

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday November 25, 2018. Psalm 23:5. "Breathe; Surely".

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. Recap.

Sunday was the final in our Psalm 23 series, and the last Sunday before Advent begins. And don't panic...none of us are ready for the Christmas season either.

We've covered some important topics so far in our Psalm 23 "**Breathe**" series. The first Sunday the topic was '*slow down*' and we talked about the importance of rest and creating margins, (unfilled space), in our lives to help us live mindfully, in the present, in a fast paced world. The second Sunday the theme was '*safe and sound*', and we talked about the power of the presence of God in those valleys of our life. Tough times will come. It's in those moments God IS with us, and we can find comfort in that knowledge. Last Sunday Pastor Lamar brought an understanding that a real relationship with God is a continual maturing relationship with God, and that moves us from just being taken care of to a seat at the table to do the work of God. And sometimes this difficult work is to build bridges and restore broken relationships in our lives. But it's in that place we are '*satisfied*'.

Reread Psalm 23 in its entirety for context and a complete picture of what a "*With God Life*" looks like.

Looking back, what are some truths that spoke to you in a specific way?

Are there things you hope to do differently because of what you've learned?

C. Sunday's Message.

The key word from this past Sunday's message is '*surely*'. Such an important word for many of us. How many of you would love to have a life that was mostly '*surely*'? You could know that everything that brings stress in your life would eventually work out. You might even be able to handle some of the bigger struggles in life if you knew that at the other end, no matter what, is a better, or least an 'okay' place.

So let's talk about things in our lives that threaten '*surely*'.

What are some of the bigger stressors in your life?

What is the attraction of wanting '*certainty*' in those things?

What is it that often desires certainty in detail over certainty in God?

D. Scripture.

You've already read Psalm 23 in its entirety but reread verse 6 a couple of times and then we'll drill down thru it.

This verse begins with the word *'surely'*. The word *'surely'* is also read as *'only'*, or *'I am certain'*, a life with God will produce these specific things in my life. But...and you knew there would be one in there, this verse states that goodness and unfailing love will FOLLOW me, which talks about our relationship with our past. And we love dredging up the past. We talk about how great it was, how much better it was. Or we bemoan about how awful it was, and yet we tend to drag all of our baggage of hurt and pain from the past with us. Our past is such a looming presence in our present it affects our ability to live for God...the *"With God Life"* in the present.

So...

Why is the past so powerful for us?

What gives the past such a voice in our present?

Lamar stated the Psalm 23 life, full of spiritual margin, only happens when we can *"let the messiah put some space between us and our messy past"*. When we can acknowledge God is, does, pursue us, we can stop running, catch our breath, **"BREATHE"**, and find the mercy, goodness, love, that this passage promises.

Continuing the look into our past.

Why do we have a difficult time making peace with our past?

In what ways do we 'run', not face up to, our past?

You have a God who is absolutely crazy about you, his love is so incredibly lavish, (means more than we could ever need. The picture is someone who puts lotion on their hands, realizes they put too much on, and now they're looking for someone to share it with and put it on their hands). And all we need to do is let go of the things we let block our ability to receive this love and goodness from God.

What are some things in your life that may be blocking God's ability to share all of his goodness with you?

What might you specifically need to do in order to either resolve from your past, or put into place, for you to receive this love and goodness from God?

Whatever it is you are carrying around that just feels like a crushing burden, that you can't carry anymore, in the classic cliché phrase, **LET IT GO**. In this psalm David recognizes even though he has lived a life so far from what God had intended for him, this same God still has this amazing life for him. This psalm is a promise of still waters, green pastures, a table, in order to work some of those issues out, and then this life of goodness, love, beauty, mercy, that we can SURELY trust in. We just have to slow down enough, **"breathe"**, in order to receive it.

As we enter into the Christmas season find rest and comfort in that promise.