

LifeGroup Questions

Stressors

Based on: 1 Peter 2:9-10

May 18, 2014

Overview

Psalm 23 is one of the best known passages of scripture from the Old Testament. For a majority of us this Psalm needs to transition from a passage that is read at special events to one that has daily implications in our lives. “The Lord is my shepherd”, this is a phrase most of us do not have a contextual basis for fully understanding. Unless you grew up on a farm and raised sheep you probably will not completely understand the dependence between sheep and their shepherd. The whole passage starts out by implying that God is our protector, provider, and leader. A shepherd took complete care of the flock. Do you rely on God for your complete care? Psalm 23 is rich with the imagery of tranquility. There are green pastures, quiet waters, guided paths, overflowing cups, restoration, goodness, and love. But sprinkled throughout are references to death, evil, and enemies. The challenge is to seek God as your shepherd during both times of tranquility and trouble. The danger is to be a self-shepherd when times are good and to only seek God when things are not going well. For some of us the opposite might be true. We rely on God when everything is good, but once trouble hits we take control. The Psalmist is trying to convey that although your circumstances may change, God will always be the same. Whether you are facing a situation as serious as death or as soothing as green pastures: God is still the same. Each of us needs to be able to say during both the good times and the bad times: “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

Bible Study: Psalm 23

1. Psalm 23 has been referenced both in and out of the church. What memories do you have of hearing this passage?
2. In what ways does thinking about God as a shepherd change your perspective of Him?
3. How do life circumstances tend to dictate our view of God’s care for us? What steps can you take to maintain an unwavering faith in every situation of life?
4. In the sermon Pastor Brent says: “we don’t always follow our shepherd; but our Shepherd always leads us in the right paths.” Discuss a time when you knew God was directly leading you in a certain direction.
5. This passage doesn’t mean we should enjoy tough times in life. What is the difference between just enduring struggles in life and relying on God for your strength? How do these two options look in your life?
6. In what ways can walking through a valley (difficult situation) with God beside you strengthen your faith?
7. How can reacting to tough situations with fear and anxiety affect your witness before nonbelievers?
8. What do you believe it means to “not be in want” in your relationship with God?
9. Imagine for a moment a huge battle taking place. In the midst of the explosions, and smoke there is a table being prepared for a banquet. How do these contradicting scenes challenge your faith? Can you remain resolute in your faith in the midst of complete chaos?