

## Refuge City Church — September 12, 2021

### “In the Presence of our Savior” [Psalm 23]

#### Introduction

- When we reflect on the past year and a half, what comes to mind?
  - Fear, anxiety, unknown circumstances, locked down, sickness, death, job loss, etc.
- When we reflect on who God is, what comes to mind?
  - Blessings, provisions, faithfulness, fellowship, hope, love, trust, confidence, etc.
- **QUOTE:** “Its peace, not escape; its contentment, not complacency: there is readiness to face deep darkness and imminent attack, and it all reveals a love which homes towards no material goal but to the Lord Himself.” [Derek Kidner]

#### Psalm 23

**Verse 1:** The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

- Is He? Can you claim that He is your Shepherd, and no one or nothing else?
  - **John 10:11, 14**, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”
  - From Joshua 24: Choose this day whom you will serve, follow, and depend on for *all* your provision.
- God provides us everything we need.
  - **QUOTE:** “...and, if I have not everything I desire, I may conclude it is either not fit for me or not good for me, or I shall have it in due time.” [Matthew Henry]

**Verse 2:** He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

- Because God knows your needs, He leads you exactly where you need to be [green pastures].
  - There you find nourishment [Word of God] and rest [peace].
  - **Psalm 34:8**, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!”
- In John 4, Jesus defines himself as “Living Water”... He is our refreshment & restoration.
  - The Word of God is our spiritual refreshment in that it leads to eternal life.
    - It cleanses us, renews us, and encourages us.
  - Ever sit by a flowing river/creek, or sit by the ocean at night [when most/all the busyness and voices are gone]?
    - Why are those desired places of rest? [peaceful, calm, comforting]... This is what Jesus and His Word does for us.

**Verse 3:** He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

- He restores us!
  - David writing the Psalm... did God restore him after his sin with Bathsheba? Yes.
  - Did Jesus restore Peter after he denied Him 3 times? Yes.
  - Did Jesus transform and restore Paul after he dedicated himself to killing and imprisoning Christians? Yes.

- Did Jesus restore me after I decided to live in a season of drunkenness, lust, and shame? Yes.
- Can He restore you? *Absolutely!* Are you willing to trust Him and follow Him to find out?
- He leads us down the right path. His way. How many times did He call people to follow Him?
  - **John 14:6**, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
  - **Psalm 139:23-24**, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"
  - According to former real life shepherd, Phillip Keller:
    - "The greatest single safeguard which a shepherd has in handling his flock is to keep them on the move... As soon as the point was reached where I felt the maximum benefit for both sheep and land was not being met, the sheep were moved to a fresh field. On the average this meant they were put onto new ground almost every week."
    - We are not to become lazy/complacent in our walk with God.
    - Constantly be on the move within the green pastures of God's Word.

**Verse 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.

- God protects you!
  - If we trust and believe that God is sovereign and Almighty, what do we have to fear?
  - Why would we not assume a posture of 'clingy dependence'?
  - He promises to be with us always [**Joshua 1:9; Matthew 28:20**]
- Many say one can not know...
  - joy without sorrow
  - peace without the storm
  - contentment without hunger
  - refreshment without thirst
  - life without death
  - freedom without bondage.
  - The gospel of Jesus is Good News, only because we have an awareness of the bad news.
  - Take heart that although we walk *through* the valley, and experience its darkness/loneliness, we will emerge on the other side because of Who is with us.
  - Like a bee who has surrendered it's stinger, so humanity has been marked by death.
    - However, it can not further harm us because it has lost its power over us by the blood of Jesus!
    - **1 Corinthians 15:55-57**, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- His rod and staff: discipline, protection, and guidance correction.

- I don't know of a single individual whose life isn't better for having received 'proper' discipline and correction.
- **Hebrews 12:11**, "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

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

- We can relax and dine in the presence of the Lord here and now.
  - In the midst of this world's problems, trials, attacks, etc., God invites us to sit down at His table.
    - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego = in the presence of God in the fire.
    - Paul and Silas = pray and praise to God in prison after they were beaten.
- As a shepherd goes before his flock to determine the best places to graze, so Jesus has gone before us to prepare a better place for us.
  - **Hebrews 6:19-20**, "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf..."
  - **John 14:2-3**, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."
- Anointing one's head with oil represented another form of refreshment and soothing of aches and pains to a weary traveler.
  - Spiritually, it represents the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - [David anointed King of Israel] **1 Samuel 16:13**, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward..."
  - **Matthew 26:39**, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."
  - **Luke 22:20**, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
  - The blessings we receive from God never cease. His mercies are new every morning, His grace abounds more and more, His love never fails.

**Verse 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.

- As our Great Shepherd leads us, we follow. And in the wake of His presence are the redeeming qualities of His goodness, love, and mercy.
  - We'll only be affected by those qualities as long as we are walking in the footsteps of our Shepherd.
- To dwell in the house of the Lord is to remain in Him here, as long as He grants us breath in our lungs.
  - To be ever present with Him is to constantly dwell in the presence of our Savior.
  - **2 Corinthians 5:6-9**, "So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him."
  - And one day, either at His imminent return, or as our time on earth expires, with our faith fully vested in Him, He will fulfill His promise to us of everlasting life!