

Conclusion

John 10:11-15

Matthew 26:26-29

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups
as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What makes the psalms so capable of speaking into our every experience?
- How does the setting of Psalm 23 capture the wide variety of circumstances we face in life?
- What type of psalm is Psalm 23? What is the overall tone of this psalm? What emotions do you think the psalmist intended to evoke with this psalm?
- Which picture of “the God who is there” is the most striking to you? Why?
- Which characteristic of God as the Shepherd was most surprising to you? Why?
- Which characteristic of God as the Generous Host was most surprising to you? Why?
- In what ways does John 10:11-15 sharpen the picture of the Shepherd from Psalm 23?
- How does the Lord's Supper represent God's lavish provision for us? What other Bible passages help you reflect on God's provision for us through Jesus?
- Why is God's presence so comforting – both on the mountaintop and in the valley?
- How would you use the words of Psalm 23 to minister to someone in your life who is walking through the valley of the shadow of death?

The God Who is There

Peter Stonecipher — April 3, 2016

Text: Psalm 23

Introduction

The psalms so successfully speak into every circumstance of life because they point us to the God who is fit for all circumstances of life.

Psalm 23 is a psalm of confidence.

II. The Shepherd (23:1-4)

1 Samuel 17:34-37

God's care is not only corporate, it's personal. (v. 1)

Matthew 18:12-14

“Waters of restfulness” - the sheep can drink and rest and drink some more and not worry about the pool drying up. (v. 2)

The Shepherd's provision leads his sheep to a place of rest. (v. 2)

Do you take time to rest in God's provision for you?

The psalmist serves the God who restores. (v. 3)

Matthew 18:12-14 – The Shepherd's heart for restoration.

With very little warning, the setting of Psalm 23 changes drastically. (v. 4)

The psalmist leaves the mountaintop and plunges into the valley.

What doesn't change is the psalmist's confidence in the Shepherd. (v. 4)

The Shepherd *being there* in the valley of the shadow of death makes all the difference in the world.

In a very *real, tangible, historical* way God himself has walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

III. The Generous Host (23:5-6)

The dark setting of v. 4 hasn't changed. (v. 5)

The psalmist portrays God as a great king who prepares a table for his household. (v. 5)

This isn't a hurried meal in the wilderness.
This is an extravagant feast in the wilderness.

The Generous Host provides an expensive, and in some ways, completely unnecessary blessing for those eating at his table. (v. 5)

Ephesians 1:3-14

The word translated "follow" often means "to pursue with hostile intent". (v. 6)

Psalm 7:1-2

In Psalm 23, it's not enemies, but goodness and mercy that are *pursuing* the psalmist. (v. 6)

The psalmist longs to dwell in the house of the Lord forever because the Generous Host is there! (v. 6)