

Sermon Title: “The King of Love my Shepherd is”

October 11th, 2020 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Psalm 23



Theme:

What's in it for me?

Sermon Text:

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today is a great day. It has been quite a while, but today through the waters and the words of Holy Baptism, Jesus brings salvation to another one of us and welcomes Carter to His family. He does this, despite all of the difficulties we now are facing.

King David, the author of our Psalm today was no stranger to adversity. He was taking care of some sheep near Bethlehem, just minding his own business, when the prophet Samuel shows up and anoints him the next King of Israel. David enters the Royal Household and then goes to war, serving King Saul. David kills storied Philistine Warrior, Goliath, saving Israel, but making Saul jealous. Since David is now a war hero, he marries Saul's daughter. The marriage starts out fine, but after David starts taking multiple wives, his marriage goes South. David is also on the run from Saul and has to hide out in Goliath's hometown from Saul.

Then Saul kills himself and David becomes king. Life doesn't get much better for David. Back then, alliances between countries are often sealed with a marriage, so David racks up quite a few wives, so he has lots of sons and daughters. David's family looks like something out of the Jerry Springer show, and one of his sons tries to kill him and take his throne. David successfully puts down the uprising, but his son is killed, and he loses his harem. Just when things look like they are going to go his way, David's world comes crashing down around him. And this happens over and over in David's life, but despite this he remained faithful. So, in the midst of all of this trouble, David pens some of the most beautiful poetic lines of Scripture, but if the only time you read it or hear it is during a funeral, then you're not getting the comfort that David wrote down for you more than 2500 years ago, so let's break it down.

David begins this Psalm stating that Yahweh is his King and Shepherd. David looks to Him for guidance and direction, and Yahweh provides for all of David's needs. This is a great act of faith that we should emulate. Continuing on in verse two, David tells us that Yahweh causes him to lie down in "green

pastures.” God once again provides for adequate food, water, shelter, and comfortable temperatures. He knows what we need, and He provides it before we even ask.

David then tells us that Yahweh not only provides water to drink, but He restores his soul. This will ultimately happen when Jesus returns, but when you come to Church and worship with your brothers and sisters in Christ, you should feel refreshed and comforted. If you don’t know what to do, God will guide you. He does this not because we deserve it, but out of His great love for us. God glorifies Himself when He blesses us.

David faces the challenges and troubles in life knowing that God is ultimately victorious. It will be ok in the end. Jesus has the final victory. Because David knows this, he is able to go on with his life and face whatever he has to face.

David ends this Psalm with the knowledge that Jesus is preparing a place for him in Heaven, and that he was called by God. David knows that when he follows God, God will continue to richly bless him both in this life and the one to come. This is a great statement of faith and hope.

So, now that we’ve taken a closer look at the text, what does this Psalm mean for us? I know many of you are suffering in some way right now because of Covid-19 and its restrictions, economic challenges, and/or the strain of caring for a loved one. This has certainly been a challenging year for us. Our Pastor left, we were forced to worship online, I’ve had to take on more responsibilities here and hold down a full-time job at the same time, we are falling behind in our church budget, and attendance has been down, particularly due to Covid-19. I didn’t even mention the ever-widening chasm between the Church and the outside community. The community sometimes has a hard time seeing us as relevant. All of these problems, but guess what, we’re still here. God’s Word is still being preached. The Gospel still spreads. We still baptize.

Know this, God puts you and me through trials and tribulations for various reasons. Sometimes He wants to get our attention when we’re doing something that isn’t particularly healthy for us physically, mentally, or spiritually. Sometimes, God uses your suffering to reach His lost sheep. There are a lot of lost sheep out there who have been too busy to listen to God. Covid-19 provided an opportunity to get their attention. Sometimes, God uses suffering to teach us something or help us build up resilience for something that is coming down the road. Take heart, David wants you to know that God is with you every step of the way. Pray to Him. Listen to Him. He is with you and will help you.

I don’t know what challenges Carter will face in this life. I know he has a family who loves him very much and only wants the best for him. I also know Carter has a Heavenly Father and a Savior who also want what is best for him. He also now has a Church family to support him as he grows. Teach him this, that no matter what he does, God loves him and is with him every step of the way. God won’t quit

on him. Life is hard, but God is tougher, and He has the final say. Today, He says to Carter, "Welcome Home."

God says the same thing to all of us, too. No matter what you have going on in your life, you have a Lord and Savior who understands you and walks with you. Next week, our Call Committee will be conducting interviews with our Pastoral candidates. God will be sending us a new Pastor to shepherd us soon. I know that we are all looking forward to that day, but know this, Jesus is our Good Shepherd. One of these great servants are chosen by Him to serve as His under shepherd. No matter what happens, we can take comfort that Jesus has been with us the entire time and He knows exactly what we need, when we need it. He puts people in our lives to bless us and prepare us for the place He's preparing for us.

Yes, life's hard, but we don't go through it alone. That is something we can take comfort in, just like David did more than 2500 years ago. Psalm 23 isn't just for funerals. Anytime you are struggling, turn to it. You will hear God's voice in those pages.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

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Quotations from Scripture come from:

Various Authors. *The Lutheran Study Bible*. Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.