26-1115p - Detailed Summary

26-1115p - *Some Thoughts on Psalm 23, Part 2, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Reader: John Nousek

See the transcript: Transcript HTML - Transcript PDF

Some Thoughts on Psalm 23, Part 2

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader (1:13 - 1:16): John Nousek **Psalm 23:1-6**: John, the scripture reader, opens the evening service by announcing the reading of God's Word from Psalm 23 and proceeds to read the entire psalm. He begins, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Continuing through the psalm, he reads of walking through the valley of the shadow of death	***continued*** without fear because the Lord is present, with His rod and staff providing comfort. The reading moves to the prepared table in the presence of enemies, the anointing of the head with oil, and the overflowing cup. It concludes with the assurance that goodness and loving kindness will follow all the days of life, and the psalmist will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. John closes the reading with "Amen."

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 28:37), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(1:21–2:12) Greeting and Introduction to Part Two

Jim, the preacher, greets the congregation with "Good evening, everybody," and expresses the hope that everyone has had a nice day so far. He shares that he personally experienced a very peaceful day because his grandkids were out of the house, which allowed him to work quietly on his unfinished evening sermon. He announces that tonight's message is part two of some thoughts on Psalm 23. He thanks John for the scripture reading just completed and notes that he forgot to thank Roger earlier. Roger had read a lengthy passage from John 10 about the Good Shepherd during the morning service. Jim addresses Roger directly, saying that if he is listening, he is grateful. He then states that the congregation will now dive into the second part of Psalm 23.

(2:16–3:49) For His Name's Sake and Bearing Christ's Name

Jim recalls that the morning lesson concluded the first half of Psalm 23 at verse 3: "He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." He acknowledges that he did not speak much about the phrase "for His name's sake" in the morning. Explaining the term, he notes that as children of God, believers are His namesake. A namesake is specifically a child purposely named after another family member in order to honor the lineage or preserve the family heritage. Although Christ has no physical children, believers are His spiritual offspring. When a person is born of the Spirit through baptism and becomes a Christian, that person bears Christ's name for His name's sake. Therefore, our every behavior is a reflection upon Him. If Christians do not behave as children of God, they malign and profane that name rather than living up to the great name of Christ. With this application in place, Jim turns to pick up the text at verse 4.

(3:51–6:27) The Valley of the Shadow of Death as a Real Place

Jim reads verse 4: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” He states that the valley of the shadow of death is actually a real place. One can search online for “Valley of the Shadow of Death Israel” or use one of the biblical names assigned to the area and find photographs. It is a formidable, hostile place with nothing good about it, making it a fitting image for turmoil in human lives. The valley is also known as the Wadi Qelt (Q-E-L-T), or in Hebrew as Nahal Prat. It is a crescent-shaped region between Jerusalem and Jericho, desolate, dangerous, and treacherous. One side consists of sheer cliffs of rock, while the path itself slopes with loose rock and dirt. Losing one’s footing means falling into a deep chasm of jagged rock below. A drone shot of the valley resembles looking across the Grand Canyon—rock with virtually no light. Navigating it safely requires great skill and familiarity with the passageways, otherwise a person risks being hurt or killed. Many biblical characters chose this area when they desired not to be found.

(6:40–10:16) Biblical Characters Who Fled into the Valley

Jim identifies several figures who went into this region. First is Elijah. After Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal and had them killed, Jezebel was upset. Jim humorously slips and says “Hillary,” then corrects himself to Queen Jezebel, adding that he had to get that in and that one might say she has the spirit of Jezebel. Jezebel pursued Elijah, who ran for his life and hid in a cave in this area. God knew where he was and sent ravens to feed him scraps of meat while he stewed, thinking he was the only one left. Jim notes that Jezebel was queen and Ahab was king—probably the absolute worst king that country ever saw—and she wanted Elijah dead because she was a Baal worshiper. Next is David, pursued by his son Absalom (described as the one with long, flowing red hair), who chased his own father in order to kill him and become king. Such treachery led David into this valley of the shadow of death, where he hid from his own son. Likewise, King Zedekiah, during the constant apostasy of Israel and Judah, faced repeated prophetic warnings of impending doom. When Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to take them away, Zedekiah tried to hide in the valley of the shadow of death. Jim adds that tradition holds the man overtaken by robbers in the parable of the Good Samaritan was also traveling through this valley, though he notes this is tradition and cannot be taken to the bank. All these people were in fear of their lives and in dark places; David learned to rely on the Good Shepherd through turbulent times, and so can believers today.

(10:18–13:09) Jesus the Light, Good Shepherd, Yahweh Shammah, and Yahweh Nissi

Jim connects this picture to the prophecy of where Jesus, the Good Shepherd, would come from. He quotes Matthew 4:12–16: when Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned, He withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, He went and lived in Capernaum by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, fulfilling what was spoken through Isaiah—the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the way to the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people living in darkness have seen a great light, and those living in the shadow of death, a light has dawned. Jesus is that light who delivers believers out of the valley of the shadow of death and darkness. With Jesus the Good Shepherd leading through life’s difficult valleys, there is nothing to fear. He goes out in front, clearing the way and making the path safe with His rod and staff. Jim identifies Jesus as Yahweh Shammah, which means Yahweh is present; He is with us at all times and nothing escapes His attention. Jesus is also Yahweh Nissi, meaning Yahweh is our banner and our victor. Just as He delivers from the shadow of death, Christ will deliver from the grave. Jim quotes 1 Corinthians 15:54–55: when the perishable

is clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, the saying comes to pass—death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? For the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. After briefly noting a sneeze coming on, he concludes that thanks be to God who gives victory through our Lord Jesus Christ—Yahweh Nissi, victory through Christ.

(13:09–15:46) Verse 5: The Prepared Table, Preferential Provision, and Judgment Day Metaphor

Jim turns to verse 5: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows." This begins a new allegory of the dinner feast. God, or the Shepherd, again provides for His people, so abundantly that it is done in front of enemies. This is Yahweh Jireh—God will provide. There are many names for God. Those who follow the Shepherd receive preferential treatment, much like when God plagued Egypt and its animals yet left the Israelites untouched, making a distinct and intentional impression on Pharaoh. He showed the difference between false gods and the true God, between the Egyptians and His people, the common and the special, the profane and the holy. The table prepared is a full spread or feast; the Hebrew word for table conveys the idea of a complete table. In this psalm the only guest is the child of God, the believer, the sheep. Jim sees this as a metaphor for Judgment Day as well. Each person will give an account for his life, like the parables of the wedding feast or the separating of the sheep from the goats. Only those who respond to the invitation or have been following their Shepherd, and those who obey the Son, can eat at this table and have a place at the feast. Those who do not believe in God, who mock Him, or who hate the children of God are the enemies on the outside, watching God take care of His children.

(15:46–19:46) Verse 6: Goodness, Mercy, Heaven, and the Shepherd-Sheep Theme

Jim reads verse 6: "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This presents a beautiful picture of grace. God's goodness and mercy are showered upon the believer all the days of life when walking in the light. The goal is heaven, which is the house of the Lord spoken of here. He quotes Genesis 22:13–14: Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket, took the ram, and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham called the place Yahweh will provide, and to this day it is said that on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided. Jesus went to the cross and the Lord provided His lamb; the Shepherd became the Passover lamb. A strong shepherd-sheep theme runs through the whole Bible. Peter says that when the Chief Shepherd appears, believers will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. If they remain faithful to the end, not giving up, they will receive a crown of life that never perishes and never fades. Jim also recalls the earlier reading from Exodus 15:11–13: Who among the gods is like You, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders? You stretch out Your right hand and the earth swallows them up—the Egyptians. With loving devotion You will lead the people You have redeemed; with Your strength You will guide them to Your holy dwelling. Just as in Psalm 23, the Shepherd will guide believers into heaven. The Savior is leading the way and will not let one slip away; He keeps them in line with His staff, which is comforting. God gives His Spirit and the Word so that people can live the best possible lives that glorify Him. Through life's challenges, His divine Word and merciful grace teach them to say no to ungodliness and to be prepared for the next life, which is heaven. Psalm 23 is a wonderful poem that gives comfort even to non-believers, and Jim himself finds comfort in it.

(19:46–20:00) Closing and Invitation

Jim concludes that this is all he has on Psalm 23. The service moves to the invitation. He invites anyone who would like to come forward, saying they will see them.