

BIBLE SMASH!

Study: Psalm 23

Memorize: John 14:27

Notes:

Analyze: The background information...

Topic: Peace and Comfort

Psalms 23

The 23 Psalm was written by David. It is probably one of the most common passages in the Bible and almost always read at every funeral. Yet it is a Psalm for the living. It puts daily activities such as eating, drinking and seeking security in a God centered perspective. It also calls us to not to simply claim individual assurance but to take our place with others in the household of God.

Verse 1: In the ancient world Kings were commonly known as shepherds of their people. Unfortunately, they were not always able to provide for their flock. People were often times left with little food or left unprotected. David claims that the Lord is his shepherd and that the Lord provides everything for David.

Verse 2-3: While the sense of the verses is that the Lord provides peace and tranquility, in its most basic form, these verses are saying what the Lord provides. Food (green pastures), water (still waters), and safety (right paths, or paths of righteousness). In short, God doesn't just restore my soul, God keeps me alive. "for his name's sake" implies that God does this for us because it is his character.

Verse 4: Even in the worst situations we do not need to fear evil (spiritual oppression). While a rod or staff is a common tool used by shepherds to

protect their flocks it is also representative of royal authority signifying God's sovereignty. God's presence provides for our lives.

Verses 5-6: Again, these verses mention that God is our provider and that he will provide for us even in the midst of our enemies. Verse 6 tells of how God's goodness will follow us. The original verb in Hebrew has the meaning of pursue. God doesn't just follow us, he pursues us. It is interesting to note that many of the other Psalms written by David are written while he is being pursued by his enemies. In this Psalm he is in the midst of his enemies but is being pursued by God and his enemies have been rendered harmless.

The house of the Lord could literally mean the temple in Jerusalem or could figuratively mean staying close to God. In either case, it implies that we must also do our part to continually grow our relationship with God. We must seek him just as he seeks us.

When Psalm 22 is read with Psalm 23 they appear to be meant to be read together. Psalm 22:22 talks about worship in a congregation (with others). And Psalm 23:6 talks about the Temple of the Lord. The temple is the place of corporate worship, where we worship with others. While our relationship with God is something we should grow on a personal level, it is something we should also grow in the Body of Christ with others as a group of believers.

John 14:27

In the preceding verses Jesus has just told his disciples that he is going to be betrayed (to be killed) and then, as his disciples argue that they will follow him where ever he may go, he tells them that they can not follow. To make matters worse, for Peter, he tells Peter, not only will you not follow me, but you will deny that you even know me! Jesus' message of peace is coming to a group of spiritually sadden group of friends that have just spent the last three years of their lives follow the one they believe to be the Christ. This Christ they have come to know as a best friend, and who initially called them to come and follow him, is now telling them, you can't come with me were I need to go next. There is no doubt that they were sad and confused.

When Jesus talks of peace in this verse he is not referring to peace as in no wars but rather the peace that comes from our lives being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual peace and comfort. Jesus is just going to leave his peace, as in, here's a package I will leave behind, but he is giving it to them. It is very real and personal. ...And, he doesn't just give what you need, he gives extra (not as the world gives). Relate this to Psalm 23:5 "my cup runs over". God doesn't just give us what we need, he gives us extra.

At this point, it may be noted that some people believe we are given "extra" so that we may share it with those around us (evangelize). I personally agree with this. I believe that as God expects us to share his grace and peace with others he gives us the means to do it. He not asking

us to do something on our own, he giving us what we need to do it (what we need is Him, and he gives us extra of Him so we can share Him). Weather it is extra in spirit, or extra in wealth, I believe we are to share what God has blessed us with. We are each to share in accordance to what we have been given to be responsible for.

Jesus is not leaving the disciples as orphans but is leaving a piece of himself with the disciples that they may not be afraid in the mist of trouble times. They are being given the strength of the spirit of Jesus.

Share: Is there anything that you have learned that you would like to share with others or anything that have learned from listening to someone else share? Write it here...

Honor: Thought

“The times we need God the most are the times when we don’t think we need Him.”

-From “God is in the Small Stuff” by Bruce and Stan.

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Do you seek God when times are good, or only when times are rough? God is always there for you, are you always there for God?

Leader's Guide: Questions for discussion...

Psalms 23

- 1) (allow some discussion after each question)
 - If the price didn't matter, what are some things you would like to have or things you would like to do?
 - If you had just \$1000 to spend this week, what would you buy?
 - Are there things that you do not have that you feel you need? (Why do you feel you need these things?)
 - Are there things you have that you feel you could live without? (Why do you feel you could live without them?)

- 2) What do you consider to be the basic necessities of life? (Have them explain any answer other than food, shelter, or clothing) Are these items we have become used to living with, or actually need to live with? Why do we feel we need these things (answers could include "advertising has taught us we need them", "everyone else has them", "I just like them, they make life easier" or many other answers.)

- 3) Is there stress involved with trying to obtain things we desire? If yes, what are some of the stresses? (Answers could include, arguments relating to money, working to get money - then not having time to enjoy life because of work, putting items before friends).

- 4) Do we ever put things before God? (money, relationships, schooling...) If yes, what are some of the results of not putting God first?

- 5) Are there changes we can make in our lives to try and put God first? What are they? Allow your students to make a list of specific things they can do. Challenge them to implement some of these changes. Offer the check in with them on a weekly basis to see how things are going. Encourage the changes they do make and do not scold them for changes they have not yet made. It generally takes 3-4 weeks to turn a new behavior into a habit (such as devotions or prayer).

- 6) Read Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25 and 6:33. What emotions come to you as you read these verses? Does your life match Jesus' teachings?
- 7) How do these verses in Matthew related to the verses in Psalms 23? (Jesus is telling us not to worry - God will take care of our needs, David is saying that he does not worry because God is taking care of his needs)
- 8) Review your answers to question 2: "What are you basic needs?" Would you change this answer now? If yes, what do you now consider to be you basic needs? Among other things such as food, shelter and clothing, if one of your students does not suggest a closer relationship to God than you should bring it up and discuss the importance of God as a basic need.

John 14:27

- 1) If a famous evangelist walked in to the room right now (Billy Graham?) and asked you to stop living the life you are living and follow him so that he can teach you how to win others to the Lord how would you feel? (honored, scared, like he was nuts? ...etc) Would you follow him? Why or why not?
- 2) Assume you followed this man. After travelling around and studying with your new best friends for three years how do you think your relationship would be between you and your leader? How about between you and the others in your group?
- 3) How would you feel if one day, after about three years, with little notice, your leader told you he was leaving and you couldn't follow him anymore? Remember you left you normal life for this guy. This is probably about how the disciples felt at the time of this verse.
- 4) Now, knowing that the man was the son of God, how would you feel? (hopefully excited that you were able to spend three years with him, but you may still have feelings of disappointment or anger)

- 5) When Jesus tells the disciples that he is leaving his spirit with them (His peace), how do you think they felt? How much is a gift like that worth? It is a gift that is free for all of us. Even though we are Christians, how many of us have not fully accepted God's peace? Why or why not?
- 6) What can we do to be able to fully trust in the peace that comes from knowing Christ?
Answer(s): Pray, trust that it is true, believe, have genuine faith, live a life that shows we believe. Often times our perceptions become our reality when we try to live them out. If we live as though we believe that Christ is peace in us, then we do have peace through Christ.

Credit

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