



"He Leads Me Beside Still Waters"

Psalm 23 (NKJV)

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, 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 runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

As my heart, mind, and body begins to prepare to go to Africa two weeks from tomorrow, I cannot believe that this will be my sixth trip to this great continent.

Not to go duck or deer hunting, but to go on a Safari....to see the lion and her cubs, elephants, and giraffes.

Northern Botswana...end of the day...elephants coming for water

I. Problem

Humans can only last 3-5 days without any water in temperature conditions.

During winters in the Sahara, camels have been known to survive up to six or seven months without water.

Sheep need water.

70% of a sheep's body is water, and the lack of water leads to dehydration, weakness, sickness, and even death.

Sheep, like humans, are made aware of their lack of water by thirst. They will begin looking for water on their own, if it is not provided. They will go to dirty, polluted, and dangerous places in the search for water. With their head down, they become easy prey for attackers.

We are thirsty for real significance and satisfaction.

This thirst becomes so real and passionate that we look for it in dirty watering holes like immorality, substance abuse, and even religion.

Ancient church father, Augustine, of Africa summed it up well when he wrote, "O God, thou hast made us for Thyself and our souls are restless, searching, till they find their rest in Thee."

"My people...they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,
and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water"
Jeremiah 2:13

II. Provision

Grass and food was not enough. Water was needed, and it helped with digestion of the food.

Sheep would gain access to water through two primary resources...

A. Dew

If the moon was especially bright, sheep would sometime graze at night. But they would always rise just before the dawn to graze, getting the heavy dew on the grass as a source of water.

B. Streams

Flocks would normally water at least once a day at a stream, and normally around noon.

It was a hard life for the shepherd and sheep in the dry and arid lands.

Sheep were scared of bubbling, noisy, fast flowing streams. Maybe it is that the water would get on their heavy coats of wool, become waterlogged, and they might drown?

They preferred water that was placid so they could see themselves in it like a mirror, and they would prefer waters clear enough where they could see the bottom, having nothing to fear. Then, they could drink in peace.

The Shepherd would find a stream of water, but the sheep would not go in. So he would take his rod and staff and loosen up a few large stones and dam up a place for the water to become still and welcoming.

Then, many times, the Shepherd himself would step into the water to show the sheep it was ok.

III. Place for us

Green pastures is the Word of God and the still waters is the Holy Spirit.

Two things are needed for all who breathe...have life. Food (substance) and water.

The language here is wilderness language. The children of Israel were led through the wilderness and the necessity of both food and water is evident and provided.

The manna came from Heaven daily and **John 6** reminds us that Jesus is the Bread of Life.

The water would even come from a gushing rock, if needed, and **John 7** reminds us that Jesus is the Water of Life.

But water is also representing the Holy Spirit.

Perennial

Perennial refreshment

"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
John 14:4

Plentifully - abundantly

Freely provided but we must be led.

Green pastures sustain

Still waters refresh

A. Word of God

B. Spirit of God

He is our Heavenly peace - inward calm - sweet refreshment of soul

He is our Comforter - **John 15: 26**

The Word of God is not enough...we must have the Spirit of God.

Translations of the Bible can help only so much. The natural man will never understand the deep things of God.

We must have the Holy Spirit.

But, we must follow where He leads

Sheep will lag behind, go ahead, or take their own way.

C. Place of rest

1. Personally

Everything you need to be healthy, whole, full, and satisfied our Shepherd has provided.

"I have no need."

2. Church body

We are content - at rest - with the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

When we are not getting food and sustained by the Word and Spirit, then we turn to other things that we must have as a church to sustain us. Fleshy, exciting, billboard.

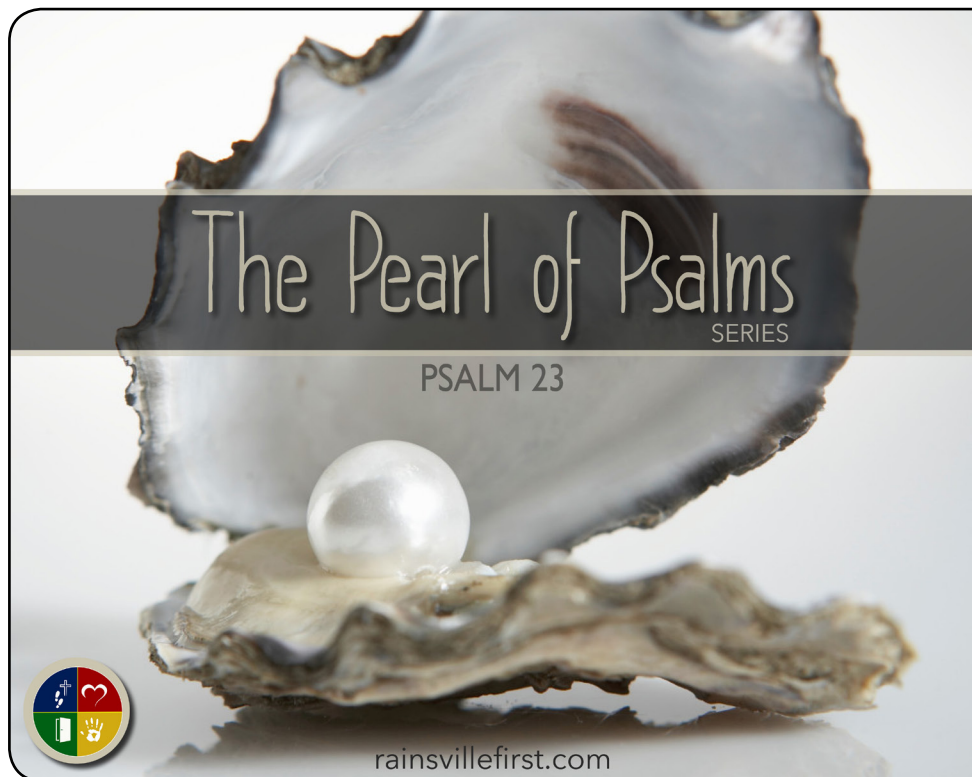
Concerning the church, are you bored?

Are you bored with the Word of God and the Spirit of God?

We are not a circus with the "best show on earth."

We are not a sports team that counts "wins and losses."

We are not in competition with other churches. Why would we be? Do they preach a better Bible? Do they have more of the Holy Spirit than we can have?



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SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2019

September 15th
"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

September 22nd
"I SHALL NOT WANT"

September 29th
"HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES"

October 6th
"HE LEADS ME BESIDE STILL WATERS"

October 13th
"HE RESTORES MY SOUL"

October 20th
"HE LEADS ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

November 10th
"THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY"

November 17th
"YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF THEY COMFORT ME"

November 24th
"YOU PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME
IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES"

December 1st
"YOU ANOINT MY HEAD WITH OIL; MY CUP RUNS OVER"

December 15th
"SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME"

December 22nd
"AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER"

December 29th
"THE LORD'S SUPPER"