



Sermon Notes:

Preacher: Di Timberlake

Text: Psalm 23

Title: Meditating on His rest

Date: 5th May 2019

Psalm 23 – Meditating on His rest

A few weeks ago, I preached on taking a sabbath. I talked about finding rest in God and setting aside one day a week, as commanded, to rest and reflect on the glory of God.

This morning, I want us to experience His rest by spending time in His word and meditating on what it means to find our rest in Jesus. We will be working through Psalm 23. While I do this, I want each one of you to close your eyes and turn inward. Become more aware of your thoughts, inviting God to lead you where He wants you to go.

Some guidelines for this.

As we meditate on this Psalm, press into God's presence. Trust that He is taking you on a journey of discovery about yourself and bringing truth into your heart and mind. Trust that God is with you. Be open to His leading and my prayer is that you will encounter Him this morning in a very real way.

Psalm 23 is very personal. There are no references to "we" or "us" or "they," but only "my" and "me" and "I" and "You." What makes this psalm so special is that it covers all of life. With simple beauty, it speaks of green pastures and still waters as well as dark valleys and enemies and adversities.

My prayer this morning is that God will imprint His truth in your heart that you will find your confidence in Him and rise above the storm clouds in your life, even as David did.

Let's get started.

Psalm 23 starting in verse 1. (New Living Translation)

The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need

I am not the shepherd of my life. The Lord is my shepherd. I am not in charge. I am in the care of another. A shepherd is a protector and provider. Father God protects me as I follow Him. He takes care of me so I lack nothing.

If God is my shepherd, I can relax. I am in the care of my heavenly father. I am not in command over my life, my problems and my peace. I can trust in His provision, even when I can't see it now. He can sustain me no matter what happens. So, all I am responsible and concerned about I can give over to Father God. I am covered and cared for and I am content. It should bring such peace and contentment.

It could also mean that you may need to repent and give control over your life back to Him. Trade your kingdom to His kingdom. To surrender to your shepherd, to let go.

Lord, as we open ourselves to you, where in my life have I not given everything to You? Where have I worried and not trusted you to lead and provide for me?

Think of all you are responsible for – work, school, relationships – everything. Picture yourself handing it over to Him. Imagine yourself giving them to Jesus. Now imagine yourself letting go and leaving it there in His hands.

Lord, we declare you are our shepherd. We confess we have tried to control our lives, but today we hand over our lives and all the things we are responsible for into your capable hands. Lord, would you speak to each one of us right now. Is there a scripture or image you could give us on what it means for me to be loved and cared for by You, Jesus. What it looks and feels like to be in your safety and security.

I declare again that you are my shepherd and I am in your care. I declare again that I have everything I need in You. I trust that you are good enough and that you are big enough to meet my needs.

What do you want me to know about Your abundant provision for me? Show me how I can let go and trust You completely.

Some of you may be broken hearted. You feel bruised and are hurting. You don't feel loved or cherished. God, would you restore their heart. Would you show them Your heart and may they know Your love intimately.

Others may need direction and wisdom – they need you as their shepherd to guide them.

Would you provide this for them, in abundance of wisdom, discernment and your knowledge.

Would you pour out wisdom and insight for their situation.

What would it look like to be at a place of peace with You? You know us intimately as a good shepherd – our personalities, needs, worries and situation. Show each one of us what that peace looks like.

Thank you for what you are speaking to us right now. Guide us into more of your truth as we move through the text.

² He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
³ He renews my strength.

It is when we are fully provided for, we are able to rest.

Green pastures and peaceful streams (or still waters in other translations) gives us a picture of contentment. Picture sheep lying in green grass. They spend most of their day eating, but these are lying down, having eaten all they can. Picture the stream right beside them, again, the sheep are not thirsty, they are content.

Jesus says He is living water and we will never thirst again. When we drink of Jesus' water we no longer have to chase after any of it. We can be totally at rest, fulfilled and at peace with Him watching over us.

He renews us as we sit and rest. He restores us as we stay in His presence. We no longer hunger and thirst for anything.

Come, Holy spirit and enter into our thoughts. Help each one of us to rest completely in you. We confess that we have filled our lives with more and more things and activities that we have not spent enough time with you. Bring us now in your green pastures, beside your still waters that we can now stop and listen to you.

Pause

Some of you may need your souls restored. You feel deflated and beaten up. God will you come and restore their soul. Would you connect them again with you on a deep deep level. Give us an image of what it would look like to be at a place of peace and rest in you. Totally refreshed, full in You. Reveal Your truth to us this morning.

God thank you for what you are saying. Continue to speak to us as we continue in the text.

He guides me along right paths,
bringing honour to his name.
⁴ Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,^[a]
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.

Know that He guides us along right paths. Nothing is a waste. Even in the darkest valley, He guides us. The valley isn't good, but the Shepherd is. He knows the way.

Jesus wants us to know we can actually live at peace even in this world we live in today. Jesus wants to free us and give us His perspective. We can be at peace despite all that is going on around us. Free of fear of failure, of being embarrassed, of life and death, disease, aging. Free of fear of any person, even losing all your possessions, the next business deal. Actually losing everything.

We can be fearless in adversity. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, we can rest.

How do you fight fear when you don't know what's going to happen next and your imagination is working overtime? Your Shepherd has something He wants you to hear:

I will be with you. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13⁵

The presence of God, the full authority of heaven is right there beside you.

He keeps us on His path using His rod when he disciplines us and His staff when He guides us.

We don't need to fear either. Both have a function to correct us and to lead us, all for His glory.

David says, "They comfort me."

⁵You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.

We are safe in the valley of death. We are also safe in the more intimate and personal spaces in our lives, even in the face of our enemies.

God, enter our thoughts right now. God, please identify our fears. We want to be able to fully rest in you. For some, there is a situation in your past when you were not protected. You may now have a belief that the world is not a safe place. Ask God to bring His perspective. Because of our experiences, we started believing a lie about ourselves, the world and maybe You. Please show it to us right now. We believe you are always with us but in our memory, we may not have seen you. Jesus would you show us where you were in that memory. Would you speak and tell us what you want us to know in that event. Jesus, we want to be freed by any fears or lies that are

connected to this memory. Would you tell us your truth. Would you free us of any fear we have been carrying.

Jesus, what would it look like for you to remove this fear? God would you speak to us as the good shepherd, to protect us and defend us. If there is any evil that is in our lives or against us and that you would free that in Jesus name. If there is any evil we are engaging in – media, thoughts, anything that is not of you, would you highlight that and bring healing in Jesus name. We bring it before you in confession and would you come and defend us. Give us faith that even in the face of our enemies that we can absolutely be at peace. Do a work in us, fill us with Your spirit. We want to be freed to live into what You have for us and live into Your destiny. Release a kingdom size vision and dream of what you have called us into. Give us an image of what total freedom and peace looks like to you, oh Lord.

***6 Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the LORD
forever.***

This abundant life, eternal life is available to us right now. We don't have to wait until heaven to have it. It is available to us now. ALL the days of our life. We have this abundance in Jesus, and it is in this that we can truly rest. We don't have to do anything to have this goodness and mercy. It is right behind us, it's right here now.

Celebrate the reality that we can be at rest and at peace with God. It was because of His great goodness and love. God found you not because of what you did but because of Him, his goodness and mercy. His abundant love. He poured out this love through the Holy Spirit. Now we are adopted into his family meaning all the inheritance of Him is shared with us.

Lord, we look up to you when we are weak, when we are in the dark, when we are uncertain and fearful. We turn to you when our souls are downcast. We fix our eyes on you, Jesus, our good shepherd. We will stick close to You and know You are right there beside us in the good and well as the bad. We trust in You that You know the way through and that you will never leave us. You will never let us wander around alone. We thank you for your amazing provision and promise.

Thank you for revealing your truth to us this morning. Please speak to us during this week so that we find our rest in You alone. Amen

