

“God Shepherds His People Now and into Eternity”

Sermon Notes

- **Psalm 23 is a powerful Word for God’s people because it speaks of His goodness to us on both sides of the veil between life and death.**

**God’s Word in Psalm 23 shows us:*

1. In Christ, we have peace that passes the understanding of the world because Yahweh Himself gives peace to our hearts. (1-3a)
2. God leads us in paths of righteousness to establish His name in the earth. (3b-4)
3. God Himself distinguishes us as His people and He Himself will serve us, lavishly and publicly.
4. When we own God’s Word in Psalm 23 as God’s Word to us, we live differently, and this difference will have an impact on the world.

Benediction: Aaronic Blessing: Numbers 6:24-26

In Numbers 6:27, Yahweh told His priest to bless His people with the following words, saying, “Thus, will they put My Name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” Hear now and receive that blessing:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you.

יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנֶּךָ

May the Lord make His Face shine on you and be gracious to you.

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

May the Lord lift up His Countenance upon you, and give you Peace!

Next Week: The MEFC 2025 Vision → 1 Year In...

MEFC Community Group Study Questions

For the week of January 3rd - 9th

When we own God's Word in Psalm 23 as God's Word to us, we live differently, and this difference will have an impact on the world.

Getting Started

Let's start with the last point of the sermon as the beginning of our study. How does, or how can the "eternity vision" that God gives us influence our decisions in the way we think and operate as Christians in our culture today? Be fairly open with your answers, going any direction with the question you feel led.

Some possible directions to go with this may be:

- How would the settled mind that is aware of God's salvation and eternal goodness speak to:
 - Others wrestling with God's righteousness?
 - Today's political issues?
 - Their own family members about God's character?

Open Your Bible to...

1. Matthew 5:13-16: Read the passage out loud once or twice. Emphasize the last half of verse 16: *"that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

The people of God, though saved by Grace through faith, are intended to be salt and light to this world. They are to do "good works" that the people of their cultures can see and recognize as good works. Jesus's words here would also imply that we avoid as much as possible words and works that are offensive to most people.

A: What are some values and attitudes which we, as God's people, can adopt within our culture to make God look good? What good works can we do within our culture which will be valued and appreciated?

B: Conversely, what kinds of attitudes and works, can we let go of as they are not useful in making God look good to others today?

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2. Psalm 23:3b – 4: “*He leads me in paths... they comfort me.*” Read the passage once or twice.

The passage here talks of three things. 1) God upholding His reputation. 2) God’s training and guidance. 3) A sense of the felt presence of God as He leads us in “paths of righteousness,” even if the path leads through “the valley of the shadow of death.”

A: Describe, in your own life experiences, some of the ways God has trained you, been present with you, and/or been a source of comfort for you in your life.

B: Have you ever been led by God do or say something which you were not comfortable with saying or doing, for His sake? Share one or two of those experiences.

C: Share your understanding of how God establishes both His Name in the earth and His felt presence in His people’s hearts through His training and guidance.

3. Psalm 23:5; Deuteronomy 14:23-27; Colossians 2:20-3:1: Read these three passages. Then work out what God is saying through them.

God calls us special and likes to give His people gifts to enjoy, both in this world and into eternity. In each of these passages, we are encouraged to 1) Enjoy the gifts and pleasures God gives. 2) Acknowledge (even include) the Lord in the enjoyment of these gifts. 3) Let our joy and acknowledgement of the Lord be seen by others.

A: What are some of the authentic ways in which you can live joyfully in acknowledgement of God’s gifts?

B: How can you use both your joy and acknowledgment of the Lord as an invitation to others into the good life in Christ?

4. Psalm 23:1-3a; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: Read both of these passages. Then consider their relationship to each other.

God provides sustenance, comfort, and true relationship. He even restores us to ourselves, to the flock and to Himself when we stray. All this is God’s doing. He desires to give His people a large measure of peace in their mind and hearts. One of the reasons is so they can be free to “be all things to all people” in order that some might be won for Christ. As we conclude our study today:

A: Talk about the kind of people and/or cultural ideas you find distasteful.

B: How can the Lord help you, so that you can sit more comfortably with the kinds of people and/or cultural ideas you find distasteful?

C: Finally, how do you think the Lord might use you to engage with these people and/or cultural ideas in such a way that it would cause a meaningful encounter between our loving God and others?