

The promises of Psalm 23

Ps. 23:1

The lord is my Shepherd

Psalm 23 is what comes after Psalm 22 which speaks of Jesus on the cross and in Hell. In Ezekiel 34 we see what a good 'shepherd was supposed to do for the sheep...

- ❖ Feed them
- ❖ Protect them
- ❖ Strengthen and heal them
- ❖ Lead them to safe and luscious pasture

David himself was a shepherd and he knew the responsibility of a shepherd. David laid down his life for the sheep.

1 Sam. 17:34-35 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.

This is why God said that he was a man after his own heart... Not only was David a man seeking God, David knew God's heart and his heart was like the heart of God. The people of Israel had Saul as a king, but this leader did not have the heart of a shepherd. It was David who put his life on the line to lead, protect and deliver from the enemy.

2 Sam. 5:2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.' "

Jesus is the ultimate good shepherd because He literally laid His life for us and died on the cross.

1 John 3:16(a) By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us...

John 10:11 Jesus said of Himself that He was the "good shepherd".

I shall no want!

Why? Because of what He did on the cross... (Psalm 22)

Want: Webster def. To fail; to be deficient; to be lacking, the absence of that which is necessary or useful, To wish for, to desire.

Want or lack is not God's will for His children.

Phil. 4:16 says that *God shall meet all our needs according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.*
Ps. 23:1, not only does God promise to meet our needs but He promised that there should be no want.
WHY ? Because everything we need has already been paid for and provided through the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

2 Pet. 1:3 - Eph. 1:3 - Eph. 1:11 - Rom. 8:31,32 - 1 Cor. 2:9-12

He even wants to fill the desires of our heart

Ps. 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

God is such a good Father... He is the God who is more than enough.

Ps. 23:2

He makes me... We see here that it is God's doing... Often when we feel hurt, vulnerable or in danger, we can have a hard time being quiet and still but we kick and scream. God in His mercy will make us settle down with a strong but gentle hand.

Example: I can see the image of someone drowning, and a lifeguard comes to the rescue, but he has to make the person relax, stop kicking and resisting in order to help him and bring him to safety. He will speak words of comfort, that now he's got him and everything is going to be ok. I remember... when I first gave my heart to Jesus, these are the exact words I heard "do not worry, from now on I have you, and everything is going to be ok!"

To lie down... A place of rest.

This is the beauty of this new covenant... It is a covenant of faith... And faith brings us into rest because Jesus has finished the work and he is sitting down at the right hand of God...

He gave us the victory and all we need to do is receive and live in rest knowing that the victory is already ours in Christ. *Heb. 4:3+9-11; Eph. 1:20.*

This is how Jesus invited people into this new Covenant

Matt. 11:28 Come to me all you are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest...

Bible rest is not passivity but it is ceasing to perform to be good enough... to do something to merit God's blessings and favor... Cease from trying to be perfect by our own efforts. A performance mentality comes from the law, but Jesus has freed us from the law which demanded perfection (*Rom. 7:6 - Heb. 7:19*).

In green pastures... A place of abundance, a place of life, a place of growth

John 10:10 The good shepherd comes to give us life, and life in abundance.

He leads me... Jesus does not push... He does not use force, he does not motivate us with fear but he leads. He leads by example, by the Holy Spirit and by the Word.

Lead = Hebrew, *nachah* - Vines OT - to guide gently & by inference to protect and sustain, to guide or transport in exile or as colonists. We are exiles in this world... Jesus said that we are in this World but not of this world. And as colonists we have to learn to occupy this new territory and take it over.

The equivalent word in Greek is = *hodegeo* - to lead the way like a guide in a museum

John 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
Rev 7:17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

By the still waters...

It is not troubled waters... we just saw that God wants to lead us by living fountains of waters. We see the same symbolism in Exodus 15.

Exodus 15:22-26 The waters were bitter, but God told Moses to cast a tree in the waters to make them sweet, then He made an ordinance (a type of Jesus on the tree cast upon humanity to make a covenant with it and make it sweet).

Exodus 16:27 God then brought them to a place called Elim, which had 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees (a type of the new covenant of life, abundance & prosperity).

Still waters are a place of quietness and peace, a place of refreshment and life. A place of abundance of cleansing and revelation. It is only by the waters that we can grow deep roots and mature.

Ps. 1:2-3 *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

God does not lead us into tests, trials and temptations to mature us... Jesus said in *Matt. 13:19-21* that trials come because of the Word. Who sends the trials? The wicked one, the devil who wants to uproot the Word and destroy our faith.

Matt. 13:19-21 *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

We can rejoice in trials because God has given us victory and we can obtain it by walking in faith... Faith based in the Word.

1 Cor. 15:57 *Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus.*

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me **you may have peace.** In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

It is in the world that we have tribulations... But in Christ we can have peace, even in the midst of trials. Jesus said that we are in this world but not of this world.

Note: *God is not leading us in the desert where there is no water! When God took Israel out of Egypt the children of Israel spent 40 years in the desert because they refused to trust God, they refused to believe and take possession of what God had already given them... Canaan, a place flowing with milk and honey. God was sending them to battle with the understanding that the enemy was already defeated, the battle was already won, the victory was already theirs. The journey to Canaan should have taken them 11 days but they refused to believe and they spent 40 years in the desert.*

Ps. 23:3

He restores my soul

Once God leads us by still waters, this is where he can restore our soul (mind, will, emotions). Water is a symbol of the Word because it is the Word that can cleanse our thoughts, purify our heart and heal our emotions.

Eph. 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.*

Eph. 5:27 *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

The Hebrew word “*shûb*” for Restore is the equivalent of the Greek word “*anakainōsis*” that we find in *Rom. 12:2* and *James 1:21*. It means to renew, to save and make whole, to bring to its original state. God uses His Word to transform us and make us whole again. His desire is to bring us back to what man was originally supposed to be in the Garden.

He leads me: see comment in verse 2.

In the paths of righteousness

Righteousness = Heb. *tsedâqâh* = what is right, just, true and prosperous. It is a legal theological term to describe right standing with God. E. W. Kenyon describes it as being able to stand before God without a sense of guilt, shame, fear or inferiority as if sin had never existed. The Holy Spirit will lead us to our righteousness in Christ.

2 Cor. 5:21 God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ.

This is one of the ministry of the Holy Spirit... He will minister righteousness to us, He will convince us of our right standing with the Father, He will teach us who we really are (sons of God), He will show us that we are loved and accepted by the Father and it is in that place of acceptance and love that we can learn to walk straight and righteously. Our right conduct does not produce righteousness, but knowing our righteousness in Christ produces a right conduct! This path of righteousness is so unfamiliar to us, that we have to be led into it, we have to be reprogrammed so that we can walk it out in our everyday life.

For his name sake

Heb. *Mahan shem* – it means because of his name.

Name in Hebrew represents someone’s honor, authority, character and reputation. God does good things because He is good, just and compassionate. Leading us into trouble and problems is not part of God's character. Because of who He is, God leads us in a path filled with moral rightness, justice and prosperity.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Tempt = Greek *peirazō* - To test, scrutinize, entice.

God is blessed when His children walk in peace, righteousness and prosperity. This reflects on His character, His honor and reputation as a Father.

Ps. 35:27 Let the Lord be magnified who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.

1 Tim. 5 :8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Ps. 23:4

Though I walk... We notice here that it is no longer God who guides us, who leads us... but WE walk.

God does not lead us into trials and tribulations, but the enemy is. See notes in verse 2 “by the still waters”.

Mark 4:13-20 and *Matt. 13:-19-23* say that as soon as the Word is planted in our heart, the enemy comes to steal the Word... how ?

- ❖ Trials and persecutions because of the Word. he comes to test our faith.
- ❖ Deceitfulness of riches, cares & worries, desire for other things.
- ❖ Lack of understanding.

Through the valley of shadow of death

Also sometime through the choices we make, the decisions we take, we end up in the valley of shadow of death... But even there God does not abandon us to our demise... He is there with us even in the midst of our darkness.

Ps. 139:8-10 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

When Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, he said that he would lead us into light and peace, not into chaos and darkness.

Luke 1:79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

We have this promise in God, and it is part of our new covenant in Christ.

Heb. 13:5 I will never leave you, never forsake you.

2 Tim. 2:13 When we are faithless, God remains faithful, He cannot deny Himself.

I like what someone said: "When we take a wrong turn, God is better than a GPS."

I will fear no evil - we should have no fear, and especially not from God. Even when we make a mistake, God is not there to condemn us, to judge us or punish us, no but He is there to help us get out of this situation, even when it is our fault.

Rom. 8:1 For there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

The truth is that God is for us not against us, He is cheering us on to victory.

2 Cor. 2:14 Thanks be to God who leads us to triumph in Jesus Christ.

Your rod and staff they comfort me

Rod - the Word of God. Like the rod of Moses that parted the sea and brought water out of the rock.

Staff - like the staff of a shepherd, it has a hook to get a hold of the sheep's foot to stop it from going the wrong path, or to bring it back on the right path. The Holy Spirit will move upon our heart to stop us from making a mistake or to draw us back on the right path.

The Holy Spirit does not condemn but again he ministers righteousness, showing us who we really are in Christ, what is really our identity. We see an example of the spirit of God at work in the prodigal son, bringing him back to the Father's house. Notice... The rod and staff... They comfort, not beat us up!

How does God correct us and disciplines us?

- ❖ With His Word (the rod) - *2 Tim. 3:16-17*
- ❖ With His Spirit (the staff) - *John 16:13; 1 John 1:20+27*

NOTE: It is true that like a good parent, God will sometimes use our mistakes and situations to teach us something but it doesn't mean that it is God's doing, or that He allowed it for a divine purpose, or that it is His method of teaching His children. It is like a father whose child touched the fire, He will use this opportunity to teach his child that fire is dangerous, but this does not mean that he allowed it to teach him a lesson, and that it is his method of teaching and correction. In this world this would be called «child abuse» and the father would be sent to jail. Why do we accuse Father God of child abuse ?

Psalm 23:5

He set a table before me in the presence of my enemies

Ps. 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

The table of the Lord... What is it? I believe it is the table of communion, where we can receive the bread and the cup which represents the body and blood of our Lord. We see a symbol of it in the passover lamb in *Exodus 12*. They ate in the presence of their enemies (Egypt). They took a perfect lamb. They shed its blood and ate its flesh. What did it accomplish?

Ps. 105:37... They got out with gold and silver and none of them was feeble.

Feeble = hebrew *chazaq* - weak, sick, depressed, ruined, infirm, to stumble because of weak knees. More than 3 millions people and no one was sick, poor, depressed and discouraged. Why? Because they ate "passover lamb" at the table of the Lord... What did they receive?

- ❖ Freedom from bondages, liberty.
- ❖ Financial blessings.
- ❖ Healing.
- ❖ Courage, joy and strength.

Today in the presence of our enemies, we can take communion and receive everything God prepared for us through the blood and body of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 23:6

Surely = adv. Certainly; infallibly; undoubtedly. It is a surety, we can rest secure in this.

Goodness and mercy. This is what the priests of Israel sang continuously "for the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever" and the tangible presence of God filled the temple.

2 Chron. 5:13 Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud.

2 Chron. 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 106:1; Ps. 107:1 and 3 more psalms.

Goodness and mercy is the true nature of God and as we proclaim who He really is, God can manifest Himself. In *Mark 9:51-54* we see Jesus with the disciples crossing Samaria. The Samaritans refused to allow Jesus to spend the night there because He was heading to Jerusalem (Samaritans and Jews were at odds with each other). James and John asked Jesus if they could call fire and judgment on the Samaritans but Jesus rebuked them.

Luke 9:55-56 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

Our perception of God will cause us to act right or wrong, to be blessed or not, to be at peace or confusion, like the man who was given one talent and did not act right because he did not really know his master like the other 2 workers.

Matt. 25:24-25 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' "

By the way, this is not true, the master was a good and just master but this servant did not know him and acted in fear. I love what David says in *Psalm 91:2 "I will say of the Lord he is my refuge, my fortress."*

Ps. 103:2-3 "You bless the Lord oh my soul and do not forget all of his benefits..."

David talked to himself and commanded his own soul (his mind, will, emotions) to choose to declare who God is, to worship and magnify God... Because the more we magnify God the more He can manifest Himself in our lives.

Shall follow me all the days of my life - even if we follow our own path, God will not stop chasing us with his mercy and His goodness. Why? Because his goodness will bring us to repentance, and his mercy will provide forgiveness and a power to change.

Rom. 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever - this is the eternal security we have in Christ. God will never never kick us out of the house, He will never renounce us or take our salvation from us...

Important Addendum

We cannot lose our salvation, God will not take our salvation from us but WE can choose to renounce Our Salvation.

2 Tim. 2:11-13 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

There are some specific stipulations and requirements before God will accept your renouncement and rejection. (*1 Cor. 13:7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*) In these verses the author talks about those whose rejection will cause them to become reprobate...

Heb. 6:4-6; Heb. 10:26-29 and 1 John 5:16.

The sin leading to death, the willful sin, the sin that finds no repentance is when one mature Christian, filled with Holy Spirit, mature in the Word, flowing in the gifts of the Spirit, but who has chosen to renounce His salvation. He has trampled the Son of God and insulted the Spirit of Grace.

How can this happen? When someone walks in sin, God does not give up on the person but continues to draw him to repentance, to put stop signs and red lights but if the person continues to ignore the Spirit of Grace, his conscience can become seared (*1 Tim. 4:2*), his heart can become hardened (*Heb. 3:13*), and he will become cold and indifferent towards God. God will not move away from him, but that person will move away from God. Over a period of time, and after a continuous rejection of Holy Spirit it is possible for that person to become so hard that he chooses to renounce God, his salvation, his righteousness...

He will become what the bible calls a reprobate. God will have to respect his choice and decision and give him over to that reprobate mind according to *Rom. 1:28*.

Prov. 29:1 He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The process is slow... Like a frog that is boiled to death without realizing it. How? The frog is first put in cold water, and a slow fire under the pot heats the water little by little until the frog is boiled to death. This is why sin is not to be played with... It will cost you more than you want to pay, and it will take you further than you are willing to go.