

Week 2 - “Psalm 23 - God’s Care and Guidance”

The Aim of the Session

Possibly the most famous poem in history, Psalm 23 tells of the relationship between David and God as being like a Sheep and the Shepherd. It has been a great comfort to many and yet it come with a challenging message as to how we experience the life of Peace and Joy which David describes ...

- **Welcome**

Who was your best friend when you were at school and why?

- **Worship**

Spend some time sharing when you have particularly known God’s presence with you at a time of difficulty. Read Psalm 23 – or, alternatively, sing a version of it (SoF 1030, “Crimmond” or “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”) or show a video from YouTube (there are several!). Spend some time in prayer thanking God for those times and asking that you will know his presence with you in your time together.

- **Word**

The Bible is full of references to Sheep (194 times) and Shepherd (62 times). Look up some of them Isaiah 53:6, Psalm 79:13, John 10:14 and Luke 15:4 – 6.

- What would you say are the key facets of sheep?
- What do they need?
- Why can’t they provide this themselves?
- How do they react to being helped?
- Why does the Bible use the image of people/the nation as sheep?
- How does this speak into our relationship with God?

Read Psalm 23 again

- ❖ In what ways does David understand God to be his Shepherd (v1)?
- ❖ What “wants” does God provide for David?
- ❖ Why are “Green Pastures” and “Still Waters” significant to David (v2)?
- ❖ “For his name’s sake” (v3). What is the consequence of David’s righteousness?
- ❖ What does God’s “rod and staff” stand for (v4)?
- ❖ How do they give confidence?
- ❖ Where is the danger of arrogance come into v5?
- ❖ How do we balance the assurances of faith with humility?
- ❖ Does v6 mean that David’s life will always be good?
- ❖ Or what does it mean in reality?
- ❖ Sum up the different words which describe what the Shepherd provides for the sheep in this Psalm.

Read John 10:1-10

- ❖ v10 - How does Jesus understand “Good” (see Luke 18:18)?
- ❖ So how is he relating “Shepherd” and “God” and the relationship with the flock?
- ❖ What is the key to the security of the sheep (vv3-5)?
- ❖ Jesus describes himself as the gate for the sheep (v7). A gate to where?
- ❖ What promise is there for those who obey vv3-5 and enter the gate in v7 (see v10)?
- ❖ How does this relate to Psalm 23:6?

Read Luke 15:4–6. The love of the Shepherd is expressed in both the desire to search for the one individual who has wandered as well as his joy at finding him. The same love is expressed in John 10:14-15: Jesus knows the extent of his Father’s love for him and wants to share it. Something to wonder at!

- **Works**

- What is the number one material need in your life at the moment?
- What is the number one emotional need in your life at the moment?
- What is the number one spiritual need in your life at the moment?
- Could you put them in an order of priority?
- In what ways are you seeking God to be your Shepherd?
- How are you seeking to listen to the Shepherd in this?

As we start a new series together, it is important to note a key part of the relationship that is spoken about in Psalm 23, the relationship which Jesus unpacks in John 10. As wandering sheep, Jesus has come to find us – but he doesn’t force us to be rescued: we are only compelled by the experience of his love. In the same way, when we return to the fold, there are no fences to stop us wandering – we remain close to him only through experiencing and responding to his loving voice. There is a challenge behind the comfort of this Psalm – that to experience the wonderful life David describes requires a commitment to follow that voice wherever it takes us.

Pray for each other about the things which have been raised in this session.



Next Time ...

Psalms: Seeking God Through Honesty and Reality

3 - Psalm 31 – “The God of the Suffering Soul”