

23rd Psalm

Psalm 23 is one of the most well-known and beloved Bible chapters. King David is the author. Its contents have been known to inspire people to remember God's grace and guidance in times of turmoil and difficulty. The scriptures are a powerful reminder that we have a loving God who journeys alongside us as we navigate life's many ups and downs.

The first three verses are a powerful biblical reminder for us to consider God's grace and guidance even when life is fruitful and things are going well. The next verses, though, specifically ask us to seek God amid difficulty, like the isolation of being quarantined due to the Corona virus.

Psalm 23 tells us to "fear no evil" and that God is with us, even when life gets difficult. The final three verses are yet another powerful reminder of the goodness of God and His love in our lives.

Using a metaphor of a pastoral life, with which David was familiar, he describes God's loving care in providing refreshment, guidance, protection, and abundance, so that we can have confidence in His continual favor.

1. Christ's relation to His people is often represented by the figure of a shepherd (John 10:14 , Hebrews 13:20 , 1 Peter 2:25 , 5:4), and therefore the opinion that He is the Lord here so described, and in Genesis 48:15 , Psalms 80:1 , Isaiah 40:11 , is not without some good reason.

2. green pastures--or, "pastures of tender grass," are mentioned, not in respect to food, but as places of cool and refreshing rest.

the still waters--are, literally, "waters of stillness," whose quiet flow invites us to relax. On the other hand, you have boisterous or noisy streams and stagnant pools on the other.

3. To restore the soul is to revive or quicken it (Psalms 19:7), or relieve it (Lamentations 1:11 Lamentations 1:19).

paths of righteousness--those of safety, as directed by God, and pleasing to Him.

for his name's sake--or, regard for His being, a pledge for His people's welfare.

4. In the darkest and most trying hour God is near.

the valley of the shadow of death--is a ravine overhung by high dangerous cliffs, filled with dense forests, and well designed to scare the timid, and afford a hiding place from beasts of prey. While the poem speaks about great danger or cause of terror, it does not exclude the greatest of all, to which it is most popularly applied, and which its terms suggest.

thy rod and thy staff--are symbols of a shepherd's (God's) power. By them he guides his sheep.

5, 6. Another figure expresses God's provided care.

a table--or, "food."

oil--anointing oil, the symbol of gladness.

cup (which represents abundance)--are prepared for the child of God, who may feast in spite of his enemies, confident that this favor will ever attend him. This beautiful Psalm most admirably sets before us, in its chief figure, that of a shepherd, the gentle, kind, and sure care extended to

God's people, who, as a shepherd, both rules and feeds them. The closing verse shows that the blessings mentioned are spiritual.

The poetry is often a metaphor. Remember that a metaphor is when you make a statement that is called a figure of speech or relates something that paints a picture. It doesn't really mean exactly what you are say.

You can see from the poetry that the author is both wise and clever. If your read any more of the Psalms, you will need to use what is called a commentary. This is a book that interprets or tells you what the author is saying.

Scripture: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Questions:

1. Who is the Shepherd David is talking about?
2. Are the paths of righteousness scary?
3. What is the Valley of the Shadow of Death?
4. When you encounter the Valley of the Shadow of Death, who is with you?

Next Steps: Take some time to think about writing a line of poetry. You can probably do better than; *Roses are red violets are blue, I am bigger and smarter than you.* Use an analogy and write something beautiful to your mother.

Like, *"When you praise me for making my bed, your words are like ice cream on a warm summer day."* Mushy, right?