



23: FREEDOM FROM...

June 9, 2019

Pastor Keith Jenkins

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

"We don't need to grasp for significance. Jesus gives it to us when He alone is our desire and our portion."

-Pastor Keith

MAIN TEXT(S):

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

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

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 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." (Psalm 23 NIV)

SUPPORTIVE TEXT(S):

Freedom from fear: 2 Tim 1:7, Deuteronomy 31:8, Isaiah 43:1-2, Romans 8:28

Freedom from friction (with other sheep): Ezekiel 34:15-16, John 3:30, Philippians 2:3-8

Freedom from want: Ps 145:15-16, Matthew 6:25-26, Romans 8:32

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The image of sheep in Psalm 23 suggests some implications. In his classic book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, W. Phillip Keller observes, "The strange thing about sheep is that because of their very makeup it is almost *impossible for them to be made to lie down*.....unless four requirements are met." Pastor Keith identified three key requirements of the four:

- Freedom from fear
- Freedom from friction (with other sheep)
- Freedom from want
(Freedom from pests is the 4th)

David's confidence in God's ability to "make me lie down in green pastures" suggests that it is God, and God alone, who can bring us freedom from the fears noted above. Fear makes us do irrational things. In sheep, there is a phenomenon known as "blind fear." They get spooked and start running, not knowing what they are running from or moving towards. What calms us in the midst of fear, real or perceived, is the presence of God. We must reclaim a proficiency in pursuing His presence. Knowing that the Lord is "Immanuel", God with us, is crucial when we face circumstances that would cause us to fear.

God's Presence, the abiding sense of the Holy Spirit "with us", is guaranteed to us because of what Jesus did for us. The striving and desire to achieve we see in this world and among us are simply a grasp for significance. But Jesus grants us significance beyond what the world offers by setting His affection on us, by sharing His zoe life with us. When He is enough for us, when He is our portion, we can "lie down".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Were you familiar with Psalm 23 before this series, and why or why not?
2. How did you first encounter Psalm 23? Family? Sunday school? Popular culture?
3. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?
4. Why was it significant to you?
5. What was your high/low for this past week (or since your group last met)?
What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CONT.

them understand and apply the teaching.

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. How does the imagery progress from verse 2 through verse 3 of Psalm 23?
What's the significance of the move from green pastures to still (quiet) waters, then to refreshment and a path that leads to the right way.
2. How do you relate to the idea of a refreshed soul?
3. How do the passages below relate to Psalm 23? How are they similar or different?
What additional information about God's character and/or humanity do they give:
2 Timothy 1:7
Deuteronomy 31:8
Philippians 2:3-8
Matthew 6:25-26
4. In Isaiah 43:1-2, God says "when" not "if". How does that change the way you relate to this passage? Is it proper to personalize a declaration over Israel (see Romans 2:28-29)?
5. In Philippians 2, Paul asks that his reader's attitudes be like that of Jesus.
How do you understand that given what follows?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What do you see in the world that conspires against you "lying down"
2. Where do you see "green pastures" and "still (quiet) waters"?
What does that look like for you?
3. Where do you see people "lying down"? What do you see them trusting?
4. Who do you know that really needs provision (green pastures and still waters) besides you? How will you pray for them?
5. Where do you see refuge and rest being offered by God to you and others?
Why do you think you're alert to that specific expression of God's care?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. What do you see in your life that conspires against you "lying down"
2. How do you get to "green pastures" and "still (quiet) waters"?
How does the Lord lead you there?
3. What stands in the way of you following the Lord to the green pastures, still (quiet) waters, and a refreshingly right path?
4. How do you need the Lord to refresh you?
5. Share one time that the Lord was unmistakably faithful, shoring up your trust in Him.

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Could we commit to memorizing and journaling Psalm 23 in the coming weeks?
2. What's a practical step you can take in the next week or two to cement your trust in God?

NOTE: On the following page you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio

