

“Safe in His Arms”

Pr. Diane Waghorne

Psalm 23 The Lord is My Shepherd

Introduction

This is a psalm of absolute trust and confidence in Jehovah’s care. When David was a young boy he was a shepherd who cared for his father’s sheep. David’s own care for the sheep causes him to meditate on how fully he could trust in the LORD God of Israel as His Good Shepherd.

Psalm 23 reveals God very distinctly as the Good Shepherd. This name of God is Jehovah-*Rohi* which means “The Lord my Shepherd”. If you look closely at Psalm 23 you will see that God is beautifully revealed through a total of 8 different compound Jehovah names; each name revealing an aspect of who He is and how God relates to and meets the needs of His children. These are called Redemptive names of Jehovah. We are privileged to know God in these ways because of our faith in Jesus Christ who has redeemed our very lives through his sufferings and death at Calvary.

We will see the LORD as: The LORD my Shepherd; The LORD my Provider; The LORD my Peace, The LORD my Healer; The LORD my Righteousness; The LORD who is Present; The LORD my Victor; The LORD who Sanctifies.

David’s faith was a strong faith that could boldly declare, “The LORD is MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT... HE makes me... HE leads me ... HE restores my soul...” (Bold declarations of faith in God) He personally knew he could depend on God. He knew God as his constant companion who was ever present with him. Jehovah was his personal Good Shepherd. He was not a 9-5 hireling, but a shepherd who was committed for life.

Like David we require a faith that can confidently trust in God’s care and provision for our lives. Too often we fall short of this. We have faith, but it is “little faith” as Jesus describes it. We do not possess outright unbelief but a faith that lacks confidence or trusts God too little in our day to day living.

Scriptures testify to this fact: 3 robbers of faith

Matthew 6:26-30 ... will He not much more clothe you, O you of “little faith”? (Worry can make little of our faith)

Matthew 8:23-26 ... then His disciples awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” (Fear robs us of faith)

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Matthew 14:22-33 ... and immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him (Peter), and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Doubt can rob us of our faith)

Worry, fear, and doubt rob of us of our faith and we cannot enjoy the life Jesus came to give us. We must pursue growing day by day into a complete confidence in God and who He says He is.

We cannot be complacent in our faith. We are to move from “glory to glory”, from “faith to faith”, from “little faith” to a “fully developed faith” in God’s love and care for us. We do this by opening our heart to Him and taking time to open our heart to His Word.

Faith in God: Defined in the Amplified Bible... *Colossians 2:5* says it is “that leaning (resting) of the entire human personality on Him in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness.”

Pastor Bill Johnson: “This faith in God does not come by determination. Faith comes from surrender. It does not come from exercising extraordinary will. You don’t just choose faith. You choose to rest in God.”

That is what we are doing here this weekend. It cannot come out of striving. There is something about rest where faith becomes the normal expression of the believer. Let’s enter into that rest and surrender to God this weekend allowing our faith to soar.

As we feed upon God's word we will see that God is not only the ultimate Good Shepherd who actively cares for His sheep but He is also the Ultimate One who satisfies our every need.

Psalm 23

1. Psalm 23:1 The LORD is My Shepherd: Jehovah Rohi “The LORD my Shepherd”

LORD: Jehovah means the Unchanging, Eternal, and Self-Existent God who “Reveals Himself.” Jehovah is the “I AM THAT I AM... The Great I AM who is a covenant keeping God. (Ex. 3:14)

“My” Shepherd: David personalizes Jehovah as his own Good Shepherd; his own personal caretaker.

Jesus: *John 10:11* I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His own life for the sheep. Committed to our well being unto Death!

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John 10: 14 I am the Good Shepherd; and I know and recognize *my own*, and *my own* know and recognize Me...close companionship

John 10:29, 30 My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater and mightier than all else; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.

When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, He becomes our “Good Shepherd”: We are safe in Jesus’ keeping. We truly belong to Him. Figuratively speaking we are in His hands. He is protective of His own. (*Isaiah 49:16* ... I have inscribed you on the palm of my hands) He is the caretaker of our lives. *Selah!*

Note the Emphasis here on Jesus’ “ownership” of the Sheep in *John 10:14* I know and recognize “My own.” Also, remember David’s emphasis on “my Shepherd.” There is a Beautiful belonging here. We belong to Him and He belongs to us. *Selah!*

It is as though He says “No one is able to take my sheep away from me! They are mine and I will not allow it!” I will guard them. I will care for them.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. You belong to Him. The idea of *ownership* is important here. Let it sink deep within your heart.

Eph. 1:13 And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit...

Sheep: It is not an accident that God calls us sheep. *Isaiah 53: 6* All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Let’s look at what He has taken on with us....

Sheep: Sheep require more care than any other class of livestock. They are very easily frightened, stubborn and just plain dumb animals. One little jack rabbit can stampede a whole flock of sheep. They will insist on their own way even if it means eating poisonous plants or drinking dirty water. Sheep are prey with little or no means of self- defense. They don’t normally fight back but run; although, they will fight with each other for dominance.

Sheep are totally dependent on the shepherd for every need. They are prone to disease and parasites. They need lots of care! Thank God for Jesus, our Good Shepherd!

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Shepherds were the providers, guides, protectors and constant companions of sheep.
Shepherds were inseparable from the flock.

2. Psalm 23:1 ... I Shall Not Want: Jehovah Jireh “The LORD will provide” We discover that God reveals Himself to Abraham as *Jehovah Jireh* in *Genesis 22:13, 14* when he provides the ram in the thicket for a sacrifice. The amplified meaning is “The LORD will see to it.” The LORD our provider is taught in both Old Testament and New Testament.

David confidently declares, “I shall be supplied with whatever I need.”

Matthew Henry commentary: David is so confident in God that he means that “If I do not have everything I desire then it is not fit for me, not good for me, or not the right timing. David is content with God’s management of his life.

Psalm 34:9-10 Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! (Revere and worship Him) There is no want (no impoverishment) to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; *but those who seek (follow hard in pursuit and search for) the Lord, shall not lack any good thing.* Amen!

Romans 8:32 He who did not withhold or spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, *will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all other things?*

Matthew 6:33 Seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness (His way of doing and being right) and all these things will be added to you. (Food, drink, clothing, etc. ... essentials of life will be given)

Ps 84:11 For the Lord God is our Sun and our Shield; The Lord will give us grace and glory; *No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

Psalm 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barn, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Practical Assignment: Keep a thanksgiving journal. Write down blessings God has provided whether big or small. It is a great way to encourage yourself in the faith and be reminded of God’s constant goodness and provision as the years go by. It will strengthen your relationship with the Lord and you will draw nearer to Him.

3. Psalm 23:2 He Makes Me to lie Down in Green Pastures; He leads me Beside the Still Waters. *Jehovah Shalom:* “The LORD our Peace” This name is found in

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Judges 6:24. He is revealed to Gideon as His Peace in a time of unrest and fear. He will do the same for you.

The Israelites were reduced to starvation because the enemy Midainites were destroying their crops and taking their cattle. Gideon is threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide from the enemies when an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!” I am sending you. I will be with you. After Gideon’s encounter with the Angel and he realizes he sees face to face the angel of the LORD he thinks he is doomed and will die. The angel assures him he will not die. And Gideon builds an alter and names it “Jehovah Shalom” which means, The LORD is our Peace.

Here is the image of the flock fully feed with the first tender shoots of vegetation from the earth. *The idea is of calmness and repose; resting and fully "satisfied" for their wants are completely supplied. What a wonderful condition of heart to possess!*

I am at peace and can rest in God’s full provision for my spiritual, temporal and eternal well fair of my soul.

Pasture: na'ah: a home; habitation, house, a pleasant place; figuratively speaking, a pasture.

He supplies the green pasture of His Holy Word for you to live in; for you to eat and abide in; the green pastures of a local Church and Christian fellowship; you might say, the particular house of The Lord for you to be planted in; the fellowship to call home. These become a habitation for you; green pasture for you; your spiritual home; your green pastures where your soul is spiritually feed and your faith grows. You will find increasing peace and rest in knowing and growing in Him.

Psalm 23:3 ...He Leads Me: He is in Active Control in your life. Trust Him to lead you. We need His guidance. *He leads us by His Word, by His Spirit within us; by providential circumstances.* We must learn to follow.

Psalm 23:3 ... Besides the Still Waters: The Living Waters of Life.... He leads me to and provides the spiritual refreshment that my thirsty soul longs. The waters represent His Holy Spirit, as well as His Holy Word. I can’t emphasize enough the importance of these two provisions of God. He does not force me to drink but He provides all that I need to drink. We must take time to drink of Him, of His Word, and His Spirit through worship, prayer, study, and meditation. In this we are refreshed.

John 4:14... But whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst again but the water that I give shall become a fountain of water springing up into eternal life! (Salvation & Holy Spirit)

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John 17: 37, 38 if anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink. But he who believes in me out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (The Holy Spirit)

Heb 13:20, 21 Now may the “God of Peace” Who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, The Great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood, may He equip you with all you need for doing his will.

John 14:27, 28 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

4. *Psalm 23:3 He Restores My Soul: Jehovah Raphah* “The LORD who heals” The Lord my Healer is found in Exodus 15:26. He reveals Himself to the Israelites as “I am the Lord thy Physician” after 3 days in the wilderness. For them it was a time of testing, physical thirst, discouragement and weariness. This is the very first covenant after their passage of the Red Sea. The Lord restored health to their bodies after they obeyed His command to cast a tree into the bitter waters of Marah. The waters were turned sweet. They were all healed!

The tree thrown into the bitter waters is symbolic of the cross of Christ. As we look to and by faith believe in Christ crucified our lives are restored. Spiritual, emotional and physical restoration is available. We receive the benefits by faith.

Ex 15:26 He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; *for I am the Lord who heals you.*”

Psalm 103:1 Bless the Lord Oh my soul and all that is within me ... who forgives my iniquities and heals me of all my diseases.... *Double Restoration is forgiveness of sin and healing in the body.*

Isaiah 53:5 ... the chastisement needful to obtain peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes, that wounded Him we are healed and made whole. ... Physical healing is the subject here.

Matthew Henry Commentary: “He recovers me when I am sick, and revives me when I am faint, and so restores the soul (life) which was ready to depart.” He is the Lord our God that heals us, *Ex 15:26.*

Jesus is The Physician who has come to heal and restore sin sick mankind. Mankind is plagued with sinfulness. Christ is the Healer.

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Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

He restores my soul: Restore shuwb - to bring back to a former or original condition; to refresh; to repair; to go back to a place of departure. *My Soul* “nephesh” - self, life, a person, a living being, what breaths or the inner being of man.

He restores me back to Himself when I wander. David’s soul restoration came after repentance of sin. David knew the feeling of hopelessness, sin, and being without strength. He had fallen into grave sins. David knew his need to be restored to God. Read Psalm 51.

Many people have the idea that when a child of God falls into temptation; when he is in a helpless spiritual situation, that God deserts him. Perhaps God is so fed up and furious that he abandons His child. Scripture does not teach this. God is faithful... even when man is wayward. He will never abandon us. He is still the Good Shepherd even when the sheep are bad. Scripture teaches he leaves the 99 to go after the 1. There are consequences to sin, but the revelation of Christ as our Good Shepherd who will come looking for us to set us right side up again is promising. Hallelujah! He has compassion for cast men and women. His delight is in restoring a cast one not only to their feet but also to the flock and to Himself! What good news! He Restores My soul!

There is an old English shepherd’s term for a sheep that has turned over on its back and cannot get up. It is a cast sheep. The sheep while lying on its back; its feet in the air, frantically struggles to stand up without any success. If the shepherd does not arrive within a reasonable amount of time the sheep will die. Thank God for Jesus our Good Shepherd who comes looking for us when we have turned our lives upside down!

The Good News of Restoration in the Bible: It appears that when something is restored to someone in the Scriptures that *it is increased or multiplied so that its latter condition is better than its previous condition. Praise God! When God restores He makes things better than they were before!*

Examples of Restoration:

Ex 22:1 If someone stole an ox or a sheep, it was not sufficient for him to simply restore the animal he had taken. He had to pay back five oxen or four sheep.

Proverbs 6:30-31 If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving, yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold...

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Job 42:10-12 When God restored Job after his great losses and trials of his faith, He gave Job twice what he had lost and blessed him more in his latter days than in the beginning.

Mark 10:29, 30 Jesus teaches that anyone who gives up anything for His sake and the gospel will receive 100 fold here in this life back and in the coming age eternal life.

5. Psalm 23: 3 ...He Leads Me In Paths of Righteousness: Jehovah Tsidkenu “The LORD our Righteousness”

Jeremiah 23:5, 6 “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness”

When God revealed himself as “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” in the Old Testament the people were anything but righteousness, sinless or guiltless. In fact, they were in the process of being hauled off into exile and captivity for their constant and longstanding sin, idolatry, and unfaithfulness to the Lord. They had been warned over and over through the prophets God had sent to them to repent but their hearts were hard. Finally the judgment fell.

In the midst of that devastation, the Lord comforted them by revealing himself to them in a new way that would give hope and carry them through the tough times ahead. Jeremiah prophesies of the day when a righteous king would come and setup His righteous kingdom. He would rule and execute justice and judgment. He would lead his people in righteousness!

Jesus is “The LORD our Righteousness” and He leads us “In paths” of righteousness (along the right paths).

Eph 2:10 Amp version: For we are God’s own handiwork ...recreated in Christ Jesus, (born anew) that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us (“taking paths” which He prepared ahead of time) that we should walk in them living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live.

Note that there are “right paths” specifically laid out for you and ordained by God as *Ephesians 2:10* states. Of course, there are also general paths of righteousness for all Christians to walk in and obey as God’s Word makes clear to us. But there are certain right paths just for you.

God compares us to sheep: Sheep are not very smart animals and are known for having no sense of direction and wander off from the path easily. If they wander away from the flock they are easy prey and in danger. If they wander into running creeks for water their wool grows heavy and they may even drown. If they wander off and become downcast they may even die. Sheep need a shepherd to watch over them and lead them. They need someone to keep them “on paths that are right.”

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We are lead in paths of righteousness by:

- a) *Looking to Jesus and His written Word ... John 14:6* “I am the way, the truth, and the life...” Psalm 119:105 Your Word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light to guide my path.
- b) *By the Holy Spirit, John 16:13:* When the Spirit of Truth comes, *He will guide* you into all truth... Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading (an inward witness of the Holy Spirit) will guide us.

Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”. Quite often we may sense a check in our spirit and know something is not right or a yes feeling inside and know it is the right thing to do. Be sensitive to His leading.

Proverbs 20: 27 the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts. “The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord” indicates that the Lord will enlighten us and give us guidance through our spirit or in our spirit. We can receive truth and guidance as He enlightens our spirit which has been regenerated or spiritually reborn by His Holy Spirit.

Psalms 18: 28 For thou will light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

c. *Listening to the voice of our conscience* is a way that the Holy Spirit will guide us. We must be sensitive to obey our conscience and do what is right as well as resist what we know is wrong. Having a clear conscience is important.

Acts 23: 1 Gazing intently at the high council, Paul began: “Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!” We also should be able to say this if we want to walk in the paths of righteousness.

1 Tim 1:5-6 the purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

d. *Providential circumstances:* God will set circumstances up and people up that confirm to you that something is the right thing to do. He will give you the green light through things that happen and let you know it is ok to go forward or perhaps not to advance.

John 14:21 ... whoever loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will show, reveal; manifest Myself to him. I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.

Many things that happen you know are not coincidence and no one but God could have planned it to happen. He is making Himself real to you to show you that He is still

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present and active in your life and leading you in His paths. He is still the Great I AM, not the Great I WAS!

Psalm 23:3... For His Name Sake:

His name is Jesus! He leads us in paths of righteousness for the purpose of His Glorious Name - that we bring Glory to His Name! *1 Cor. 10:31* Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God!

6. *Psalm 23: 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Jehovah Shammah “The LORD is there” This name for God is found in *Ezekiel 48:35* when Ezekiel prophesies about a restored Jerusalem and a new temple... “And the name of the city from that day shall be ‘The Lord is there’.” This has always been God’s desire to dwell with His people...from the Garden of Eden to the tabernacle; to the temple; to the bodily temple of Jesus Christ and now in you and me who believe.

Hebrews 13: 5b For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.

Yea, though I “walk through” - Many things in this life that we have to face we will have no quick or easy escape from. We will go through or walk through them with God and his help. Thank God it says we will walk through, implying that we come out of the valley! But “Going through” difficult times are frequently the only “way out” of them! Thank God it does not say: *though I stay in the valley or live in the valley, but I walk through them with Him.*

“Going through” difficult times are frequently the only “way out” of them!

Acts 14: 22 Paul states “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” Thank God we do enter into the kingdom and the blessings.

Ps 30: 5 Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. Sorrow is temporary. Holy Ghost JOY comes!

Isaiah 43: 2 When you pass through the waters I will be with you, and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned or scorched....for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

One thing to remember is that our valley experiences are temporary. We must remember this. There are many mountain top times in God, but usually in order to get from one mountain top to another we can’t just jump across. We go through the valley to get to the next mountain top. God is faithful to us and He is with us through it all.

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Psalm 84: 6 Passing through the Valley of Weeping (Baca), “THEY MAKE” it a place of springs; the early rain also fills the pools with blessings. They go from strength to strength - increasing in victorious power ...

Depending on how we respond to difficulty will determine if our valley times will be turned into a place of springs. By putting on the garment of praise, thanking Him and rejoicing in our Savior despite the situation we make it a place of refreshing springs. This is our choice. This takes faith and obedience. When we do this the rain of the Holy Spirit comes and fills the pool of our heart with grace and we will find ourselves going from strength to strength and increasing in Holy Ghost power!

Habakkuk 3: 17-19 (Amplified version) Though the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, though the product of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the victorious God of my salvation! The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds’ feet and will make me to walk not to stand still in terror, but to walk and make “spiritual progress” upon my high places of trouble, suffering or responsibility!

As we walk by faith, rejoice in Him, praising and declaring who He is “The Lord God is my Strength; my Helper, I will not fear but in Him I will trust” ... even in the midst of our difficulties the Word says we will make spiritual progress; in other words we will grow up in God and mature in our faith.

The Valley is a fruitful place: We need to realize that the valley is often a very fruitful and productive place due to fertile topsoil and running water. This valley experience in our life can be a spiritually fruitful time. If we want to bear fruit in the tough times we must keep the topsoil of our hearts fertile (confession of sin, prayer, praise, thanksgiving) and allow Him to work in our lives. (Galatians 5:22) It is possible to grow in love, joy, peace, etc. even in the valley.

Psalm 23:4... The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death (deep darkness)

Valley: Hebrew word is “gay”: a steep valley or a narrow gorge: *a deep narrow passage with rocky sides, especially one through which a stream runs!* Glory to God! This is good news!

The valley either has a river or a stream of water running through it! In the Christian’s life we know there is always a river of water we can draw from in the valley times. This water is the constant presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

John 14:16 ...He will give you another Comforter that He may remain with you forever. His presence is actually a River of Life we can draw from in the tough times. The Holy Spirit is called: Helper, Counselor, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthened, and Standby. Remembering we can drink of His presence is most important especially during valley

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times. Drink through prayer, praying in the Spirit, worship, praise and the Word...Drink through resting in His presence and knowing He is there for you.

Psalm 23:4 ... I Will Fear no Evil, for “Thou Art With Me” His unfailing promise is to be with you; help you and strengthen you. David makes a strong confession of faith that he will not fear! He will not anticipate any danger to overcome him for he knows his life is in the Shepherd’s care. He later states in vs. 6: “Surely goodness, mercy and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life...”

Isaiah 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Psalm 23:4...Thy Rod and Thy Staff They Comfort Me: Figuratively speaking the rod and staff refer to His Word and His Spirit. The rod was an instrument for protection and correction. The staff supported the shepherd, rescued the sheep, and gently kept him close to the Shepherd and in the fold. The Word and the Holy Spirit are there to protect, correct; to keep us close to the Shepherd.

7. Psalm 23: 5 You Prepare a Table Before me in The Presence of My Enemies; You Anoint my Head With Oil and my Cup Runs Over! *Jehovah Nissi:* “The LORD our Banner” or “Victor” or “Captain” is the redemptive name parallel with the first part of verse 5. It is found in *Exodus 17:10-15*. We see victory over the enemy! Here is a beautiful story of victory over the Amalekites as Moses keeps his hands raised high and his staff pointing to the heavens. He has the support of Aaron and Hur helping him keep his hands raised high for he has become weary. The Lord gives the Israelites complete victory in this battle as a result of Moses’ hands being lifted up!

Exodus 17: 10-15 While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them. Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand."... Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill. As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

Hands held high are a type of prayer and praise to God in the heat of a battle. This appears to have gone on all day long! While the battle can be tough and weary we may become, as God gives us prayer support and encouragement through other believers we can continue to withstand the enemy and come through to victory!

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1 Cor 15:57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Look at David's life: David had victory over his enemy King Saul. David knew that the Lord God was the one who would preserve his life, cause him to fulfill his destiny and give him victory over his enemies!

An outstanding character trait of David is that he would NOT avenge his enemy. He would trust in God. Fear and jealousy burned in King Saul's heart towards David and Saul was in a fierce pursuit to end David's life. Although David was always on the run from Saul we see two occasions when the stage was divinely set but David refuses even then to take the opportunity to end Saul's life. Not even in the guise of self-defense would David harm King Saul.

David is certainly put to the test. Will he take matters in his own hands or will he trust God to protect, avenge and promote Him in God's time? David would not touch God's anointed in a harmful way. During one incident David's conscious sorely bothered him for cutting off a piece of the hem of King Saul's robe. NO PAYBACK or GET BACK attitude characterized David's life, but confident TRUST in God to avenge and to promote him. No wonder he was God's choice as King of Israel. No wonder Jesus is called the son of David!

David's attitude:

1 Samuel 24:12 "May the Lord judge between us. Perhaps the Lord will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. The old proverb says: from evil people come evil deeds. So you can be sure I will never harm you.

1 Sam 24:15 May the Lord therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!"

1 Sam 26:23-24 The Lord gives his own reward for doing good and for being loyal, and I refused to kill you even when the Lord placed you in my power, for you are the Lord's anointed one. ...

Bottom line is this: There may people around us: co-workers, family members, so called friends or neighbors who purposely try to make your life miserable. They don't like you and never will. You perhaps stand for someone that they will never stand for, JESUS! Jealousy may fuel the flame when they see you as it did for King Saul towards David; perhaps they feel you are a threat to them in some way.

If we want God's blessing on our lives we must obey God and let Him be the one who takes care of the Saul's in our lives! No eye for an eye or tooth for a tooth attitude. If we choose to get even we are stepping outside of God's will and forfeit our protection, promotion and blessing. Which will it be? Will we trust God to make the

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wrongs right and come out on top or avenge the enemy and bind up God’s blessing in our own life?

Listen to what the Word of God says about enemies. Basically, you will have them! So we need to learn how to deal with them.

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil with evil. (God help us! Not even evil words!)

Romans 12:19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord.

Romans 12: 20, 21 "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." Don't let evil conquer you, but "conquer evil by doing good!" (What a word of wisdom!)

Is someone at work bothering you or just a pain in the neck to you? Well, pray for them; treat them to lunch or do some act of kindness. This gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work on them!

When we take this stand we set ourselves up for God to set “a table of blessing for us” and it will be conspicuously set where our offenders will take notice. Part of God avenging our enemies is for them to see the favor and blessing of God in our lives in spite of their attempts to discredit or do us harm.

Psalm 23:5 You Prepare a Table Before Me: Here “table” is used of a king’s table. It is synonymous with a “feast” and means that God is lavishly providing for you and making a grand show of it! If you have done the right thing and not become revengeful but bless your enemies then know that the banqueting table is being set for you. The enemy cannot stop the blessing of God in your life. It is only a matter of time! Get ready to feast!

Psalm 23:5 In The Presence Of My Enemies: They cannot stop the blessing! In one respect they actually prepare the way for you to get blessed by God. No man can stop the goodness of God in your life when you walk upright with Him. They will look on and see the hand of the Lord in your life. God’s timing may be different than yours but it is an absolute promise. He will avenge your enemies.

Psalm 23:5 You Anoint my Head with Oil: Jehovah M’Kaddesh “The LORD Who Sanctifies” is found in Leviticus 20: 7... Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: “I am the Lord which sanctifies you”.

1 Cor 6:11 ... But you were washed, but you *were sanctified*, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

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This is a part of sitting at the banqueting table. It is a joyful place! The oil being poured out represents the Holy Spirit in our lives who sets us apart as God's people for God's purposes. The oil here also represents the joy the Holy Spirit brings; rejoicing, and blessing! The allusion is to the custom of pouring perfumed oil on the head of an honored guest by someone of importance at a festival occasion. This was a symbol of honor, joy and rejoicing! The Holy Spirit is poured out on us by Jesus when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. What a joy and an honor to receive God's Holy Spirit, to be set apart for His service, and be partakers of His very presence! He anoints my head with oil!

Lev 8:12 And he poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

Rom 14:17-18 ...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit.

Ps 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (This is spoken of Jesus and can be applied to us as well when we love righteousness!)

Psalm 23:5 My Cup Runs Over - Meaning: “I have more than enough for my needs”... “ God fills your cup at this banqueting table not just full but till it is overflowing! An overflowing cup of wine! There is certainly Holy Ghost joy at this feast; overflowing grace and blessing... expect it! Here again we are talking about full provision from God when we walk with Him and obey Him... prosperity! God is not stingy with His children. He is full of grace! He is my Shepherd I shall not want... He prepares a table to feast ... my cup overflows! My heart overflows with thankfulness to my God!

8. *Psalm 23: 6 Surely Goodness and Mercy Shall Follow Me...* David may have had enemies chasing him down, but he knew that Goodness and Mercy were not far behind! This actually was God Himself not only going before him but also being his rear guard! *Goodness and Mercy would eventually chase those enemies down and turn things around!* God's promise to David to become king of Israel would be fulfilled despite his enemies.

Ps 27:13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. What a scripture to hold on to!

Ps 31:19 Oh, how great is your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men!

Ex 34:6-7 And the Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed (His Name), "The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and Abounding in Goodness and

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Truth... The LORD here describes His nature to Moses when he declared His Name to Him. Goodness and Mercy are descriptive of God Himself!

Psalm 23:6 ...All The Days Of My Life: As long as life should continue for David, he felt confidently assured that everything needful for him would be taken care of by His Shepherd; not just some days, but continually for each and every day. This is the firm confidence of a heart overflowing with faith, gratitude and joy in the remembrance of the past, and full of glad expectation in regard to the future.

Psalm 23:6 And I Shall Dwell In the House of the Lord Forever: The meaning is: My heart and my life will always be given over to my God; His cause and His presence forever. He wanted always to be close to his God. He anticipated and desired a life of continual worship and service to the LORD; desiring to be constantly aware of His presence and pleasing to Him at all time. This expresses the genuine desire of a true child of God.

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever," for heaven is my Father's house where He dwells, and this shall be my dwelling place for all eternity. Amen!

Selah!