

Sermon Outline
Psalm 23 Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow-Part II

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Sunday, May 10, 2020
Grace Lutheran Church and School
www.glcas.org
The Rev. A. David Anglada



John 14:1-141 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; 3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I 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 goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

Let us pray: Like newborn infants, our hungry spirits long to be fed. And like a loving parent, O God, you nourish us with your mercy and your grace. Open our hearts to the goodness of your word. Amen.

Thank you for joining us this morning message. Last week, I shared with you that Psalm 23 is: One of the many famous Psalms in both in Judaism and Christianity. Psalm 23 is also read during a funeral or burial service.

I also shared with you that while this Psalm has many applications and touches on death, ***it is not primarily*** about death. However, there is nothing wrong with having this text at funerals or memorial services, but it is more than talking about end of life.

This Psalm is about ***being utterly dependent on God; furthermore, Psalm 23 conveys hope from a loving, caring God.*** Moreover, Psalm 23 conveys a message of God's Grace and comfort to those who have lost a loved one. However, this morning I would like to continue the conversation on how this Psalm has a more significant impact on our lives when we are going through life's journey.

The words in Psalm 23 provide for us comfort and assurances that God is always caring for us; likewise, as a good shepherd cares for his or her flock of sheep .

I also highlighted to you that Psalm 23 was written on behalf and in honor of King David. Let's continue our conversation on Psalm 23.

“He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.”

Early in the morning, traditional Jews recite the following prayer early in the morning:

"The soul that You have given me, O God is pure. You fashioned it, you breathed it into me, you keep body and soul together. One day you will take it from me, only to restore it to me in time to come. So long as I have my soul, I must acknowledge You as my God and the God of ancestors, the God of all souls. Praised are You O Lord, who restores the soul to a lifeless body."

Our souls are what elevates us humans and bring us closer to God. When the writer of this Psalm understands that as long as I have a soul, I must acknowledge God as the God of my life. Furthermore, the worshiper praises God for restoring the souls to a lifeless body.

The Psalmist is not speaking of the future resurrection of the dead but, the miracle of waking up each morning, the wonder of being alive today.

The question is why, when we are asleep, it is as if we have no soul. We are not doing anything distinctively human. Only when we wake-up, we again encounter our daily living responsibilities capable of moral decisions. To the people in the Hebrew Scriptures, going to sleep most likely seemed like an anticipation of death. So, waking up in the morning was a time to thank God for being alive again.

In other words, I survived the night. God restored my soul. Psalm 92 say's ***"It is good to praise the Lord, to sing hymns to Your name, O Most High, to proclaim your loving-kindness in the morning and your faithfulness at night."***

Not only does God restores our soul; however, God gives an opportunity for us to make time from our daily task to restore our souls and body. We do this by keeping Sabbath by keeping a day to restore our souls. For us the Christian community we observe Sunday as a day of worship and rest.

The restoration of souls is also about restoring our souls when our souls have been wounded. Wounded by the loss of a family member, a soulmate, or a friend, the burden of life diminishes our souls.

Our souls need to be nourished by love, by relationships, and by God. We need to make time for the caring of our souls. God has taught us to keep Sabbath a day of rest.

Sabbath was given to us as a gift from God to rest our souls to replenish our souls. A time to worship God and seeking God's restoration for us and preparing us for the coming days.

Dear friends take a day of the week to restore your soul with God. When we make time to restore our souls, the words in the book of Isaiah from the Hebrew Scriptures in chapter 40 are fulfilled.

"Those who trust in the Lord will have their strength renewed. They shall mount up with the wings as eagles. They shall run and not grow weary; they shall walk and not feel faint."

When our souls are tired because of human fatigue, this when we need God to restore our souls, to replenish our ability to act like human beings that want to do good in our world or to do random acts of kindness. Especially in the days that we are living in, O, we need to do kind things to each other. Especially the most vulnerable in our society. Children and Senior citizens. Here is a noble idea, when you prepare dinner tonight, have a senior in mind prepare an extra plate and bring dinner to the person.

"He leads me in right paths for his name's sake."

The Psalmist is communicating with God to help and guide in the right direction. There are no shortcuts in life, O God, help me go through life; however, put me in the right path so that I can accomplish the goals you have set in my life. The Psalmist is acknowledging that they need the help of God.

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

The Psalmist is sharing a piece of advice to the reader of this poem, that regardless of what happens in life or death. Even if we are in darkness, God is with us. God goes along with us when the sun is shining or in the darkness of the night.

Do not be afraid to live, don't be afraid to love people, don't be afraid to give your heart away.

Do not be afraid of the pain of losing in life; don't be scared of death or the death of someone you love. Trust God to enter your pain and make it less painful, less frightening. Move on, take one step forward in life.

Remember the old saying, "there has never been a tunnel so dark that it did not ultimately emerge into the daylight or night so dark, that it did not ultimately yield to the dawn."

Think about this, all the people you know, all the people you have read about or seen on television, to whom terrible things happened-betrayal, bereavement, crippling injuries-and somehow they found the strength to go on with life.

They encounter a sense of purpose in their lives; they found a way to live their lives. They refused to allow their tragic moments to define who they were. Our blessed Lord Jesus wants to take us by hand and lead us through the valley of darkness. We are not alone in the valley of life and death. We will not fear evil, and God is with us.

The promise God has given us is that when we encounter evil, pain or life's unfairness, we will not have to face it alone. God will accompany us. The Psalmist is also saying; I will fear no evil for Thou are with me, the author

of this Psalm is conveying a positive message; I can handle this because I am not alone, God is with me. Our blessed Lord Jesus is with us. I can handle all of life's challenges because God is with me and guiding my life. The shepherds' staff is with us to help us not go astray or to help us out of the pit; the staff helps us climb out. The staff was a symbol of help and support.

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

The Psalmist is communicating that God will provide a lavish banquet, which makes it more interesting is that people that do not like, me will have to acknowledge that God favors us. For us, Christian, we are favored by God because of our Baptism in Christ Jesus. We belong to God for all eternity.

When we "were baptized," the priest or pastor said child of God you have been marked with the cross of Jesus forever. The presiding minister anointed our forehead with oil. To be anointed in ancient times meant to be chosen by God, therefore worthy of being a king or queen. To be anointed signifies to be a unique individual and designated for greatness.

When the Psalmist writes, "Thou anointest my head with oil," the writer is saying, God, you have not only given me the gifts of food and safety. You have given me the Gift of being special, and I embrace your Gift of Grace for all eternity, your Gift of forgiveness, and I accept the responsibility that comes with that Gift.

Furthermore, God is present with me and us. At the end of the day, when human beings fail us or let us down, God is with us to renew our strength and give us what we need to move forward in our spiritual journey.

We will continue this message next week.

We take this opportunity to say thank you for being our guest on behalf of Grace's church and school.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD:

Let us pray: Keeper of our souls when we go astray, help us return to you, Shepherd and guardian. May the words we have heard resonate within us here at Grace Lutheran Church and School, like a drum in the valley, and may its echo never fade. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

May the God who calls us by name lead you out to green pastures and lead you into the safety of Christ's fold.

Please join this morning for our virtual community gathering at 10 am. Visit our website at www.glcas.org to join our virtual gathering. Thank you for joining us this morning, and remember, God loves you and cares about you.