

Hostility Of The Culture.

Review of Ps. 23 appropriate ~ in times like these.

Probably ~ no psalm ~ is better known ~ nor more universally loved ~ than this one.

▶▶It is a mistake though, ~ if we view this psalm ~ as something only to be used ~ at funerals.

▷▷Because ~ Ps. 23 ~ covers ~ all the days ~ of a believer's life.

The psalm ~ is written by David, ~~ and is a song ~ of trust & confidence ~ in the Lord.

▶▶And, ~ even though David referring to himself, ~ this Ps., ~ of course, ~ for all believers.

▷▷It is for all those ~ who ~ have confessed with their mouth ~ that Jesus is Lord, ~ and believe in their heart ~ that God raised him from the dead.

My goal for us ~ in our review of Ps. 23 ~ is simple.

▶▶To gain encouragement ~ and ~ to increase our trust & confidence in Jesus, ~~ in order ~ to face the future ~ without fear.

Looked @ vv 1-3 last time.

▶▶Wrap it up by looking at ~ vv 4-6 of Ps. 23.

Let's Begin By Looking At Verse 4a. 1/13

Even though ~ I walk through ~ the valley of the shadow of death.

▶▶ Now, ~ this is not ~ talking exclusively ~ about the process of dying.

▷▷ The Heb. word for ~ the valley of the shadow of death ~ is a word ~ for darkness ~ without any hint ~ of death ~ in the word itself.

▷▷ It certainly remains the case, ~ however, ~ that the process of death ~ can be one dark valley ~ through which ~ a believer must walk.

▶▶ And of course, ~ vs 4 should be used ~ to comfort ~ believers who are dying.

▷▷ Jesus ~ is ~ certainly ~ a source of comfort ~ in a believer's dying moments.

▷▷ However, ~ we must not think ~ in exclusive terms.

▶▶ Translated as NIV has it: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Even though I walk ~ through ~ the darkest valley (NIV).

▶▶ It can refer to ~ any ~ difficult time in our lives.

▷▷ E.g., ~ ~ afflictions, ~ ~ trials, ~ ~ suffering, ~ ~ persecution, ~ ~ and, ~ of course, ~ the process of dying.

2 observations here ~ regarding vs 4a.

▶▶ 1st, ~ our Shepherd ~ does not keep us ~ from the dark valleys.

▷▷ No, ~ Jesus does not keep us ~ from the dark valleys of life. 2/13

▷▷ But we can rest assured, ~ the eventual outcome ~ of whatever we're going through ~ will be ~ for our ultimate good.

▷▷ Paul states the case clearly ~ in Rom. 8: ~ 28 (CSB).

↳↳ We know that ~ all things ~ work together for the good ~ of those who love God, ~ who are called ~ according to his purpose.

▷▷ Is. 38: ~ 17 (NIV), ⇔⇔ Is. quoting King Hezekiah.

↳↳ Surely ~ it was for my benefit ~ that I suffered such anguish.

▷▷ James 1: ~ 2-4 (CSB), ~ Consider it a great joy, ~ my brothers and sisters, ~ whenever you experience various trials, ~ because you know ~ that the testing of your faith ~ produces endurance. ~ And let endurance ~ have its full effect, ~ so that ~ you may be ~ mature and complete, ~ lacking nothing.

▶▶ And the 2nd observation here ~ regarding vs 4a.

▷▷ Notice carefully, ~ Even though I walk ~ through ~ the darkest valley (NIV).

↳↳ Through ~ is the key word here.

↳↳ IOW, ~ we do not take up ~ permanent residence ~ in the dark valleys we encounter in life.

↳↳ But we should point this out here.

→→ There's no mention ~ of how long ~ we'll spend in the dark valleys, ~ just that ~ we will not take up ~ permanent residence ~ in them. 3/13

▷▷Peter notes ~ this temporary nature ~ of trials in our life.

↳↳1 Pet. 1: ~ 6, ~~ In this you rejoice, ~ though now for a little while, ~ if necessary, ~ you have been grieved by various trials.

▷▷My, ~ when we find ourselves in dark valleys, ~ we can take comfort in knowing that it is only temporary.

↳↳We are going ~ through.

→→We are not ~ staying.

Vs 4b, ~~ I will fear no evil.

I.e., ~~ Even though I walk ~ through the darkest valley, ~~ I will fear no evil.

▶▶The word translated ~ *evil* here ~ means ~ danger, ~ harm, ~ injury.

▷▷I fear no danger. ⇔⇔ Or, ~ I will not be afraid.

▶▶In brief, ~ David was not overcome ~ by fear in any way.

▷▷He was fearless ~ even when he found himself ~ in a dark valley.

▶▶All ~ of God's blood-bought people ~ can be fearless ~ even in the darkest of valleys.

▶▶But why ~ is this so? ⇔⇔ Why ~ can we be fearless ~ even in the darkest of valleys?

▷▷This ~ is a pretty bold statement. 4/13

Well, ~ In Verse 4c, ~ David Tells Us Why ~ We Can Be Fearless.

Even though I walk ~ through the darkest valley, ~ I will not ~ be afraid, ~~ for you are with me.

▶▶ We have the promise ~ of the presence of Jesus, ~ our Shepherd.

▶▶ Our shepherd ~ is right there with us ~ even ~ in the darkest ~ of valleys.

▷▷ When we enter a dark valley in life, ~ he does not say, ~ "See you on the other side, ~ good luck to you."

▷▷ Does not keep us from the dark valleys, ~ but goes right through with us.

▶▶ In Is. 43: ~ 2a, ~~ When you pass through the waters, ~~ I will be with you.

▶▶ Heb. 13: ~ 5b drives this promise home as well, ~ I will never leave you nor forsake you.

▷▷ And that means ~ even ~ in the darkest ~ of valleys.

▶▶ And, ~ at the end of the great commission ~~ Jesus buttresses this promise.

▷▷ Matt. 28: ~ 20b, ~~ And behold, ~ I am with you always, ~ to the end of the age."

↳↳ Not sometimes. ~~~ Not only in the good times. ~~~ No, ~~ with us at all times.

▶▶ This ~ is an indisputable fact, ~ reinforced over and over in Scripture.

▷▷ Jesus, ~ our Shepherd, ~ is always with us. 5/13

▶▶ But, ~ there will be times ~ when going through dark valleys ~ that we feel ~ abandoned by the Lord.

▷▷ David felt that way in the opening verses of Ps. 13.

↳↳ How long, Lord? ~ Will you forget me forever? ~ How long ~ will you hide your face from me? ~ How long ~ must I wrestle with my thoughts ~ and day after day ~ have sorrow in my heart? ~ How long ~ will my enemy triumph over me? (NIV)

▶▶ But let us never go by feelings, ~ but ~ by the truth of Scripture.

▶▶ And always keep in mind ~ what the author of Heb. says, ~ it is impossible ~ for God to lie.

▷▷ I will be with you. ~ He's not lying. ⇔⇔ I will never leave you nor forsake you. ~ He's not lying. ⇔⇔ I am with you always. ~ He's not lying.

AND HERE IS SOMETHING ~ THAT SHOULD ADD ~ TO OUR FEARLESSNESS.

▶▶ The Lord ~ is not only present with us.

▶▶ He is also ~ for us ~ and will act ~ on our behalf.

▷▷ Ps. 118: ~ 6, ~ The Lord is on my side; ~ I will not fear. ~ What can man do to me?

▷▷ And Deut. 20: ~ 4, ~ For the Lord your God ~ is he ~ who goes with you ~ to fight for you against your enemies, ~ to give you the victory.

▶▶ So we have no need to fear ~ even ~ the darkest of valleys.

▷▷ Jesus, ~ our Shepherd ~ is with us ~ and working on our behalf ~ right there ~ in the dark valley. 6/13

▶▶Joseph.

▷▷In Potiphar's House. ⇔⇔ The Lord ~ was with Joseph.

↳↳Potiphar saw ~ that the Lord ~ was with Joseph.

▷▷In the prison.

↳↳The Lord was with Joseph ~ and showed him steadfast love ~ and gave him favor ~ in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

In Verse 4d, ~ David Tells Us ~ What Will Give Us Comfort ~ In The Midst ~ Of The Dark Valleys Of Our Lives.

Jesus' rod and staff.

▶▶The rod was used by a shepherd ~ to fight off the wild animals.

▶▶The staff used by the shepherd ~ to assist the individual sheep.

▶▶IOW, ~ the shepherd ~ was there ~ and was equipped ~ for any emergency.

▷▷This gave the sheep ~ comfort.

Here's the point of application.

▶▶Believers are Jesus' sheep.

▷▷And Jesus is ~ is equipped ~ to handle any emergency in our lives. 7/13

▶▶ Jesus is not ~ a hired hand ~ who runs away at the sight of danger.

▷▷ He is a ~ true Shepherd, ~ the Good Shepherd, ~ who lay down his life for his sheep.

▶▶ God's sheep ~ have peace ~ with God, ~~ and may enjoy ~ the peace ~ of God ~ as we trust him.

▶▶ Our Shepherd ~ is with us ~~ and ~ is equipped ~ for any danger we might encounter.

▷▷ All-powerful, ~ sovereign. ⇒⇒ So, ~ we may trust him ~ and have peace.

▶▶ Is. 40:9-11 (NIV), ~~ You who bring good news to Zion, ~~ go up on a high mountain. ~~ You who bring good news to Jerusalem, ~~ lift up your voice with a shout, ~~ lift it up, ~ do not be afraid; ~~ say to the towns of Judah, ~~ "Here ~ is your God!" ~~ See, ~ the Sovereign Lord ~ comes with power, ~~ and he rules with a mighty arm. ~~ See, ~ his reward is with him, ~ and his recompense accompanies him. ~~ He tends his flock ~ like a shepherd: ~~ He gathers the lambs ~ in his arms ~ and carries them ~ close to his heart; ~~ he gently ~ leads those that have young.

▶▶ And ~ Is. 43: ~ 1-3a, ~~ But now thus says the Lord, ~ he who created you, O Jacob, ~ he who formed you, O Israel: ~~ "Fear not, ~ for I have redeemed you; ~~ I have called you by name, ~ you are mine. ~~ When you pass through the waters, ~ I will be with you; ~~ and through the rivers, ~ they shall not overwhelm you; ~~ when you walk through fire ~ you shall not be burned, ~ and the flame shall not consume you. ~~ For I ~ am the Lord your God, ~ the Holy One of Israel, ~ your Savior."

5a, You Prepare A Table/Feast Before Me ~ In The Presence Of My Enemies

What was comforting to David ~ was that this feast ~ was in the presence of his enemies.

▶▶ Despite impending danger, ~~ the Lord spread out a table for him.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the Lord ~ provided for him. 8/13

Reminds us that ~ we live in enemy territory.

▶▶ Jn. 15: ~ 19 (NIV), ~ ~ ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, ~ ~ it would love you as its own. ~ ~ As it is, ~ you do not belong to the world, ~ ~ but I have chosen you out of the world. ~ ~ That is why the world hates you.

▷▷ Peter & John tell us ~ not to be surprised at this.

↳↳ E.g., ~ Do not be surprised, ~ my brothers and sisters, ~ if the world hates you.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ Satan is the ruler of this world.

▷▷ Jesus did not challenge his claim.

▷▷ And Satan ~ is out to destroy us.

▶▶ Peter defines us as ~ temporary residents and foreigners ~ in this world.

▷▷ We live ~ in a foreign world, ~ ~ and are surrounded ~ by hostile forces, ~ both human and demonic.

But this vs also reminds us. ⇔⇔ We have no need to fear.

▶▶ Jn. 16: ~ 33 (CSB), ~ ~ I have told you these things ~ ~ so that ~ in me ~ you may have peace. ~ ~ You will have suffering ~ in this world. ~ ~ Be courageous! ~ ~ I have conquered the world.

What's more, ~ vs 5a ~ shows us something else.

▶▶ It shows us that ~ living in enemy territory, ~ surrounded by hostile forces, ~ does not affect ~ Jesus' presence with us ~ his loving care of us, ~ or ~ his protection. 9/13

▶▶ Our enemies will never ~ cut off our connection ~ to our homeland ~ or ~ to our Savior.

▶▶ Absolutely nothing ~ can separate us ~ from the love God has for us.

Plus, ~ this vs shows us that ~ the Lord does not forsake us ~ in fear of hostile forces.

▶▶ Again, ~~ Jesus is ~ sovereign ~ and all-powerful. ⇨⇨ He fears ~ no one.

▶▶ Isaiah asks, ~~ Have you not known? ~~ Have you not heard? ~~ The Lord is ~ the everlasting God, ~ the Creator of the ends of the earth.

5b, ~ You Anoint My Head With Oil.

The picture ~ David may have in mind here ~ is two-fold.

▶▶ #1, ~ power & presence of the Holy Spirit in his life.

▶▶ And #2, ~ that he belonged to the Lord.

Remember in our study of James, ~~ anointing with oil ~ symbolizes ~ the power and presence ~ of the Holy Spirit.

▶▶ When Samuel took oil ~ to anoint David king over Israel, ~ the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

▶▶ Every genuine believer ~ is indwelt permanently ~ by the Holy Spirit from the moment of conversion.

▶▶ Speaking about the Holy Spirit, ~ Jesus said that ~ he would be with us forever.

▷▷ And that he would ~ dwell with us and be in us. 10/13

▶▶ And John tells us ~ excellent news. ⇨⇨ 1 Jn. 4: ~ 4, ~ He who is in [us] ~ is greater ~ than he who is in the world.

▶▶ If God is for us, ~ who can be against us?

And remember also, ~ anointing w/ oil ~ symbolizes that something is set apart ~ as belonging to the Lord.

▶▶ The person who is anointed with oil ~ belongs to God.

▷▷ This means ~ that God is responsible ~ for taking care of them.

▶▶ And no matter how hostile the culture becomes, ~ he will take care of us.

▶▶ Is. 41: ~ 10, ~ Fear not, ~ for I am with you; ~ be not dismayed, ~ for I am your God; ~ I will strengthen you, ~ I will help you, ~ I will uphold you ~ with my righteous right hand.

▷▷ The ~ right hand ~ is a symbol ~ of the Lord's power ~ to deliver and protect.

↳↳ Song of Moses. ~ Your right hand, O Lord, ~ glorious in power, ~ your right hand, O Lord, ~ shatters the enemy.

↳↳ In Ps. 63, ~ David said that ~ the Lord's strong right hand ~ held him securely.

→→ Jn. 10: ~ 27-30, ~ My sheep hear my voice, ~ and I know them, ~ and they follow me. ~ I give them eternal life, ~ and they will never perish, ~ and no one ~ will snatch them out of my hand. ~ My Father, ~ who has given them to me, ~ is greater than all, ~ and no one ~ is able to snatch them ~ out of the Father's hand. ~ I and the Father are one.

5c, ~ My Cup Overflows.

Cup = Cup of blessing. ⇨⇨ My cup overflows with blessings (NLT). 11/13

▶▶ Israel was promised ~ material blessings.

▶▶ Believers in the church age ~ are not.

▶▶ And since we are ~ not promised material blessings, ~ this, ~ of course, ~ refers ~ to a spiritual cup ~ overflowing with ~ spiritual blessings.

▶▶ And our cup of spiritual blessings ~ is definitely ~ overflowing.

▶▶ Paul tells us in Eph. that God ~ *blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

▷▷ Adopted, ~~ Redeemed, ~~ Forgiven, ~~ Inheritance, ~~ Grace, ~~ & on & on.

▶▶ And no matter what ~ our enemies do, ~ they can neither steal ~ nor destroy ~ our cup.

▶▶ All of this ~ should give us great encouragement and courage ~ in the presence of surrounding hostile forces, ~ human or demonic.

In Verse 6a, ~ David Tells Us, ~ Surely Goodness And Mercy ~ Shall Follow Believers ~ All The Days Of Our Lives.

From the moment we are born again ~ to the moment we enter into our Savior's presence, ~ we are assured ~ of being beneficiaries ~ of the Lord's goodness and mercy.

▶▶ Doesn't seem to be a lot of goodness and mercy in the world today.

▷▷ But according to David, ~~ we don't have to worry about that.

▶▶ And our Shepherd ~ will never ~ be in short supply of these blessings for us. **12/13**

▷▷ His goodness and mercy, ~ like his grace, ~ are ~ vast, bottomless oceans ~ that will never run dry.

↪↪ He will keep pouring them upon us.

▶▶ And let's never forget.

▷▷ We don't ~ deserve ~ Jesus' goodness and mercy.

▶▶ Titus 3: ~ 4-7, ~~ But ~ when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ~~ he saved us, ~ not ~ because of works done by us in righteousness, ~~ but ~ according to his own mercy, ~~ by the ~ washing of regeneration ~ and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ~~ whom he poured out on us richly ~~ through Jesus Christ our Savior, ~~ so that ~ being justified by his grace ~~ we might become heirs ~ according to the hope of eternal life.

And Here's The End Result ~ Of Jesus Being Our Shepherd.

Verse 6b, ~~ and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

▶▶ My . . . , ~ our great shepherd will lead us throughout our lives and then bring us safely into his heavenly kingdom.

▶▶ My fellow believers, ~~ one day ~ we will leave ~ all the dark valleys ~ and all of our enemies ~ behind.

▷▷ We'll never ~ be plagued by them again.

↪↪ And we'll join our Shepherd ~ in our Father's house ~ forever.

Halleluiah. 13/13