

THE 23RD PSALM
The King James Version

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

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

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

4 Yea, 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.

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

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

The 23rd Psalm is a favorite psalm that has been read, memorized, taught, and quoted again and again throughout the centuries. It is such a familiar, favorite psalm and used for so many different reasons and occasions that we often have the tendency to forget the full impact of truth that it contains.

In this writing I invite you to walk through David's psalm with me as I share the heart of God for His children. May it bring fresh truths and exciting glimpses of God's care and concern for His people today. Psalm 23 is full of the love of God in that it gives hope and promise to the believer. This Psalm has five points that minister to the heart and spirit of man which are:

Verse 1 - the Psalm starts out in stating that **Jesus is the good shepherd** who went one step beyond David's list of provisions in that He gave his life for the sheep (see John 10:1-16).

Verse 3 – We see daily **restoration** of the anxious, weary soul, which is a major human need as shown in 2 Corinthians 4:16 – *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

Verse 4 – this verse is the key to **provision** which is found in the presence of God. Joshua 1:5-9 (God's Commission to Joshua) gives us awesome insights into the faithful and steadfast side of God.

After Moses' death, God told Joshua, Moses' assistant and successor, that he must lead God's people; to cross over Jordan, into the land which He was giving to them—the children of Israel. In verse 5 God says that *No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.*

Throughout these scriptures God is reassuring His people to be strong and of good courage for He says, *I will not leave you nor forsake you!* The Holy Spirit's work is continual. His continued presence is necessary for the success of God's plan in our lives. The Holy Spirit is committed to working with you and accomplishing the task no matter how long it takes. As a son and daughter, we have the assurance in this promise that God will be with us wherever we go!

The Holy Spirit's work is mutual. It is through our faithful obedience as we listen to, yield to and obey that God's blessings and abundance will come. It has been said: *Without Him, we cannot; without us, He will not!*"

The key to provision is the presence of God, and this awesome thought in verses 4 through 6, causes the psalmist to change from mere statements (He...) to spontaneous heavenward praise, for now David is saying, Thou (You) are with me

Verse 5 – of the two kinds of oil, the priestly anointing oil and the **Oriental perfumed oil**, this is the latter in that this act shows favor and excellent hospitality.

Verse 6 – Mercy is the unfailing, steadfast covenant love of God. This loving-kindness is similar to the New Testament word **GRACE**: (John 1: 16-17). *And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace, for the law was given through Moses, but GRACE and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

The definition of a shepherd is one who *tends, leads, guides, cherishes, feeds, and protects* a flock. I believe that the 23rd Psalm and John chapter 10 go hand in hand as we read in John 10:7-15, where Jesus tells us two times that He is **The Good Shepherd**. And twice Jesus says, *I am the door* or some versions use the word *gate*. Jesus is making it clear to us that he is the only way unto salvation. He is the door of the sheep. He gives freedom to them as they go in and out and find pasture.

Jesus came to give life—not just ordinary existence, but life in fullness, abundance, and prosperity. On the other hand, the enemy, Satan, comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. The line is clearly drawn. On one side is God with goodness, life and plenty of all that is necessary for life, and on the other side is the enemy of our souls, who comes to rob us of God's blessing, to oppress our bodies through disease and accidents, and to destroy everything we love and hold dear.

Jesus came to earth in defense of life. By His words and actions He opposed anything, force, or person that might diminish it. So after you read this, ask yourself if you are doing everything within your power to preserve and enhance the lives of those around you.

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON THIS DAY?