

Psalm 23. – My Shepherd. 9th October 2011

**¹ The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.**

**² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.**

**³ He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.**

**⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

**⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.**

**⁶ Surely goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Beloved in The Lord,

It is one thing to know about a person, and an entirely different thing to know a person. You may know a lot about someone but not have a personal relationship with them, and therefore you do not really know them.

This is exactly the problem that many people have with God. They know some things and in some cases a lot about Him, but do not know Him personally. They may know about Jesus, but do not know Him as their personal Saviour and friend.

The church in Laodicea seems to have had this problem. They were living in a false sense of security thinking that they were ok. They believed that they were not lacking anything. They were religious, but they were lukewarm in their devotion and faith. This lukewarmness was I believe, a result of their lack of having a personal relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in Revelation Chapter 3:

¹⁴ "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

¹⁵ *'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.*

¹⁶ *So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.*

¹⁷ *Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,* ¹⁸ *I*

advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

You may be wondering what the connection is between these words of Jesus to the Church in Laodicea and the beautiful 23 Psalm. There is a great connection!

Psalm 23 opens with a beautiful confession of faith and relationship. David writes: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

It is only when the Lord is our personal Shepherd, can we make such a confession. Only when our lives are submitted to Jesus can we say I shall not want, or I shall lack nothing.

The members of the Church in Laodicea thought that they did not lack anything. They thought that they were wealthy, that they had everything in abundance and that they were not in need of anything. That is not how Jesus saw it. He said to the Angel of the Church:

“you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,..”

Every single person that is not living in a relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, whether they know it or not, certainly spiritually speaking.

The worst ones are the religious people. They are smug in their religion and do not realise the great need in their lives. That is how they are lukewarm in their faith and conviction.

People are so easily tricked and blinded by Satan. He whispers in their ears: “You are ok. You are a member of a Church. You are not harming anyone. After all you are a good person. God will accept you.”

It is only when we come to a total realisation that without Jesus in our hearts as our personal Saviour and Lord, we are not ok, then we can be blessed.

If you cannot truly confess with David: “The Lord is MY Shepherd” then you are not ok. To confess that you believe in God is not enough. The Devil believes in God.

You must come to the Cross where Jesus bled and died, admit that you are a sinner and that apart from Him you have nothing. You must submit your life to Him. You must open the door of your heart to Him, that He may enter and abide there. Listen again to what Jesus said:

“20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

The door as I mentioned already is your heart. The handle is on the inside. Jesus does not enter by force, but with great love and patience He is standing and knocking, waiting for you to open up to Him. If and when you do, He enters in and He comes with the fullness of His blessings. From that moment you can confess: “The Lord is MY Shepherd. I will lack nothing.

When Jesus abides in your heart He freely gives you all things. You have gold that is refined in the fire – That is God’s Word. God’s Word is the most precious thing you can have. God’s Word is refined by fire. It is more precious than gold. It is pure, valuable, holy, powerful and beautiful. A person who is rich in God’s Word, has more wealth than a billionaire. The worlds riches will pass away, but the Word of God abides or endures forever.

Next you have white robes. These are the robes of Righteousness. You are by Jesus blood made right before God. We read in Isaiah 1:18:

“Come now, and let us reason together,”

Says the LORD,

“Though your sins are as scarlet,

They will be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They will be like wool.”

When Jesus comes into our hearts He washes away our sins with His blood and that which was filthy with sin is made clean and pure. Your garment, your life becomes something beautiful in the eyes of God.

This can only happen at the cross with the blood of Jesus. Nowhere else and in no other way. All of our shame is exchanged for honour.

Next our eyes are healed. We go from being blind to seeing. Before a person comes into a right relationship with Jesus, he or she is spiritually blind. The understanding is darkened by the lies of Satan. They cannot see nor understand the truth. Paul writes in his 2 letter to the Corinthians: ***“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (4:3-4).***

It is only when we meet Jesus, and accept Him as our personal Lord and Saviour do we begin to see the light of the truth. We begin to know the truth and the truth sets us free. Then the words of Psalm 23 become our daily confession. We can say the Lord is My shepherd in every circumstance in every place.

Our lives are no longer led by our thoughts and desires, but we follow the Good Shepherd, because we trust and know that He knows what is best for us.

Even, when we are led into the dark valley of suffering, we trust and are not afraid, because we know that our Shepherd is always with us. We simply follow and obey His voice. This is the place where the Lord desires each one of us to be. He desires for us to be in the place where we can confess from the heart: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. The place where we can say along with Paul: ***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)***

And also: ***“For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” (Romans 14:7-9)***

Are these words the confession of your heart? If yes, then praise the Lord. Stay close with Him and know that goodness and mercy shall lead you all the days of your life and afterwards you will live with Him forever in His Kingdom.

If however, these are not reflections of your heart, do not delay. Come to Him today. Open the door of your heart so that Jesus would be Your Shepherd.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.