

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

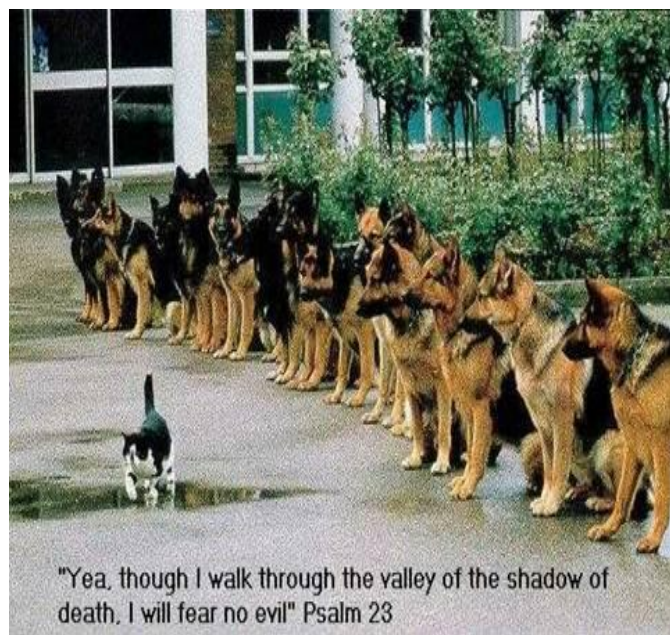
1) 01 June	Psalm 001	God's Wisdom
2) 08 June	Psalm 119	God's Truth
3) 15 June	Psalm 019	God's Glory
4) 22 June	Psalm 096	God's Reign
5) 29 June	Psalm 132	God's Promise
6) 06 July	Psalm 110	God's Messiah
7) 13 July	Psalm 018	God's Deliverance
8) 20 July	Psalm 105	God's Faithfulness
9) 27 July	Psalm 038	God's Conviction
10) 03 Aug	Psalm 032	God's Forgiveness
11) 10 Aug	Psalm 023	God's Care
12) 17 Aug	Psalm 139	God's Greatness
13) 24 Aug	Psalm 005	God's Righteousness
14) 31 Aug	Psalm 042	God's Presence

INTRODUCTION

- As widely popular as Psalm 23 is, it is never quoted in the New Testament
- Many of David's psalms are full of complaints, but this is full of comfort, and the expressions of delight in God's great goodness and dependence upon him.
- Spurgeon said this about Psalm 23.** "The position of this psalm is worthy of notice. It follows Psalm 22, which is peculiarly the Psalm of the Cross. There are no green pastures, no still waters on the other side of the twenty-second psalm. It is only after we have read, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that we come to "The Lord is my Shepherd." We must by experience know the value of blood shedding, and see the sword awakened against the Shepherd, before we shall be able truly to know the Sweetness of the good Shepherd's care.
- Spurgeon goes on to say, "Psalm 23 has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; and it has visited the prisoner and broken his chains"
- God's people are often portrayed as defenseless sheep which need constant oversight. Jesus Christ is The Perfect Shepherd who laid down His own life for His Sheep. **John 10:1-42** portrays six marks of a sheep (i.e., a Christian) who belongs to Christ:

1. They know their Shepherd	4. They love him
2. They know His voice	5. They trust him
3. They hear him calling them each by name	6. They follow Him
- This classic Psalm of only 6 verses depicts God being able to lead us through dark and troubling valleys to eventually come out the other side fully promoted before our enemies
- Should this Psalm be taken literally or figuratively? Generally, for some or absolute for all? From an earthly perspective or from a heavenly perspective?
 - Consider the following:** The promises within the Psalms are primarily Jewish, and suited to a people under the law, but are spiritually true in many Christian experiences – but not all.
 - There are many doctrines, principles, and teachings in Psalm, BUT Psalms are Old Testament sing-alongs, hymns of praise, prayers of desperation, they proclaim the highest of platitudes and the lowest of despair with the purpose of emphasis.
 - AND, like Proverbs, we need to take a passage in light of how the writer intended it to be taken. An absolute, ultra-literal sense may lead to misunderstandings & misapplications, confusion and even contradiction at times. FOR EXAMPLE:
 - Did the cup overflow for the widow with 2 mites? NO
 - Did Stephen have goodness & mercy all his days? NO
 - Will all believers dwell in the house of the Lord forever?.YES

Passage	Comments
Psalm 23:1	The Lord is My Shepherd – I Shall Not Want <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the attributes of a "Good Shepherd"? What are the attributes of a "Good Sheep"? Remember, God wants to lead good sheep, not stubborn cows Hosea 4:16 I Shall Not Want. God should be our EVERYTHING. He should mean more to us than wealth or food. If He doesn't, how do we fix it? Job 23:12; Ps 119:72
23:2	He Makes Me Lie Down in Green Pastures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does God do this, especially when we are going through desert places of loss, turmoil, persecution? Consider this. From a heavenly perspective, the Green Pastures would be dwelling on His character traits of love, faithfulness, righteousness; mercy, and goodness; and recalling His wonderful works Ps 77:11 He Leads Me Beside Quiet Waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How nervous was Jesus when He calmed the seas? Consider this. When we realize the Creator of the universe promises never to leave us or forsake us in all circumstances (even when we fail Him), for He gives us a peace that passes all understanding Phil 4:7
23:3	He Restores My Soul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does God restore the soul of a repentant sinner? Or of a faithful servant? Is there a difference? Consider this. God wants to see sinners repent; and He wants to encourage the fainthearted Is 40:29 He Guides Me in the Paths of Righteousness for His Name's Sake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the truth be told, God does things for His Name's sake. Even our sins are forgiven because of His Name's sake 1John 2:12 How does God keep us or guide us in Righteousness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> He removes certain friends? <input type="checkbox"/> He gives us new friends? <input type="checkbox"/> He closes or opens doors of opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> We receive a ticket for speeding <input type="checkbox"/> Other ways? BUT, what if someone wants to sin? To be unfaithful? To speed on the highway? To speak unkind words? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ We have opportunities to sin and to sin BIG, BUT the path of righteousness is known. We have no excuse.



"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" Psalm 23

Passage	Comments
Psalm 23:4	<p>Though I Walk Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I Fear No Evil – For You are with Me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Is it something Satan or man does or something we cause? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it Death? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it Persecution? <input type="checkbox"/> What else? Notice it is not the "Valley of Death" – which conveys finality, BUT the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" which conveys shortness, something temporary, and no power to harm since it is a shadow. Absolute Truth → God is ALWAYS with us at all times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deut 31:6 "Be strong & brave, fear not, for God goes with you; he will not fail you, nor forsake you" Josh 1:5 "I will not leave you or forsake you" Josh 1:9 "God is with you wherever you go" Mat 28:20 "I am with you always, to the end of time" Heb 13:5 "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" <p>Your Rod & Staff Comfort Me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> God's means to correct us, discipline us, and guide us are countless, unique, and tailored for us He puts boundaries in our lives, which are comforting What are some of boundaries we cannot cross? <input type="checkbox"/> Who we can/cannot marry or be friends with? <input type="checkbox"/> What we can/cannot do? <input type="checkbox"/> Any other boundaries?
23:5	<p>Prepare a Table in the Presence of My Enemies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earthly Perspective. God will vindicate us in every situation in this life since He is just and fairIs 11:4 Heavenly Perspective. God will indeed vindicate us of wrongs done to us, but we may not see it in this lifetime. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For some, God may indeed promote His people in front of every opponent.....e.g., Joseph For others, promotion comes latere.g., Stephen <p>Anointed My Head with Oil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anointing means separation for special service Every one of us is anointed by God for God...2Cor 1:21 <p>My Cup Overflows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earthly Perspective. Prosperity proponents see this as material blessings. Heavenly Perspective. We are materially blessed more than we realize, especially us American Christians, BUT true overflow blessings involve producing much fruit for God's glory (Joh 15:8), having Heavenly riches available through Christ (Php 4:19)
23:6	<p>Lifelong Goodness and Mercy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earthly Perspective. This seems to be a generality for some, but not for all. Consider Stephen, the widow with 2 mites, and all martyrs for Christ. Heavenly Perspective. But God's goodness & mercy extends beyond one's lifetime on earth. <p>Dwell in the House Forever</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absolute Truth → We have the guarantee of the Holy Spirit regarding this spiritual truth2Cor 1:22

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

- This Psalm is a source of great comfort to everyone with a heavenly focus – for better days are coming for God's people, possibly in this earthly life, definitely in the eternal life to come for ALL believers
- NEXT WEEK: Psalm 139. The Value of Life – What is at Stake?**
 - The soul of the child; 2) The future life of the child – who would have an opportunity to know the Lord and lead a fruitful life with rewards in Heaven;
 - Our own soul – it is either enriched or impoverished depending on our support for the unborn, the weak, the perishing, for we are to deliver those being taken away to slaughter **Prov 24:11-12**

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