

Life Group Guide – Psalm 23

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: When facing a difficult situation this past week, what was your first response? Where did you turn for help or comfort?

Sermon Summary

Pastor explored Psalm 23, one of the most beloved passages in Scripture, examining how we can confidently follow our Great Shepherd whether we're walking through green pastures or dark valleys. The main idea: The Lord doesn't just give us what we need—He gives us Himself, which is what we need most.

Key Takeaways

1. We can trust in His provision - God provides for our needs and our rest
 2. We can trust in His paths - God restores our souls and leads us in righteousness
 3. We take comfort in His presence - Even in the valley, the Shepherd is with us
 4. We enjoy His companionship - God's goodness and mercy pursue us all our days
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Discussion Questions

Opening Up (10-15 minutes)

1. What stood out to you most from this sermon on Psalm 23? Was there a phrase or idea that particularly resonated with you?
2. The pastor asked, "What do you do when you face uncertainty or lack direction?" How would you honestly answer that question about yourself?

Digging Deeper (25-30 minutes)

3. On Provision: David says "I shall not want." The pastor clarified this means "you will never lack what God knows you truly need."
 - o How does this differ from how our culture defines provision?
 - o Can you share a time when God provided what you needed rather than what you wanted? How did that shape your faith?
4. On Rest: The psalm says "He makes me lie down in green pastures."
 - o Why do you think we struggle to rest and let God lead?
 - o Are you currently exhausted because you're trying to shepherd yourself rather than allowing God to lead you?
5. On Righteous Paths: God leads us "in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."
 - o What comfort do you find in knowing God leads in ways consistent with His character?
 - o How does knowing God's reputation is at stake when He leads you affect your trust in Him?
6. On the Valley: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."
 - o The pastor emphasized David didn't say "if" but "even though." Why is this distinction important?
 - o How does this verse challenge prosperity gospel thinking?
 - o For those comfortable sharing: Are you in a "valley season" right now? How does knowing God is with you provide comfort?
7. On God's Presence with Enemies: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."
 - o What does it mean that God provides even when our enemies aren't gone?
 - o How have you experienced God's peace in the midst of difficult circumstances?

Personal Application (15-20 minutes)

8. Tim Keller said, "You don't really know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all that you have."
 - o Have you experienced a time when this was true for you?
 - o What did that season teach you about God's sufficiency?
9. David concludes with confidence: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."
 - o The image is of God's goodness and mercy chasing us down. How does this picture encourage you?
 - o What would change in your daily life if you truly believed God's goodness and mercy were pursuing you?

10. The pastor challenged us to pray Psalm 23 this week when we're anxious or tempted to go our own way.
- What specific situation this week could you apply this practice to?
 - How might praying Scripture be different from just reading it?
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Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one (or more) of these practices:

1. Memorize Psalm 23 - If you haven't already, commit this psalm to memory so it's available when you need it most.
 2. Pray Psalm 23 Daily - Don't just read it; pray it personally. Replace "me" and "my" to make it your own conversation with God.
 3. Journal Your Valleys and Pastures - Reflect on where you are right now:
 - Are you in green pastures? Write a prayer of gratitude.
 - Are you in a valley? Write out your fears and then write out God's promises from Psalm 23.
 4. Identify Your "Go-To" - The pastor asked what we run to when life gets hard. Honestly identify what you tend to run to instead of God, and confess this to a trusted friend or this group.
 5. Share Your Testimony - Share with someone this week about a time when God shepherded you through a difficult season.
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Closing Reflection Questions

- Where do you need to stop trying to shepherd yourself and trust the Great Shepherd?
 - What is one specific way you can follow God more closely this week?
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Closing Prayer

Pray Psalm 23 together as a group, pausing after each verse to allow members to add personal prayers related to that verse.

Alternatively, break into pairs and pray specifically for the "valleys" or challenges each person is facing, asking God to be their comfort and guide.

For Next Week

Encourage group members to:

- Read Psalm 23 daily in different translations
 - Notice when they're tempted to "shepherd themselves" and consciously surrender to God's leading
 - Come prepared to share how praying this psalm impacted their week
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Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to those who may be in genuine "valley" seasons (illness, loss, financial hardship, etc.)
- Create space for silence and reflection; not every question needs to be answered
- If someone shares a deep struggle, consider offering to pray for them immediately
- Remind the group that trusting God as our Shepherd is a daily, ongoing practice, not a one-time decision