

The 23rd Psalm

Introduction:

1. Our final lesson in 2016 is based on the message presented in the 23rd Psalm.
2. This beautiful Psalm reveals 12 special blessings that God provides for His sheep.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1a) DAVID BEGAN BY DECLARING HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD
 - A. David wrote most of this Psalm (vs.1-4) from the perspective of a shepherd.
 - B. As he did so, David first showed that he had a close relationship with God by saying, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*
 - C. To properly apply David's message, let us keep in mind that Jesus is *"the good shepherd"* today (John 10:11, 14).
- II. (vs.1b-6) DAVID CONTINUED BY LISTING 12 BLESSINGS HE EXPERIENCED BECAUSE HE HAD MADE THE LORD HIS SHEPHERD, INCLUDING . . .
 - A. Contentment: *"I shall not want"* (vs.1b).
 1. According to James 1:17, God provides all good blessings.
 2. Furthermore, God will bless His faithful sheep with the necessities of life (Matthew 6:33).
 3. This assurance helps God's people to be content (1 Timothy 6:6).
 - B. Providence: *"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"* (vs.2a).
 1. Shepherds constantly lead their sheep in search of rich pastures.
 2. In addition to providing green pastures for His sheep, God causes His sheep to lie down in them (Ezekiel 34:14-15).
 - C. Peace: *"He leadeth me beside the still waters"* (vs.2b).
 1. *"Still waters"* are quiet and peaceful.
 2. Storms may occasionally arise, but the Lord can calm them (Mark 4:35-39).
 - D. Restoration: *"He restoreth [turns back] my soul"* (vs.3a).
 1. God's people may drift away from Him, but He will restore those who repent.
 2. David also dealt with this principle in Psalm 32:1-5.
 - E. Direction: *"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake"* (vs.3b).
 1. Man is unable to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23).
 2. However, God provides direction through His Word (Psalm 119:105).
 3. As God's people follow His Word, we are led in *"the paths of righteousness."*
 - F. Courage: *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"* (vs.4a).
 1. David's courage was based on his confidence in God's protection (1 Samuel 17:37).
 2. God still supplies courage to His children (2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 13:6).
 - G. Companionship: *"Thou art with me"* (vs.4b).
 1. God promised to be with Joshua as he led the Israelites (Joshua 1:9).
 2. The Lord has promised to be with His followers today (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5).
 - H. Comfort: *"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"* (vs.4c).
 1. The shepherd used his rod and staff to guide and defend his sheep.
 2. David referred to them as symbols of God's guidance and care (1 Peter 5:7).
 - I. Favor: *"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil"* (vs.5a).
 1. God is pictured as a great feast giver who favors His followers, even before enemies.
 2. Anointing the head with oil is an illustration of God's favor.
 - J. Abundance: *"My cup runneth over"* (vs.5b).
 1. Throughout this Psalm God is shown to be a great provider for His children.
 2. This statement illustrates how God abundantly blesses His children.
 - K. Assurance: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"* (vs.6a).
 1. David was confident that God would always bless him with goodness and mercy.
 2. David did not change his mind as he grew older (Psalm 37:25-26).
 - L. Immortality: *"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"* (vs.6b).