The 23rd Psalm



 *April 13*

**CONTEXT:** We turn to the final portion of this beloved Psalm. Though there are actually two different ways it may be understood the essence is the same—the blessing of Jesus’ providential care for His sheep.

***Challenge:*** Might you memorize the 23rd Psalm?

**FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP** (Scripture, Ps 19:7–11)

* Is it enough to simply have a high view of the Bible or read it regularly to really receive grace through it?
* What are all of the words (e.g. law, testimony, etc) synonyms for?
* Vv. 7–9- what grand statements and practical benefits do we discover here?
* V. 10- Why is Scripture to be desired? Do I desire them?
* V. 11- Yet more reasons to desire them. What should we do if we don’t desire them?

**READ:** Psalm 23 (today we’ll study vv. 5–6)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. *Key to interpreting Scripture is its context; in this case what is the metaphor? The two views are that: a) the shepherd theme continues and b) that a new metaphor of hospitality is introduced (possibly from Jerusalem or maybe a David on the run). Use this chart to reflect upon which view you think best fits:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Text** | **Shepherding** | **Hospitality** |
| *A table before me* | Table=plateau, high summer range for grazing | A literal table in a home |
| *In the presence of my enemies* | Dangers, not unlike those from the valley | An untouchable meal of rest in the midst of hardship |
| *You anoint my head with oil* | Salve for summer fly problems | A soothing ointment for weary travellers |
| *My cup overflows* | The bounty and health found at the end of the season | A gift given to the guest.  |
| *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life* | Summary: the privileged position of a sheep with this shepherd. | Summary: the blessing interposed by such a host.  |
| *And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.* | A statement of contentment of being brought to the end of the season in the sheepfold | Not simply hope in the Temple (which commoners couldn’t enter) but His eternal courts and presence. |

1. **What imagery best fits and why?**
2. *Regardless, key themes of untouchable providential care emerge:*
	1. *Provision*
	2. *Goodness/Relief*
	3. *Bounteous refreshment*
	4. *Grace*
	5. *God’s [eternal] presence*
	6. **What specific examples can you think of to illustrate these themes (i.e.. how does God provide these)?**
3. **What encouragement is it that no matter how difficult the journey is the enemy cannot steal these?**
	1. **And that the Lord provides these in the midst of life’s trials?**
4. **V. 6- What confidence do we have in God’s mercy and goodness and why?**
5. **Whether as a sheep or a guest, what difference will it make that we have such a Shepherd or Host in life? Missionally, how will this make our enemies jealous?**

Takeaway

1. **What have you learned or re-learned from this Psalm?**
2. **How do you plan to put this into practice?**
3. How does this Psalm intersect with the themes of Easter?

**NEXT TIME:** April 20th- Famous Prayers of the Bible