



## His Provision

April 28, 2024

Text: Psalm 23

### BIG IDEA

Life is hard, brokenness often overwhelms us, and grief comes into our lives- yet, God promises to provide all that we need. Regardless of anything we face, the Lord promises to care for us and the Bible is full of promises that He will never forsake us, He loves us unconditionally, and that He will never fail. So, if He promises all of this yet brokenness still comes-- what is His provision? In Psalm 23, David declares that God is his shepherd and then points out three different locations: the green pasture, the darkest valley, and the table surrounded by enemies. David says he lacks nothing, which means he is fully provided for--the provision of God is sufficient in all three of these areas. The only provision that David mentions though is the presence of God. His presence is His provision. Here is where we find peace and power, because in His presence we lack nothing.

### *Conversation Starter*

- How do we practically find and rest in peace in the presence of God?
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### COMMENTARY #1

**(Verses 1-3)** David describes God as his personal shepherd- God was not just a shepherd to David, but was a personal, present, and intimate provider for him. He goes on to make a bold declaration: I

shall not want (I have all that I need). This is easy to see in the lush green pastures and peaceful streams David goes on to articulate. Here, in the beauty of the pastures, God is sustaining and nourishing him. David then describes how God leads- down good paths for His namesake.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Why do you think it is significant that David called God my shepherd not the shepherd?
  2. Describe what the pastures might look like in life; these times where everything seems to be peaceful and easy.
  3. What does it mean that God leads for “His namesake?”
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### **COMMENTARY #2**

**(Verses 4-5)** Now, verse four crashes in like a tornado destroying our peaceful pastures with valleys and fear. How close to death do you have to be to be inside its shadow? Then, we are led to a table surrounded by enemies! Why would God ever set a table, a place to sit, amid enemies? These verses say that His rod and staff comfort us, and we do not have to be afraid... then it says that even at this table, David’s cup overflows with blessings. Even in these places, God is providing.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. What are your enemies? What has surrounded you lately? (Depression, anxiety, fear, relationships, shame etc...)
2. Why do you think God sets a table in this place? What does sitting down to eat require us to do? (rest, trust, surrender, be vulnerable, stop fighting...)

### 3. How does God's "rod and staff" comfort us?

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#### COMMENTARY #3

**(Verse 6)** This Psalm walks us through three places we often face in life: the pastures, the valleys, and the places where we feel surrounded by darkness, but it ends with a resounding promise. Goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and we will live in the house of God forever. THIS is the promise of God, that despite where we go or what we face, God's presence is there with us and we are promised the gift of living in His presence forever if we choose it.

#### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are some ways His goodness has remained present even in the darkest times/places in your life?
  2. How can we "live" in His presence throughout our lives? What are some ways His presence is revealed to us?
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#### GOING DEEPER

In Biblical times, a stranger could stop at your house and it would be customary to offer them a hot meal and drink. It would be understood that they needed to leave afterwards. However, if the host chose to pour into their cup until it overflowed, it would be an invitation for the stranger to stay, find rest, and come back whenever they needed. This was reserved for only those who truly were loved and welcomed by the host.

1. How does this change the way you view David's writings-

“my cup overflows?”

2. Study Biblical shepherding- what are sheep like? What did shepherds do? How did they lead/protect their flock?

Bugs would often get into the ears of sheep and lay eggs/nest. This would drive the sheep so crazy that they would literally drive their heads into rocks or the ground to get relief. They were constantly disoriented and often harmed/killed themselves because of their helplessness to combat the bugs. Shepherds would pour oil over their sheep's heads to keep the bugs away and protect the sheep.

1. Have you ever found yourself disoriented by thoughts or voices that have set themselves up in your mind?
  2. How does the Shepherd “anoint your head with oil” in order to combat these things?
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-valley-we-would-not-choose> - Devotional
  - <https://www.ministryvoice.com/why-did-david-write-psalm-23/> - Cultural and Historical Background Information
  - <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?&q=psalm+23+sermon&&mid=52801AEF0BB45A7BB64552801AEF0BB45A7BB645&&FORM=VRDGAR> – Sermon on Psalm 23
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## GROUP ACTIVITY

This passage highlights three key places we often find ourselves in throughout life- the pasture (peaceful times), the valley

(scary/unknown and dark seasons), and the table (situations where we feel surrounded but powerless to do anything). Take time as a group to discuss where you are right now. What emotions or experiences are connected to each of these places? How long have you been here? Are you there alone? Now, discuss ways that the presence of the Lord can be seen in each of these places. If you cannot see it yourself, have one of your peers point out ways God is still present in whatever place you are in. What does Scripture say about these situations?



## Strength to Fight

### Supporting Passage

Text: Joshua 6:1-14

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### BIG IDEA

We often face battles in this life; we come up against walls and enemies that seem insurmountable. This could be depression that seems overwhelming, anxiety that never ceases, or situations that seem like death has won. But God has made a promise to us- Victory is ours. So how can we still be walking in victory even in the shadow of these things? How do we have victory in our battles when our strength is weakening, our bodies are hurting, and our minds are failing? What is the promise we can hold to?

The presence of God.

### ***Conversation Starter***

- What is the presence of God?
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### COMMENTARY #1

**(Verses 1-5)** The Israelites are finally facing the battle they've been marching towards for forty years- the battle of Jericho. The city was overwhelming; the Israelites would've stood like ants under the

shadow of this massive wall and fortified city. But God speaks to Joshua in past tense, “I have given Jericho into your hand...” God promises the Israelites that the victory is theirs, but then commands a crazy method of battle- walking. God always promises us victory through Him, but often requires methods of battle that seem contradictory to our victory. God makes it clear; this battle is impossible for you; but I WILL bring victory if you heed my voice.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. What is your “Jericho?” What are you up against that seems immovable?
  2. What are the methods of battle that often seem contradictory to our nature? (Stillness, prayer, surrender, silence etc...)
  3. Why do you think God often requires these methods over fighting?
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### **COMMENTARY #2**

**(Verses 6-14)** The instructions of the Lord were very specific. First, the trumpets would lead and then the Ark of the Covenant would follow. This was before the Holy Spirit came to indwell within us; the Ark was the physical place where the Lord lived. Where the Ark of the Covenant was, God was. Worship (the trumpets) would pave the way for the presence of God (the Ark) and behind that, the people would follow. This is a beautiful illustration for us; our worship ushers in the presence of God and it is only with His presence that we can keep walking- that we can have victory. Because as they kept walking and kept following His presence, finally, on the seventh day, the walls came crumbling down.

### ***Discussion Questions***



1. How does our worship pave the way for the presence of the Lord? (Consider Psalm 100)
  2. Why is His presence so vital for victory?
  3. We no longer have an Ark, so how is His Spirit manifested in and around us today?
  4. How does it make you feel that God went first in the battle?
  5. How can you realize the presence of God in your battles?
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## GOING DEEPER

1. Jericho was fearful of the Israelites because they knew God had promised victory. How does it make you feel that our enemies are fearful of us?
  2. Does it seem like the people of Jericho had more faith in the power of God than the Israelites? (They were fearful because they knew God could defeat them while the Israelites often doubted His ability).
  3. What are some ways we receive or live in His presence?
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/ark-covenant-and-gods-presence-us> - Blog Post
  - <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?&q=sermon+joshua+6&&mid=CBEDA51F59138EFCE636CBEDA51F59138EFCE636&&FORM=VRD GAR> – Sermon on Joshua 6
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## GROUP ACTIVITY

The same way the battle of Jericho is laid out, we can lay out our “battles” before God. So, take this time to make battle plans.

Maybe you do this through drawing- draw the wall, the army, the weapons, and the paths you are taking.

Or you can do this through writing. Answer the questions:

What is your Jericho? What is/are your walls? (mental health, physical health, relationships, finances ect...)

What are your trumpets? How do you worship? How do you praise?

Where is your Ark? How are you seeking His presence? How can you be more aware of His presence?

Who are the people fighting with you?