Psalm 23

Intro: This is one of the greatest passages in all of history. It is learned from mothers’ knees. Let us learn some of the great lessons found in this chapter; cf. Rom. 15:4 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

I. GOD IS A SHEPHERD
   A. A good shepherd knows his sheep.
      1. Shepherd’s name each sheep; and would call each by name.
      2. John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”
      3. 2 Tim. 2:19 “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
   B. A good shepherd loves his sheep.
      1. John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
      2. Rom. 5:8 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
      3. Rev. 1:5 “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”
      4. John 10:15 “As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

II. MAN AS SHEEP
   A. Sheep have no directional sense.
      1. Jer. 10:23 “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
      2. Pro. 14:12 “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
      3. Isa. 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
      4. 1 Cor. 1:21, 25 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe... 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”
   B. Sheep are unable to purify themselves.
      1. Each day the shepherd will take each sheep, bathe it, and anoint it with oil.
      2. Rom. 6:3-6 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 3Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 6For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man
is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

3. 1 Pet. 1:22-23 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 22Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

4. Rev. 1:5 “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”

C. Sheep cannot protect themselves.
1. Other animals if backed into a corner will fight.
2. Sheep will resign themselves to their fate.
3. Without God’s help and aid man would be overtaken.
   a. Rom. 8:31, 33-34, 37 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?... 33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. 34Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”
   b. Heb. 13:5-6 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

D. Sheep are stupid.
1. Example:
   a. There was a man throwing rocks into a pond so sheep would not drown themselves.
   b. Put an hurdle before one and take it away and the others will continue to jump: “But everyone is doing it.”
2. Man is stupid
   a. God offers him salvation, yet man refuses to accept it.
   b. Man accepts the salvation God offers but then apostatizes.

III. GOD IS PRESENTED AS A PERSONAL SHEPHERD: “MY”
A. David was a shepherd himself but God was his very own.
1. He had been with the Lord often and He had proven His worth.
2. Thus David claimed Him as his own.
B. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
C. Jer. 31:31-34 “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Heb. 8:8-13 “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

D. How many of us see God as a personal Shepherd or does He seem far away?

IV. RESULTS: “I SHALL NOT WANT”

A. For Food (“lie down in green pastures”).

1. The picture is that of satisfied, contented sheep.
   a. They are so satisfied they lie down.
   b. Sheep lie down for two reasons:
      (1) weariness
      (2) satisfaction

2. Physical
   a. Mat. 6:24-33 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment 26Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they 27Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature 28And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin 29And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these 30Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith 31Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed 32(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things 33But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
b. Mark 10:29-30 “And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, 30But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”

c. Psa. 37:25 “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

d. Mat. 7:11 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

3. Spiritual

a. Mat. 5:6 “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

b. 1 Pet. 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

c. John 6:48, 51, 53-56 “I am that bread of life.... 51I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.... 52Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 56For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

d. John 4:14 “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

B. For Guidance

1. “He leadeth me”

a. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

b. Christ today leads us through his word.

(1) Psa. 119:105 “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

(2) 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

(3) 2 Pet. 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”

2. “Beside still waters”

a. Represents that we have peace.

(1) John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

(2) Phi. 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

(3) Rom. 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”
(4) Psa. 29:11 “The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.”

b. We have peace:
   (1) With self.
      (a) A loving God will give us the things that we need. Mat. 7:11 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
      (b) We can cast all our cares upon God.
         i) 1 Pet. 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
         ii) Mat. 6:25-34 (esp. 34 “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”)
   (2) With God
      (a) We have been reconciled to God by the blood of Christ.
      (b) Rom. 5:10 “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”
      (c) Eph. 2:13-17 “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

3. “In paths of righteousness”
   a. As pointed out, man cannot find his own way.
   b. Righteousness is revealed in God’s Word:
      (1) Psa. 119:172 “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”
      (2) Rom. 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”
   c. When we do (obey) God’s Word, God is leading us in paths of righteousness; 1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous”

C. In Death
   1. Death is no longer to be feared but is now a blessing.
      a. Phi. 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
      b. Rev. 14:13 “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”
   2. The reason is that we will be raised up from the dead; 1 Cor. 15:51-58 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the
dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

3. Here he is actually speaking about the verge of death.

D. In presence of enemies.
1. We are beset with many enemies today
   a. The world
   b. Denominationalism
   c. Even in the church
2. We can find solace in God; He will protect us.
3. Our attitude to enemies.
   a. Mat. 5:43-46 “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?”
   b. Rom. 12:19-20 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”

4. We are beset by many enemies today:

E. For all blessings; “My cup runneth over”
1. Physical
2. Spiritual
   a. All spiritual blessings; Eph. 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
   b. No condemnation; Rom. 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”
   c. Forgiveness of sins; Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”
   d. New Creature; 2 Cor. 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
   e. Child of God; Gal. 3:26 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
   f. Salvation; 2 Tim. 2:10 “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”
   g. Prayer through Christ to the Father; Eph. 2:18 “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”
F. For Spiritual Fellowship

1. “Dwell in the house of the Lord”
2. Must obey the Gospel to enter the Lord’s house (the church).
   a. As such they have a heavenly citizenship; Phi. 3:20 “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
   b. They seek a heavenly country; Heb. 11:14-15 “For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned”
3. We are strangers and pilgrims here; 1 Pet. 2:11 “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”
   a. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
   b. Not fellowshiping those outside God’s fellowship; Eph. 5:11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”

Conclusion: We will be able to dwell with God eternally; 2 Pet. 1:11 “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”