

Walk Alone in God's Spiritual Presence

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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."

Psalms 23:1-5 (NLT)

You may ask, why is Ted taking us on a journey using words written roughly 1000 years before the birth of Jesus the Christ. In reference to time, King David ruled from 1010 – 970 years BCE before the birth of Jesus. The Psalms are a series of poems that often identify the author in the opening sentences of each poem. Moses, Asaph, David, and other names are identified in the first lines of the Psalms. Psalms 23:1-5 is likely the most quoted Psalm and to my way of thinking, the most comforting.

The Psalms are a distinctive treasure of Scripture that connect current followers head and heart in a rich and vivid way. While most of Scripture are written to express words from God to man, the Psalms, on the other hand provide man with Spirit-inspired words to pray and sing to God. I believe being in nature gives us special insights into the words of the scripture I chose for today's Talk.

This morning, I walked along the shoreline of Lake Grapevine and watched gentle waves work their way toward the shore. I had a wonderful sensation of walking "beside the still waters." There is little more peaceful than not seeing a ripple on the water, but the gentle movement today provided just the right amount of wave flow. This morning was one of the special ones. I felt that the shepherd was leading me beside the still waters. That feeling makes me appreciate God's creation in unique and long-lasting ways. Sandy and I had dramatic moments on our sailboat that can be described as majorly scary. Those were far offset by the absolute peaceful easy feelings of water and breezes bring.

How did Moses respond to God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt? He sang a song (Exodus 15). How did David respond to the Lord's deliverance from his enemies and Saul? He wrote a hymn of praise (2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18). How did Asaph cure his envy of the wicked? He worshipped God, learned of their fate, and recorded his story of trust in Psalm 73. Despite what the winds deliver, I believe we can find solace in song...or perhaps just reading and internalizing the Psalms.

Singing the psalms allows us to proclaim God's words and let them dwell richly within us (Colossians 3:16). In doing so, we will be shaping our lives according to God's Word and making worship a more natural part of our lives. The default setting of our hearts will be more focused on praise than on things like worry, our lives, and ourselves.

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. (Psalm 84:1-2)*

Peace Always,

Ted