

The Shepherd Psalm #2

Introduction. Of all the Old Testament books, none has meant more to modern Christians than Psalms. Psalms captures the essence of what it means to walk by faith with God. They display the outpouring of the heart to God through praise and prayer.

As we began to see this morning, depth and strength underlie the simplicity of Psalm 23. Its peace is not escape; its contentment is not complacency: there is readiness to face deep darkness and imminent attack, and the climax reveals a love which funnels toward no material goal but to the Lord Himself.

I. Courage — “I will fear no evil”

- A. David had shown courage all of his life.
 - 1. God’s deliverance was the basis of his courage (1 Samuel 17:37).
 - 2. David knew as long as he did God’s bidding, God would be with Him.
- B. The man who fears God has no need to fear anything else.
 - 1. If we fear men we may be rejected of God (Matthew 10:28).
 - 2. God accepts us if we fear Him and do His righteousness (Acts 10:34-35).
 - 3. John teaches us how to completely eliminate fear (1 John 4:18).
- C. When we are totally satisfied that we are at peace with God we need not fear any evil.

II. Companionship — “For thou art with me”

- A. Just to have God as a constant companion is so comforting, but how can we have Him as our companion?
 - 1. We must come to where God is (1 Timothy 6:16).
 - 2. We must come to walk where He dwells (1 John 1:5-7).
 - 3. That means we have to keep His commandments (1 John 2:3-5; 3:24).
 - 4. The Lord is with us as our companion as long as we are with Him (2 Chronicles 15:2; James 4:8).
- B. Too many today suppose God is with them.
 - 1. Even Mary and Joseph supposed that once (Luke 2:43-44). They looked for Him among their kinsmen which is just like a lot of people today who are looking for Him among their relatives.
 - 2. Others are looking for Him in denominations and in other schemes. He is not to be found there.
- C. You must look for Him where He is.
 - 1. You cannot come to God except by Jesus (John 14:6).
 - 2. To come to Jesus you must hear and learn of the father (John 6:44-45) and obey Him (Matthew 7:21).
 - 3. And you must be careful not to go beyond God’s word or encourage them who do (2 John 9-10).
 - 4. You see, if we listen to Him, and obey Him, He will be with us as our companion.

III. Comfort — “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”

- A. A shepherd’s rod and staff were the same tool.

1. It was a rod because it was used as a stick by which to discipline and a staff because it was also a walking stick.
 - a) David could take comfort in the rod because he knew that God would use it to punish his enemies (Psalm 9:16).
 - b) He could take comfort in His staff because it was the path God would travel and in which David could place his trust, for David knew God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13).
 2. God's rod and staff comforts those who walk with Him because He is a God of comfort (Isaiah 40:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4). It is not a comfort to the sinner (Psalm 110:2; 138:7).
- B. Think of the glorious promises we have in death (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). What greater promises or comfort could we desire?

IV. Providence – “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies”

- A. Abundance is provided. But more than that, it is provided so that his enemies could see it. All of those who criticized and complained about his chosen course were able to see that it was the right course.
- B. We have the same promises (Proverbs 28:25; Matthew 6:32-33). While the enemy of the sheep seeks a victory, a table is prepared for the sheep.
- C. One of the lessons learned from Revelation is that although the enemy seems to be victorious, the saints always win (Revelation 13:10; 14:12-13; 19:11-21; 20:4-6).

V. Favor – “Thou anointest my head with oil”

- A. To be anointed of the Lord is to be chosen of the Lord, be in His favor, and to be a king.
- B. God has anointed and chosen certain ones today (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:4).
 1. We are a chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9).
 2. We are in His favor (2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:16-19).
 3. He has made us kings (Revelation 1:6).

VI. Joy – “My cup runneth over”

- A. The cup is full.
 1. There is no more room for blessings, and he is overjoyed as a result.
 2. This reminds us of how it is when we gain any kind of victory.
- B. Think of the rejoicing that the Christian can have in Christ.
 1. The eunuch went on his way rejoiced (Acts 8:39).
 2. The jailer's household rejoiced (Acts 16:34).
 3. All Christians should rejoice (Matthew 5:11-12; 1 Peter 4:12-14).
- C. No one on earth has more right to rejoice than the people of God.

VII. Mercy – “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”

- A. There were reasons for David's conclusion.
 1. He had followed the Lord and leaned on Him.

2. He had been richly blessed even before his enemies.
3. He had reason to expect even further reward if he continued to follow God.
- B. God's goodness is reserved for those who continue in His goodness (Romans 11:22).
 1. The prodigal understood that the goodness of His father's house was reserved for those who lived there (Luke 15:17).
 2. The blessings of salvation are reserved for those who continue to walk therein (1 Corinthians 15:1-3; Colossians 1:21-23).
- C. Yes, and if you are continuing in God's commandments, you too should enjoy goodness and mercy all the days of your life.
 1. This does not mean you are not going to be tried from time to time.
 2. God permits us to be tried to prove and increase our faith (James 1:1-3, 12-14; 1 Peter 1:6-7).

VIII. Immortality – “And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever”

- A. David understood that following the Lord not only provided blessings here but that provided for eternal life too.
 1. Abraham had this kind of faith (Hebrews 11:10-16).
 2. Job reflected it too (Job 14:14).
- B. Godliness not only has the promise of the life that now is but the one which is to come (Mark 10:28-30; 1 Timothy 4:8).
 1. We will have a new body (2 Corinthians 5:1; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:52-57).
 2. It is reserved in Heaven for us (1 Peter 1:4).

Conclusion. Can you speak with the faith, conviction, confidence, and assurance of David? Only if you have let the Lord be your shepherd. A thoughtful and prayerful study of the psalmist's lofty song can help us understand what it means to truthfully say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." If you have not had Him as your shepherd, why not start now?