

Leader Notes – Lesson 4 – “For You Are With Me” Psalm 23

PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
YOU WILL ROB YOURSELF OF THE JOY OF DISCOVERY!

These are some comments, etc. on the lesson.
Don't try to include everything and you may not need to use any of the below!
I make these comments to clarify and give some additional thoughts and suggestions.

**In case you don't have time to discuss all the questions,
be sure to ask your group which questions
they want to make sure they get to.**

BACKGROUND:

3rd Paragraph: *Trust is believing God's promises before you see them fulfilled.* We hold on to God's promises while we are *waiting* for God to act. Why is trust important?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

If God threw a party, what kind of host do you think he would be?

Have someone pray and ask God to give understanding and to see wonderful truths from His Word.

Read the scripture out loud:

Since this is poetry, you might consider reading the scripture with this pattern:

Psalm 23

Reader A: Odd verses

Reader B: Even verses

Question # 3

Have several share what images spoke to them.

Question # 4

The shepherd makes sure that the needs of the sheep are taken care of.

♥ This doesn't mean we will get everything we want. It means we will not lack anything we need.

THE LORD - *Yahweh*

God has various names and titles in scripture. Sometimes it is a name that he reveals, sometimes it is a name that given to him by a person who God has helped in some way. Each name tells us something of God's character. His names identify and describe God.

The names of God still speak to us today. Meditating on them unlocks a fuller understanding of who God is and how he relates to us. God's name is reliable. It is a solemn guarantee that he will fulfill all his promises.

Question # 6 & 7

God could be a shepherd or caretaker that takes care of us out of duty. But in Exodus and Isaiah he shows us what kind of person he is. He is a compassionate, gracious, loving, patient, faithful, tender, gentle Shepherd. He gathers us in his arms and hold us close to his heart.

Question # 8

Be sure to have different ones share what they think God is promising in this Psalm. You will probably have a variety of answers.

Question # 9

- ♥ It's good to discuss what we all use to fulfill our needs beside God.
- ♥ God leads us, not because we earn it or deserve it. He leads us because of who he is – faithful, loving, kind, etc.
- ♥ For his name sake means he has a reputation to protect! For his name sake is equivalent to "in Jesus name" as it applies all the promises and assurances given to the followers of Jesus.

Question # 10

What are some ways that God restores us?

God Word revives us (Psalm 19:7). Discuss HOW God's Word restores us.

God's face shining on us in pleasure and approval restores us (Ps. 80:3). How would we be aware of this and how would it restore us?

God forgiving us our sins restores us (Ps. 85:2-4). Why would this restore our soul?

God restores and makes us strong again after a spiritual battle (1 Peter 5:8-10). God knows when we are worn down by attacks of the enemy. He knows what to do to restore us.

Question # 11

We fear not evil even in the dark valley because God is with us. Evil has no power over us when God presence is with us. What does God specifically promise in Ps. 73:23-24?

What difference does his presence make?

His presence gives us rest (Exodus 33:14-16). How?

He will fight for us against our enemies and give us victory (Deut. 20:4)

No one can stand up against us because God is with us. He keeps us from being terrified and discouraged (Joshua 1:5,9).

Whatever hard time we are in, it won't destroy us (Is. 43:2)

Question # 12

Sheep will wander and get lost without a shepherd. Sheep are helpless without a shepherd; they cannot survive and they cannot defend themselves.

- ♥ Because sheep are led by their shepherd (God), the shepherd sees any danger first. Any danger or hard time has to pass through the shepherd first. The shepherd prepares the way and makes sure the sheep can get through. Because God is with me and goes before me, he knows exactly what I am experiencing.

- ♥ Because the disciples knew that Yahweh was their Shepherd, when Jesus said that he was the Good Shepherd, they would have taken that to mean that he was saying he was God.

Question # 13

He prepares physical and spiritual food for us

He anoints our heads with oil

He fills our cup to overflowing

Question # 14

Have several share their answers. God provides whatever we need!

♥ The significance of a lavish table prepared in the presence of our enemies could mean that God is so powerful and protective that we are actually at ease in the presence of our enemies or it could mean that the meal is a victory celebration and our enemies are harmless because they have been disarmed.

♥ A table in the presence of the enemy could be a reference to Jesus and Judas at the Last Supper. It also foreshadows Jesus defeating Satan at the cross, making a public spectacle of him.

Question # 15

The oil of joy and of unity with other children of God.

♥ Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed in the Bible. We can be anointed to do God's work. Oil was used for healing the sick and injured and it is a sign of the anointing for filling of the Holy Spirit.

Question # 16

God completely surrounds us. God is in front of us leading us and his goodness and love protects us from behind.

RESPONSE:

How would the meaning of Psalm 23 change for you if you replaced all the personal pronouns (I, me, my) in the Psalm with plural pronouns (us, we and ours)?

For those who might want to explore further the image of God as Shepherd, there is a great little book entitled "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23" by Phillip Keller.

Someone has summarized **Psalm 23** in this way:

The Lord is my Shepherd – That's Relationship!

I shall not be in want – That's Supply!

He makes me lie down in green pastures – That's Rest!

He leads me beside quiet waters – That's Refreshment!

He restores my soul – That's Healing!

He guides me in paths of righteousness – That's Guidance

For his name's sake – That's Purpose!

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – That's Testing!

I will fear no evil – That's Protection!

For you are with me – That's Faithfulness!

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me – That's Discipline!

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies – That's Hope!

You anoint my head with oil – That's Consecration!

My cup overflows – That's Abundance!

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life – That's Blessing!

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD – That's Security!

Forever – That's Eternity!

ON THE NEXT PAGE IS ALL THE "EXTRA SCRIPTURE" FROM THIS LESSON IN CASE YOU WANT TO MAKE COPIES FOR YOUR GROUP SO THAT YOU CAN EASILY READ TOGETHER THE VERSES REFERRED TO IN THE QUESTIONS.

Exodus 34:5-7 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

Isaiah 40:11 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.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Psalms 80:3 Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Psalms 85:2-4 You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger. Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

1Peter 5:8-10 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Psalms 73:23-24 Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Exodus 33:14-16 The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

Deuteronomy 20:4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”

Joshua 1:5, 9 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 26:31 Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”

John 10:11, 14 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—”

Luke 22:20-22 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.”

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Psalms 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Psalms 133:1-2 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes.

Revelation 7:11-17 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 21:3-7 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”