that he was experiencing God providing for him in providential way, a preordained way, a way that was predestined in the wilderness, during barren times. God is openly blessing him with an outward prosperity that his enemies will see. Furthermore, this anointing with oil is not referring to the oil that Samuel the prophet used to anoint David to oversee the kingdom. It is referring to the custom during that time. Oil was used to anoint guest head and feet at luxurious feast.

By God providing for us in the presence of our enemies, He is desiring for our lives to witness of Him and draw them into the fold.

Vs.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.

David is saying that he knows for sure, for certainty, definitely or we would say back on the block “mos def.” God’s favor, grace, love, mercy will continually, always will be, in his life because it is following him. In Deuteronomy 28:2, Moses says, All these blessings will come upon you and **overtake** you (When?) when you obey the LORD your God...

Bible Scholars, Students of the Word of God When we Let Go and Let God lead, by following Him and obeying His Word. When we do, our lives outwardly witness to others of the goodness of God even in dry and barren times.

Assignment

Lesson 7