

PSALM 23: A Psalm of Confidence

A psalm of David.

¹ *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

² *He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

³ *he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.*

⁴ *Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,*

*I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

⁵ *You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

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

Introduction

Psalms 20:7-8

⁷ *Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

⁸ *They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.*

Who do we trust? Who can we rely on? These are difficult questions especially in a time where trust and confidence are waning. Trusted people and institutions have failed us. Who can we trust? The book of Proverbs invites us 'to trust in the Lord' (Prov 3:5). The psalmist proclaims his confidence in the Lord. He asserts his confidence in the Lord in submissive trust. Psalms of confidence reveal to us the psalmist deep awareness of the Lord's presence in his life. In the presence of God, the psalmist finds peace, strength and contentment.

Psalms 131:2

² *But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.*

The Lord is MY Shepherd

¹ *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

² *He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

³ *he refreshes my soul.*

1. David was a shepherd for many years. This is a vocation he understands well. As a shepherd, he is responsible for leading, feeding, protecting, and procuring rest for the flock. Even as a king, he carried the responsibility of leading, protecting and providing for the people.
 2. In this Psalm, we see David's deep awareness of the presence of God in his life. He is like a sheep that is helpless and lost without a shepherd. He is well and blessed because the Lord is his shepherd.
 3. Reflect on the imagery:
 - David recognizes his own helpless state. David acknowledges the Lord as the authority, provider and protector of his life.
 - The Lord is standing beside him as his shepherd. Because of the gracious presence of the Lord, all his needs are met.
 - What do we lack? How does the Lord meet our needs?
- **Rest in a place of abundance:** The Lord leads him to a place of where he finds rest among fertile grounds. The worshipper is reminded of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised land. Where is your place of rest?
 - **Unhindered access to water that refreshes:** The psalmist has access to the Lord's favour and goodness. The Lord leads him to this place. Even though David and Israel have strayed many times, the Lord has led them back to a place of restoration and renewal.

Keeping Us On the Right Path

*He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.*

1. Another need the Lord meets is the need for guidance. Sheep can easily stray away into dangerous places. The Lord keeps His people on the right path.
 2. This shepherd is not like a hireling who leads the people for personal profit (the bad shepherds of Israel). The Lord leads His people on the right path because He is righteous and true. He is faithful, and he will always act in a way that is true to himself. Therefore, His faithfulness will keep us on the right path.
- We are made righteous in Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

The Valley of Shadow of Death

⁴ *Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

1. The psalmist is not ignorant of the many challenges he must face in life. There are wicked forces at work, there are people scheming against him, and there are real threats to his life. During such times, the Lord fills the need for guidance and protection. The rod and the staff are the tools a shepherd used to fend off attacks and to keep the sheep on the right path.
2. It is clear to us being a Christian is not a bed of roses. The psalmist does not ignore the vicissitudes of life. Jesus informs His disciples of the many challenges that come with being His followers. He also assures us that He will be with us always. When days are difficult, He walks beside us, armed and ready to see us through.
 - Reflect on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Even death cannot separate us from the presence of God.

Favoured and Blessed

⁵ *You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

1. The metaphor of a shepherd ends here for it is not able to capture all the things the Lord does for us. The imagery used here is being hosted by the Lord at His table. We are invited to be seated at the table of the Mighty Lord, our deliverer.
2. The psalmist is seated at the Lord's table in the presence of enemies that has been defeated. The Lord has defeated the enemies and shows favour to His people.
3. **Anointed and an overflowing cup:** The psalmist is treated as a guest of honour. The anointing of the head and a lavish feast (cup overflows) shows us the grace and honour the Lord bestows upon the psalmist.
4. **In the presence of my enemies.** The victorious Lord vindicates the psalmist in the presence of his enemies.
5. We are friends of God, favoured and anointed because He has saved us.
 - Reflect on the Lord's Supper.

Psalms 116:13

¹³ *I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord.*

Goodness and Mercy

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

1. The psalmist is pursued by the goodness and love of God. He is not pursued by troubles, enemies or death. Instead, he finds himself overtaken by God's goodness and love.
2. The Hebrew word for love is a covenantal word. It speaks of God's steadfast love over His people.
3. The psalmist finds his home in the presence of the Lord.

Prayer

1. The Lord will teach us to place our confidence in Him
2. A growing awareness of the presence of God with us
3. Trusting the Lord to meet our needs for
 - Rest, restoration, guidance, protection, and direction during challenging season
 - Salvation, goodness and mercy

Church

- God will continue to shape our lives through His Word, allowing His truth to build us as a church.
- We will be a place of prayer and worship. Teach us to pray, to stand in the gap for this nation and the people of this land.
- Give us strength to live as ambassadors for Christ in the world: where we will extend help, be compassionate and kind and take every opportunity to shine for Christ.
- The Lord will open doors for us to do good works and testify to His name.
- We will proclaim the Gospel with grace and truth.

Covid-19

- Healing
- Economy
- Front liners
- Vaccination
- Mental health

Healing

- Rita
- Jayden

Malaysia

- Stability
- Leadership issues will be resolved peacefully
- Racial reconciliation
- Churches will seek the face of God, so that He will open the heavens, reveal His glory and pour His power upon our nation.
- The Church will be God's instrument for unity, integrity and racial harmony

