

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday November 11, 2018. Psalm 23. "Breathe; Safe and Sound".

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

B. Sunday's Message.

Sunday was the second in our Psalm 23 series. The first Sunday we talked about the need to slow down, and to seek God who so wants to give us those places of rest and restoration. We just have to create a 'path', a way of life, that works those things into our ordinary, everyday, walking around life. This past Sunday Pastor Lamar landed on just one verse, and it revealed to us what society's understanding of 'progress' does to our spirit. Progress promises great stuff, and forward motion, but it does a horrible job at taking care of people. The pace of life gets faster and faster and our spirits are damaged. We've all felt it haven't we? So this message was to help us in some very practical ways deal with what this obsessions progress does to our spirit.

As always we want to make these studies personal, not just talking about things and learning stuff, but asking; *"How can we apply this to our daily life?"*

Where does the pace and frenzy of life affect you?

What do you see happening within you, to your spirit, because of your pace of life?

And a more serious question.

How has your pace of life affected your relationship with God?

C. Scripture.

The scripture used Sunday was just one verse. But what a powerful, truth loaded, lots to unpack, nugget of wisdom. So just read over it slowly a few times and then we'll ask some questions.

Read **Psalm 23:4**.

What does this passage say to you?

Do any specific words or phrases jump out to you?

There are some key words and phrases that can help us as we navigate the difficulties and pace of life.

David states that he has and does *"walk thru the valleys"*. Life is hard and tough. There are hills, (great moments), and valleys, (not so great moments, struggles), and that's just life.

Think about a valley moment or two that you had to walk thru.

What was that experience like?

David also says he “walks’ thru those valleys”...not ‘runs’. That means there are times when we’re facing big struggles in which we can’t race thru it. We have to face the pain and just be in those moments. Such a tough and difficult truth.

What have you discovered about those difficult moments?

This is kind of a leading question; but what about that ‘valley’ made it something you had to “walk thru”, face fully, ‘feel’ the pain, rather than rush thru?

David also stated it’s in those valleys, those tough places, he found and experienced God. He found God’s direction and guidance comforted him. Comfort is what we really need in those moments. Yes, it would be nice if we could just be plucked painlessly out of every difficult moment, but that’s just not realistic. However, David said he found comfort from God’s presence in those tough places.

Most historians say that a rod was used to keep enemy animals away, and a staff was used to help guide the sheep. Similar to hand holding you do with a young child. It’s a way you can guide and direct them in a loving manner.

So...

Where have you felt God using his rod and taking care of one of your ‘enemies’?

Where have you felt God using his staff, and gently guiding and directing you to a better path?

This passage is full of inspiration for those valley moments in our lives. Sometimes it just good to memorize this passage and to be able to recite it in those tough times.

D. Practical application.

Lamar suggested some very specific things you can do to find comfort as you walk thru your own valleys.

Which of these are specific things you can begin to work into your ordinary, everyday, walking around life, to help you find that comfort and presence of God even in the most frantic times in your life?

Specific things you can do.

- 1. Learn to be led not just driven.** Being led means you acknowledge you are not in control. Relax and trust God.
- 2. Learn to say no.** Say no to greed. Say no to fear of scarcity. Trust God to be enough and provide enough.
- 3. Don’t rush wisdom.** Wisdom is not the product of speed nor does it come from avoiding feelings.
- 4. Do less but do the right things.** Focus on right decisions AND right direction.
- 5. Plan Free Time.** Valley comfort is actually freedom from overload. Try to plan free time.

Our culture works against the nurturing and care for our soul. The pace and obsession with progressions just runs over people and leave them damage. But, claiming that God is for us and can nurture and care for us at our deepest levels is the answer that takes care of the inner us.