

The Lord Is My Shepherd

Ps 23:1

1

1 The Lord is my shepherd,

This passage is one of those that many in the world are at least familiar with the words of, even though they may not practice religion at all. It has been the subject of many sermons, many of which you have probably heard. Though, this will be my first attempt at it. Paul, in writing to the Romans, tells them that it is important for them to be reminded of the things of God.

Rom 15:15

2

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

To try and make some new point that revolutionizes the world of faith is just an effort in futility. There is nothing new to be said about this passage. To be honest, I have no desire to try and do so; but if we can remind ourselves of some of the old and divine truths, and put ourselves into remembrance of the things of God, then this will be an effort worthwhile.

It is universally accepted that this is a Psalm of David, most probably when he was a king. David had been a shepherd, and he was not ashamed of his former life and humble beginnings. When he was wearing the crown, he remembered the time when he had handled the shepherd's crook, and, as a lad, with his sling and stone, had kept watch over his father's sheep in the wilderness. The life experiences that David had been through colored his actions and reactions.

1 Sam 17:32-33

3

32 David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." *33* Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth."

The scenario is one we are probably familiar with. Goliath was a giant of a man, skilled as a warrior, and brash enough to challenge any of the Israelites to meet him, man to man, in hand to hand contact. David hears this challenge and questions why not one of the men of the Israelite army was willing to take up his challenge. David believed that if any man had had faith in the Lord then the challenge would have been met and won.

Saul's comment to David so illustrates a condition that so many times we all fall victim to, at times. We tend to look at people, as well as ourselves, and see there the outside with whatever weakness or flaw that may seem to be apparent. But we often fail to recognize either in others or ourselves the well of strength that comes from a faith and love for God. Saul looked at David and saw a youth of not imposing stature as Saul was and he didn't recognize the enormous strength that was within.

1 Sam 17:34-36

4

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, *35* I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. *36* "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this

uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”

David tells Saul that he has faced what might appear to be insurmountable foes before, the lion and the bear, and that this Philistine is no different.

1 Sam 17:37

5

37 And David said, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

David had a great faith in God and believed that it was the Lord that had given him the strength to overcome such powerful animals and that it would be the Lord who would deliver him from the Philistine Goliath. I find it interesting that after David tells Saul of his faith that Saul still seems to place his faith and trust in things other than the Lord...

1 Sam 17:38-39

6

38 Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. **39** David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them.

Saul wants to have David wear his personal armor for protection. The rest of the story, as Paul Harvey might say is that David took off the armor and went out to meet Goliath. He took his sling and five smooth stones and brought Goliath down.

David remembered from where he had come. He remembered the strength that the Lord supplies to His faithful.

There is a fine line between having a great confidence based our faith, understanding , and knowledge and being prideful in our self-perceived abilities. David had a great confidence in the Lord and channeled his abilities into the Lord’s care. He wasn’t prideful or boastful in his statement to Saul. He had faith in the Lord, so, when we read how he begins this Psalm...

7

"The Lord is my Shepherd"

We read of his great faith and trust in the Lord. This is another of the many great statements of faith that we see in the scriptures.

What I would like to do for the remainder of this lesson is to look at some thoughts from David’s proclamation of his faith.

8

- 1) This faith leads to certain privileges
- 2) The duties involved in this relationship

The first thought...

9

- 1) This faith leads to certain privileges

There are some interesting lessons to be found in this analogy. A shepherd was the guide, the protector, the sheep didn’t need to know where the water was to be found or the green meadows were located at. The shepherd would lead them in the way they needed to go. It wasn’t the responsibility of the sheep to know how to fight or to defend themselves from the terrors of the world, it was up to the shepherd to protect the flock.

These principles that we see in the analogy that David uses, are to be applied to ourselves as the sheep and Christ as the shepherd, and when we look at those principles I think we see some things that are obviously apparent. When a lamb would wander away from the flock, away from the shepherd, then the protection and guidance afforded by being with the shepherd would be gone.

John 16:12-14

10

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **14** He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Christ tells His disciples that they would be guided into...

11

"All Truth"

Then, while speaking of His disciples to His Father, Christ says...

John 17:14-17

12

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **15** I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

I find it difficult to understand how that so many can read these passages and not see the progression. Christ tells the disciples that they will be led into all truth and then declares that the Word of God is truth.

The Psalmist writes...

Ps 119:160

13

160 The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

God's word is what leads man into "All Truth."

Heb 4:12

14

12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

When man gives himself over to the truth and allows it to lead him in his life, it will change him, transform him into a righteous relationship through Christ with God. The real application of this passage from Hebrews is that if a man will truly live by that truth then it will allow him to judge his own actions and intentions. We must all weigh the things we say, the things we do, the things we think, will be those things that keep us on the path that leads to righteousness. That is one of the purposes of the Word, to guide us into all truth. It is also there to help protect those who believe it.

2 Thess 3:1-3

15

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; **2** and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. **3** But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Paul shows us that the Lord is true to His promises and that He will give strength and protection to all who believe in and follow Him. Paul also indicates from whom the Lord will protect,

16

“The Evil One”

1 Cor 10:12-13

17

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

There is a danger that all Christians face. Satan wants nothing more than to lure each and every one of us away from God. Therein is the protection that God provides for His children. Temptation comes in all sorts of forms, but God promises that with every temptation there will be provided an escape. That is the word of God, the Word that guides and protects.

This brings us to our next thought...

18

2) The duties involved in this relationship

The love, the forgiveness, the wisdom, the protection, the guidance that God offers are freely given, is freely offered. But this is where so many make a grievous error. There is a vast difference between something that is freely given and something that is given for free. The promises of God are freely given in that He offers them to all men. There are no restrictions as to who may partake of them or to what degree. But they are not given for free, there is a cost to them. There are requirements and prerequisites that man must adhere to and complete on an ongoing basis to receive the promises of God.

Matt 11:15

19

15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus tells the people to listen. In Revelation, He says, no less than 8 times...

20

“He who has an ear, let him hear”

Man must hear what the Lord has to say.

Heb 11:6

21

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith is an absolute necessity in coming to God. When the Eunuch saw the water and asked Philip if he could be baptized, the answer was...

Acts 8:36-37

22

36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, Look! "Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" **37** [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

Faith, belief is a prerequisite to coming to God, without it man cannot please God.

2 Peter 3:9

23

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching to the people, repent for the kingdom is at hand. Repent, to change one's will to God's will. Choosing to allow the Word of Truth to be the guide in our lives is something that each who come to God through Christ must do.

Luke 13:3 24

3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Jesus tells the Jews that unless they changed their willful ways they would perish in their sin.

Rom 10:8-10 25

8 —that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10** for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

As we have already seen in Acts 8 when Philip asked the Eunuch if he believed, the Eunuch proclaimed...

26 ***"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."***

Look at these proscriptions. Hear God's Word. Actually hear it. Believe it, take it into your heart and accept it. Repent, change your will to God's will, quit living the way of the world and start living for God. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, both with the mouth and with the way we live. Then be willing to act on what the Word is telling us. In Acts 2:37, when the people asked what they had to do, Peter told them...

Acts 2:38 27

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter tells the people there that the correct response to believing God's Word and wanting to partake of His promises is to be baptized.

1 Peter 3:21 28

21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God

There is a correct response to what the Word of God tells man, faithful obedience. Willingness to place ourselves into the hands of the Lord and allow His Word to be our guide and protection is a must. The correct response to what we see in God's Word is to make...

29 ***"The Lord our Shepherd"***

So, the only question left to ask is...

30 ***Is the Lord your Shepherd ?***