

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Good Good Father, Made Me Glad, God Will Take Care of You

WELCOME

What are “terms of endearment” or “titles” that you use for people who greatly influenced your life? It could be your parent, spouse, Dgroup leader, teacher, etc. Why did you use this term or title?

WORD

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not 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 the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I 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 have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Welcome to the new series, Songs in the Night – a study on some of the greatest Psalms in the Bible. The word PSALM literally means praise, and it usually involves a musical instrument. Written over 1,000 years collectively, the psalms feature works of various characters—majority of which were written by David. The book is so unique because it focuses on the character of God. It also talks about our humanity, our experience, and even our emotions. The Psalms, as an entire book, is the most quoted book in the New Testament, and Jesus would refer a lot to the book of psalms even in His claims and teachings.

In **Psalm 42:8**, we see why this series is important. As the verse implies, a “song in the night” is a tune of assurance, with the resounding promise of God’s lovingkindness coming to us as we seek Him. The truth is, the Christian life will not always be bright and sunny. Sometimes, you go through darkness and hardships. So how do we deal with this? In **v.11** of the same psalm, notice how the author is honest with his feelings but recognizes the solution is right thinking—putting our **HOPE IN GOD**. Learn to meditate on God’s Word when you are down. As we study the psalms, it will help you deal with your emotions.

PSALM 23 may just be the most famous psalm. It is a psalm written by David who grew up as a shepherd. This psalm is so personal, with the pronoun *I* or *My* being used commonly. To make it even more personal for us, we are compared to sheep which do not have a sense of direction, hopeless, and weak (**Isaiah 53:6**) who need a SHEPHERD.

What does it mean when we say **THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD**?

1. HE PROVIDES

V.1 declares, “**The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want**”. It means that if God is our Shepherd then we can be sure that we will not lack any good thing. Everything we need is provided for.

The word “**want**” is also used in **Psalm 34:10**, which say, “**But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing**”. In other words, God wants us to be dependent upon Him.

V.2 explains how our Good Shepherd provides means for us to be satisfied. He knows where the “**green pastures**” and the “**quiet waters**” are. “**He makes me...**” is a causative verb. He **causes** me to lie down. Sheep will not lie down if they are not satisfied. To be able to rest completely like that means all their needs are met. It is the Shepherd’s job to make sure the sheep have green pastures. Your green pasture is God’s best for you. Be comforted by the fact that He is **able** and **willing** to provide and take care of us.

2. HE GUIDES

Aside from restoring our souls, **v. 3** highlights that God guides us in “paths of righteousness”. Many times, we want to do or follow God’s will. However, we usually look towards circumstances and dreams as God’s guidance. But this “guiding” refers to the way of righteousness. How does God guide us? According to **Psalm 119:105**, He guides us step by step and day by day to do the right thing. When we follow God’s guidance, He allows us to accumulate stories of His faithfulness and righteousness **FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE**.

When you are guided by God, you see that it is in His heart to fulfill His promises to us and improve our over-all well-being (**Isaiah 48:17-18**). He does this **THROUGH HIS WORD**. We follow what He desires for us to do so that we are guided accordingly. Not many people thank God for His guidance, but if you just look at your life, God has done amazing things to steer your direction to the point where He will most be glorified. You must give Him praise for He truly deserves it!

3. HE PROTECTS

We also see a wonderful facet of God as our Shepherd in **vv. 4-5** where the pronoun changes to “You” to make this part very personal. It expresses David’s experiences with God through the valleys. Sometimes, you go through the valleys, but the reason for this is that you cannot go to the mountain top if you don’t go through valleys. There are things in life we cannot avoid – pain, suffering, hardships, trials and testing. While these are “given”, we can still hold on to the comfort that He is with us, guiding us and protecting us! Notice what gave David comfort: the ROD and STAFF. Both are essential tools in shepherding. The rod is used for defense while the staff is used for protection and for drawing the sheep closer to the shepherd.

God’s protection also includes His discipline. In **Hebrews 12:11**, we are reminded that when God disciplines us, it is not joyful. It is challenging and painful. But we can take comfort in the fact that “whom the Lord loves, He disciplines”.

Notice the use of the “*shadow of death*” —a figurative expression of the things we fear. During this COVID19 pandemic, death is one of the things that scares us. Death though is but a shadow, it does not have power to harm the

Lord’s sheep. God guides us and God protects us. If we continue walking with the Lord, there is truly nothing to fear.

4. HE PROMISES WHAT’S BEST FOR YOU

Finally, towards the end of Psalm 23, we are given two words—goodness (Towb) and lovingkindness (Checed). Both words combined would mean nothing less but that goodness and grace, the undeserved best, and whatever is pleasant and excellent will overtake us. The greatest blessing is received in the **PRESENCE OF GOD**. Just keep following the Good Shepherd, and His goodness, mercies, love, and promises will keep us all the days of our lives. Who is the Good Shepherd? We discover Him in **JOHN 10:10-11**: It is **JESUS**, who lays down His life for His sheep. How will we know if we are part of His flock? **John 10:27-28** gives us two tests: **the EAR test**, whether we are able to listen to the Lord or not; and **the FOLLOWING test**, where we are tested if we are abiding by His standards, holding on to His promises, and living life for the exemplary glory of God. Nothing can separate us from His love (**Rom. 8:38-39**). Is Jesus your Good Shepherd? Are you following Him day by day, and through both good times and bad?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Who or what shepherds your life in this time of pandemic? Why?
2. Were there moments when you lacked trust that your Good Shepherd can deliver His promises? Share how God showed His power over your lack of trust.
3. Using the EAR test and FOLLOWING test, can you say that Jesus is really the Good Shepherd of your life? Explain.

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people to have a personal relationship with the Good Shepherd—Jesus. Share to others how the Good Shepherd has provided, protected, and guided you throughout your life. Care for others just how Jesus cared for you.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends