**1. Motivate**

What sometimes threatens your peace of mind or sense of security?

* driving in heavy traffic in a strange city
* driving in a country (like England or Australia) on the left side of the road
* hiking in an area where bears are common
* going into an important final exam for a very hard course
* reading all the reports of an upswing of Covid-19 cases
* meeting your future in-laws for the first time
* the alarm didn’t go off and you’re late for an important meeting
* bad news from a doctor (or lawyer or your boss)
* someone you were with recently has come down with the Covid virus

**2. Transition**

Today we look at Psalm 23 where David talks of things which tended to cause worry.

* He tells us that God’s presence provides peace of mind and security.

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/1_0a720ay4> If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/yb9qlnff>

**3. Bible Study**

3.1

Listen for the shepherd’s tasks.

Psalm 23:1-3 (NIV) The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Why was the metaphor of the Lord as shepherd a fitting one for David to use?

* David was a shepherd
* he had plenty of time to observe the relationship between sheep and shepherd
* sheep herding was a common thing in their culture
* people who read the psalm would catch what the poem was trying to convey
* he saw the parallel of God’s caring for us

What shepherding functions or tasks are prominent in these verses?

* feeding the sheep
* watering the sheep
* keeping the safe and contented

What would following God to “green pastures” and “quiet waters” look like in your life?

* financially secure
* no calamities going on, peaceful, no emergencies
* sufficient food
* well rested
* family is healthy

David is talking about how he was aware of God’s presence with him. Name some ways in which you are *aware* of Christ’s constant presence with you.

* we always have His Word available (especially if you memorize portions)
* times of protection
* times of stress when He gives peace and comfort
* when God works out the circumstances of a situation to accomplish His purposes (when doors are opened or closed in your path)
* when He brings a specific verse to mind just when you need that bit of wisdom
* when reading God’s Word, a specific verse jumps out at you … just the Truth you needed for that point of time in your life

Some translations say “*makes* me lie down.” Why would God force us to rest?

* sometimes we need to be told or urged to do so
* a workaholic might need to be taken out of that mentality forcibly
* we can get so busy, we don’t know what we really need
* … or when we need it

Other translations say “*lets* me lie down.” How is this translation just as valid?

* God does not force us to receive His blessings
* we have a free will
* but when we *do* submit to Him, He joyfully lets us experience His provisions
* when we *do know* we have a need for rest and reprieve, we can depend on His divine providence

David says God restores or renews his soul. What kind of renewal or restoration did God provide for David (and for us)?

* after his sin with Bathsheba, David’s relationship with God was restored after repentance and confession
* when we fail God and sin – if we confess our sins He is faithful to forgive and cleanse (1 John 1:9)
* renewal also is provided after particularly stressful and draining life events
* relationships with others can be renewed
* a rocky marriage can be restored
* broken relationships within families can be mended

David spoke of a shepherd and sheep—what metaphor could you use to picture your relationship with the Lord? Finish the phrase, “The Lord is my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

* helpful, mentoring boss
* wise teacher
* loving and encouraging grandparent
* gardener who lovingly cares for a garden
* someone who seems to have abundant common sense and shares it with you when you are confused

3.2 Trust God’s Presence

Listen how David addresses God personally.

Psalm 23:4-5 (NIV) 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. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

What might be the dark time David alluded to in verse 4?

* spiritual failure in his relationship with Bathsheba
* confronting wild animals while protecting his sheep
* confronting Goliath
* falling out with, opposed by his son Absalom
* when Saul tried to kill him, chased him through the wilderness with a whole army
* when he faced the death of a child

Why was he convinced he had no cause to fear?

* God is with him
* God’s rod or club protects him
* God’s staff (shepherd’s crook) rescues him
* God provides food, nourishment right in the middle of a dangerous situation
* healing, refreshing

What might the rod and staff represent?

* the rod was like a club to fight off enemies (dangerous animals, rustlers)
* God’s power will “club” or punish or drive away enemies
* the staff/shepherds crook was used to guide or to reach out and rescue sheep
* God can reach down wherever we are and pull us out of a bad situation
* God guides, directs, nudges us in the direction we should go
* angels who protect us
* God sends someone to help us at just the right time
* sequence of events God arranges to rescue us from some problem or provide some

What kinds of things *keep* us from recognizing God’s presence?

* fear danger confuses us, distracts us
* evil around us scares us
* deep needs occur, causing us to wonder, doubt
* lack of *practicing* God’s presence

How can we intentionally enjoy or practice being in God’s presence?

* daily reading of His Word
* meditation on those passages
* memorizing scripture
* praising Him often, thanksgiving
* worship Him in song

3.3 Trust God’s Goodness

Listen for a view to the future.

Psalm 23:6 (NIV) Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

What is David’s future hope?

* God’s blessings in the days ahead
* goodness and love *all* the days ahead
* dwelling in God’s presence forever – even after physical death

In what ways does this verse suggest the security that comes from being in a relationship with the Lord?

* he plans to “dwell in the house of the Lord”
* he promises to stay in God’s presence
* he wants to continue to trust in God’s love and power and authority in his life

What does it mean to you that God’s goodness and love follow or *pursue* you?

* when I stumble
* when I’m going along daily path of activities
* when I stray
* even when I run away
* in all these situations, God pursues me

What would be better about God pursuing us rather than us pursuing Him?

* we might give up, God does not
* God knows where to “find” us … sometimes we might be too confused or upset to discouraged to know how or where to find Him
* God’s pursuit is consistent, ours might be intermittent
* at times we run the other way (recall Jonah), God doesn’t quit

How can we help each other feel more confident in God’s love?

* remind one another of these Truths
* encourage one another
* pray for one another
* help each other in times of need
* allow God to use you as His “rod and staff”

As a believer, how can confidence in your eternal security affect your approach to daily life?

* you don’t have that feeling of God poised over you ready to pounce if you mess up
* it is an encouragement to turn burdens and feelings of guilt over to Him, not to drag them around in your own strength
* not only does God forgive, He also empowers and motivates you to resist temptation the next time

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Worship.

* Trust is expressed as you worship, it keeps you focused on Christ.
* Make the decision to actively engage in worship both with your church and in your private devotional life.

Study.

* Identify Bible verses that teach what God says about the issue of depression and sadness in our lives.
* Share them with others.

Seek help.

* Do a serious personal evaluation of what causes depression in your life.
* Admit that it is real and it is serious.
* It might be time to talk with a close friend, pastor, or counselor about it.

This coded message washed ashore in Guiatanlu where our operative found it. It was in an Esportivo bottle, that of a Brazilian soft drink. We have a partial key for a known Brazilian code. You can help us by decoding the message and forwarding it to us through your church Kitchen Committee. If you need technical help it is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yb9qlnff> . There you will find other messages of import as well.