

I Will Not Lack Restoration

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 July 2020

Preacher: Dr. Don Owsley

- [0 : 00] We have looked the last time that Psalm 23 was one of the creeds for the Jews, for Israel. And it was a statement of faith as much as Deuteronomy 6 was. And it puts into perspective something that they certainly would have understood as agricultural people, as people who are shepherds and people who work out in the fields. It's a metaphor. We in our logical minds as Americans, we tend to take after the Western ideals, the Greek thought. You know, we have to have things on linear. We have to have things, you know, systematic, point by point, which is good. But they thought and talked in stories. And in fact, God reveals who he is through story, constant story, consistent story, the big story around which we find Jesus Christ. Now, interestingly enough, as much as we like logical progression and thought, we still have an affinity and a desire for stories.
- [1 : 13] Stories will catch our attention and stories will inform us. And we can learn much and speak through story. And so what we find in Psalm 23 are many metaphors, but they were filled and packed with stories. And so here it is in Psalm 23, as we have read, that the Lord, my shepherd, as it introduces in the first, the Lord, my shepherd does many things. The Lord, my shepherd has qualities about him, but also he does things for his people. And so we found that the Lord, my shepherd provides for us so that we won't lack. And one of the first things that we do not lack is rest. And today we're going to look at the fact that we will not lack restoration and we will not lack road, direction, guidance. We also will not lack refuge or a resource or a reservoir of hope. So let's look at these two things that we find in verse 2 and verse 3.
- [2 : 23] It's that we will not lack, not only rest, but we shall never lack restoration and we will not lack a road or guidance. I shall never lack restoration. He restores my soul. To restore has the connotations of one of the words that could be interpreted many different ways. And as always, we have to look at the context in which that word is used. But one of the ways that it's used consistently means to repent, to turn back, to turn around, to do a U-turn. You go in a particular direction and you recognize that you forgot something at the house and you have to turn around. That is this word, to restore. If you've done something wrong and you want to turn about and make things right, that is this word. It's to restore, to repent. Now with sheep, often the idea of one cast down or turned over on its back, like sheep can do if they're over, you know, they have too much, what do they have, hair or fur?
- [3 : 27] Wool. Whichever it is. I guess it's hair because it grows, both. Anyway, if they're too heavy, they have this tendency to tip over rather easily.

And I understand from some shepherds that they can tip over and end up on their back. And if they don't get turned right side up, you know, they're perfect for the wolves or coyotes or anybody else who desires to go after them and eat them.

But to turn them right side up is to restore them. To restore sheep was also to take sheep who tend to go astray.

It's funny that they will follow the lead and they will follow a lead sheep, but they will follow also the shepherd. However, if one little sheep decides that he wants to go venture off and explore, they're so curious that they will follow after the sheep.

And it could be anywhere. It could be right into a pack of wolves. It could be right over a cliff. It could be in any direction. So to restore means to turn them around and bring them back to where they need to be in the pasture, in the meadow or within the confines of their corral.

[4 : 48] Isaiah 53 reminds us, verse 6, All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So we need to be turned around. Luke 15 talks about the idea of David turning around those repentant psalms.

The psalms of his repenting and others calling for repentance. And Psalm 38 is a turnaround psalm. David pleads with God to have mercy over his pitiful condition.

And God does after David repents and confesses his sin. He turns around. He is restored. Psalm 51. A very familiar psalm to many of us.

Psalm 51 in which he cries out in agony because of the sin that he had committed. And he confessed. He is restored.

[5 : 48] Psalm 102. 102. 102. 102, I'm sorry. The psalm of complaint to God because of affliction. Psalm 130 was a psalm of ascent.

That was a psalm that they would often sing when they gathered together as God's people. And march up and dance up and march up and go up the hill to the mountain where the tabernacle was or the temple was.

It's a song of ascent waiting for redemption from God. It was a psalm of restoration. A psalm of turnaround. Repentance. Repentance.

Repentance. So this idea of turning around was a covenant term. And it was applied to God's people whom he calls out whose hearts he is determined to take and make them turn around to come back to him.

It's the idea of a prodigal son who's gone off and the father calls out to him. Come back. Come back. The son doesn't until after a certain period of time he's had enough and he turns back.

[6 : 55] That's what it means to restore. It's a saving grace as the Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us. It's whereby a sinner out of true sense of a sin and apprehension of God's mercy in Christ does with grief and hatred of a sin.

Turn from it unto God with full purpose in endeavor after new obedience. To turn back to God. That's to restore. You can recall I'm sure how the Lord was merciful to you and called you and restored you to himself.

Whether it was the first occasion in which you came to faith in Christ or if you grew up in a Christian family you had this recognition of who you really were without him. You came back and repented.

So he says I shall not lack the opportunity to repent. In Christ I will not lack the ability to repent. That's what it means to restore. However, the word also means to repair, to restore, to be made new.

To repair. We bought a house that was built in 1985 and just as many houses that are rather old or older, oldish, we discovered quite a list.

[8 : 15] I think we have a list of 100 projects that we need to do to bring it up to speed. We've got to restore it. Thankfully it wasn't as bad as the house that we had back in the Sunnyvale, San Jose area.

Talk about restoration. We spent a good year restoring that. And the funny thing was after all that was said and done and all the effort and all the work that we did, it wasn't any better than it was when we started in terms of aesthetics.

It was solid. We fixed it so that if it rained, it would never leak again. In fact, if it flooded, it could lift up and float down. We just water sealed that thing like nobody's business.

Except that we also had to bolt it down. We had to remove all the walls and bolt it down for earthquakes. So if you wanted to be in a place that was earthquake free and secure, that was the house to be in.

We restored it. We remade it. It was like new. And then we moved. You know, that's what we do. But see, it's in keeping with the context of the Lord leading his sheep to cause the sheep to lie down in green pastures and leading them to quiet, secure waters in an effort to, and for the purpose of restoring, repenting, to be made new.

[9 : 46] I don't know about you, but restoration is needed. I'm mentally and physically tired. Emotionally tired.

Restoration is a good thing. You know, it's depleted energy. When you have depleted energy, you need refreshment. When you're in a place of despair, you need repair.

When you have this anxious desperation, you need restoration. Or hopeless exhaustion, you need restoration. Depleted energy again, you know, you need an exhausted soul, you need restoration.

It was one of those occasions, probably similar to the time of the 1960s or the 1930s or during the World Wars, you know, where there was so much angst and anxiety or much restoration is needed.

And yet this is a promise. God says, you will not lack restoration. So where does it come from? Where does it come from?

[10 : 52] Well, the context, verse 6, you know, there's this, we find a, I'm sorry, in Psalm 6, good David's plea during sickness is rest.

Restoration comes from rest. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He makes me, he motivates me, he brings it, he causes, he encourages.

The, I'm not sure about sheep, but I doubt too much that whether the shepherd has to go and beat sheep over the head to make them lie down.

It's not, it's not like little toddlers or three-year-olds, you know, who don't like naps sometimes. Our little guy was so tired yesterday, he volunteered to go to sleep last night.

He's like, whoa, you have to write that one in the journal, you know. You know, I didn't have to make him lie down. But God does that. He provides circumstances to give us rest.

[12 : 05] Rest, you know, in Psalm 32, David shows refreshing joy found in forgiveness. And that was, that was a weight that was lifted off of him that provided rest.

It's the picture of coming to an oasis where the weary find a peaceful, pleasant place in the desert. It's the spirit, bringing the beaten, sun-parched soul in the dryness and heat of trouble and temptation in order to drink deeply.

Tasting the very sweet essence of life. Like Jonathan did when he took the honey. It's refreshed. This is what it means to have this kind of rest.

David makes a statement without qualification. He doesn't tell exactly how the soul is restored. There are many, many books that are written about the value of sleep, the value of rest, the value of decompressing, the value of restoring oneself.

But he doesn't do that. He just makes a blanket statement, a statement of truth, and leaves it up to us to figure out before the face of God, exactly how to do that.

[13 : 22] Because rest for you may be different than rest for me. And rest might be going on a vacation and traveling around the United States.

Rest might be sleeping for a week. Rest might be camping. A lot of different ways. But see, the context here is the restoration is because God is Lord.

He is the shepherd who leads you to rest. Rest. And in him you have rest. And it is by his provision that you have rest. And then on his day you have rest.

This is why he provided the Sabbath, the Shabbat. He gave the Sabbath to his people to do exactly what the Lord did. Six days God worked and then he took a Sabbath break.

Not because God needed to rest. You know, he didn't lie down after that for that day. Rather, it was an opportunity to rejoice and to celebrate in the works of his hands.

[14 : 22] It was a cessation of labor to an extent. He didn't need to sleep. He doesn't need to sleep. In fact, it says he never sleeps. Thank God. But the Sabbath was provided, you know, and the principle of the Sabbath was provided for rest.

By resting, God declared his work as a creator that was completed. Not cessation from all work. He declared that it was completed exactly as he intended it.

And sometimes rest means contemplating and thinking back on the work that you've done. You know, enjoying it. But, you know, one thing they do know, the studies have shown, the research has shown, is that when you get into the zone, you've been in the zone, if you're a painter and you're, you know, lost in your painting, or you're reading an excellent book, you're lost in your book, or if you're making something out of wood, you're kind of lost and time just flies by, you know, you're in the zone.

And they've shown that when you get in the zone, that's rest. It's refreshment. And this is exactly the kind of thing that the Lord intended for a Shabbat, for his Sabbath.

He rested to express delight in his work. He ceased from labor, but he showed refreshment. By resting, God pictured the rest that he provides for his people.

[15 : 44] The Sabbath, a day of rest. He was a long period of time in which it was a year in which there was rest.

And all that pointed to Jesus, who is the perfect rest, who said, Come unto me, all you who work and are burned down, and I will give you rest.

He gives you rest because you're granted rest, and God gives you restoration first. It's given on his day of rest and refreshment.

It's a day of refreshment of joy. It's a day in which God reorders our lives. Even though man fell, God promised rest, not because of Adam's obedience, but because it was a grace.

He says, Here, take a break. Have some rest. I'm sure you're familiar with the experiment in the early 1900s when the communist Russia started taking over other countries, and they decided to go for a 10-day week.

[16 : 54] You work consistently hard, you get one day off. They thought that was better than that old religious seven days, six days you work and one day off.

They found out, the experiment, they had to go back to the seven days because as hard as they tried and as hard as they decided and mandated by law that this is the way it's going to be, this is the right way, things began to break down.

People were too tired. Things were not up to par. They couldn't think. They couldn't sleep. They couldn't do much. They were overdone. Ten days didn't cut it.

It's God's rhythm. Six days and you take one day off. He provides the rest. But rest is provided through the rest that he gives through his grace.

Rest also comes from his word. It comes from being saturated by his word, replenished by his word, encouraged by his word. Psalm 19 says, converting the soul.

[18 : 00] It means restoring the soul. Isaiah 40, 31 says, But those who wait on the Lord, you know this one, shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. That's rest. That's restoration. 2 Corinthians 4, 17. Therefore, Paul says, we don't lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed every day.

Rest. Rest. Rest. Rest from God's way. Rest through the word. Rest comes by the word of the spirit. He gives rest.

He provides rest. Rest also comes from other people, like fellow believers who practice. In Christ, practice all those one another commands.

Love one another. Remember, the dearest times, the most refreshing times that I've ever had in my life were with dear, close friends who knew how to encourage and how to give rest.

[19 : 11] Just at the right time, they say the right thing. Just at the right time, they provide the right food. Just at the right time, they come and mow your lawn. Just at the right time, whatever it is, right?

You know, they come over and help paint, or they fix things up for you, or whatever it might be. Maybe it's just to come and listen. They provide rest.

So God gives these resources, you know, and it's always timely that he does that. We shall never lack rest or restoration. But also, you finish up, we shall never lack a road.

We'll never lack a road, meaning guidance. He gives a path. He provides a path, a well-beaten-down path. The word here means to lead or to guide.

It's often the term of God's covenant, leading as a shepherd of his people. It was used sometimes as a strong term for official guidance, the declaration of king.

[20 : 10] So this is what we're going to do as a people, and this is the direction we're going. It's the idea of Moses leading, because God is leading him, Moses is leading his people through the wilderness to the promised land.

So notice after gently leading you to a place of restoration and rest, after restoring your soul, he deliberately guides and directs you. That's how it's done.

And there's an assumption that God is at work here. He's leading. It's a picture of a shepherd leading his people. There's no mention of the detailed mechanics for exactly how he did it. You know, he doesn't give particular advice, you know, through his, through audible word every single day, you know, to every single person exactly what to do.

He gives us what is needed for us to have the wisdom to be able to see the road ahead of us, to trust that God will guide in a way that is good.

Think about this. Sometimes we work too hard, labor too hard, trying to discover how God is leading, all the while forgetting that he is leading and directing.

[21 : 26] Leading to bring you to a solid conclusion, working all things together for your good, just as he promised. But where?

Where does he lead? This is the psalmist's emphasis. If it's the covenant Lord, the covenant shepherd who is leading, the God who is leading, then he leads you to paths of righteousness.

The Jewish had in mind, the Jews had in mind, Israel had in mind, that the way of God was a path. In fact, the Muslims borrow that concept of the way, the path.

And the way of God was a path that was built on the word of God. It was the direction. And he gives you the lantern, the light, the torch, to go on the way.

And so these were people of the way. And the early church were also called people of the way because they followed Jesus, who was the way. This is the reference that he means.

[22 : 30] When Jesus says, I am the way, it means that he is directing, he is leading. He has paved a road. He guides. But it's a path of righteousness.

And this path, it really is the ruts left by wagon wheels. So you know exactly where it is. We would say, he keeps me on the beaten path.

The thing is that the sheep themselves, sheep can't distinguish a safe path from one that leads to death. They'll go by the way that is most convenient, the least difficult, with least resistance.

And sometimes God doesn't want us to go that way. Instead of taking I-25, he wants us to take the old dirt road.

Because that's the path of righteousness. It's Proverbs 14, 12, says there's a way that seems right to man, but the way thereof is death. He leads in either paths of righteousness, to follow the Lord means to be righteous, in spite of one's sinfulness, like David after God's own heart, like Job, like Lot, like Abraham by faith, or on right paths.

[23 : 54] It could be interpreted either way. He leads you assuredly on the right course. It's great freedom to have that kind of leading. So the question is, why does he lead then?

Why does he lead? And with this we'll wrap up. He leads, what it says, for his namesake.

And as we explore the rest of scripture, the biggest thing to understand is that whatever is in our best interest is for his namesake. Whatever is good for us, whatever is good for the Lord, it's the same.

The purpose and motivation for God to do this is not found in us, but it's found in him for his glory. That's what Ephesians 1 is talking about.

It's found in the great covenant name, I am. I am that I am. I provide everything for you to lead you. Because he is the Lord he leads.

[25 : 02] God finds a desire and motivation for saving us, not in us, not we benefit from that salvation, but he does it for his own glory, for his delight.

He desires it. Have you ever been in a situation where you help somebody out and the person was rather skeptical and they turn to you and say, why are you doing this?

You know? Well, the Lord, you know, he does that because he desires it. Because he wanted to. And if that's true and he never changes, then your salvation and your path on which he directs is forever secure.

The Lord leads. It's the beauty of this analogy and metaphor here in this, the Lord is, the Lord, my shepherd, I'll not lack, is that he gives us rest, he gives us restoration, and he gives us a road.

And in that, we can rejoice. Thank you, Father, for your word in which you give, you provide. You provide rest through your word. You provide restoration through your word.

[26 : 13] You provide a road. You lead us in righteousness for your name's sake. So we ask that you would give us the privilege and the ability to have the insight and the foresight and the knowledge and the wisdom to be able to observe what you are doing in life and what you're doing in our lives as you give us rest, as you restore us, and as you lead us down the road.

In this time of confusion and angst and challenge, and in this time, we ask, Father, that you would make it very clear that we can just trust in you and lay back in you and be refreshed in you.

Thank you, Father. Amen.