

The Twenty Third Psalm  
(Study #4)

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Introduction

1. Once more: The sweetest little song that ever sounded on this earth.
2. Already:
  - (1) Verse 1: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."
  - (2) Verse 2: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."
3. In this study:
  - (1) Verse 3:
  - (2) "He restoreth my soul."
4. Musical grace notes:
  - (1) Notes which are not necessary to the tune.
  - (2) Notes added for adornment and ornamentation.
  - (3) Notes added to enhance the melody.
  - (4) Notes added to embellish the following note.
5. Grace notes abound in this third verse.
6. Grace notes of:
  - (1) Faith.
  - (2) Trust.
  - (3) Courage.
  - (4) Contentment.
  - (5) Confidence.
  - (6) They adorn and enhance the melody.
  - (7) They embellish the entire psalm.

7. Three background truths:
  - (1) There can be no confidence without conflict.
  - (2) David was often embroiled in great conflicts.
  - (3) And from those conflicts, he emerged with a calm confidence.
  
8. In this verse, David looked back:
  - (1) Across his experiences with men.
  - (2) Across his experiences with God.
  - (3) Across the misty clouds of memories.
  - (4) And in looking back, he discovered that life had become more beautiful and meaningful as the years rolled away.
  
9. The true picture of life:
  - (1) Life is not only joy, and sunshine, and peace.
  - (2) Life is also sorrow, and darkness, and warfare.
  
10. We live to learn that it is easier to sing of past blessings than to trust the present; or to have confidence in the future.
  
11. In this third verse:
  - (1) A comforting statement about our common experience; soul sickness.
  - (2) David had fallen prey to soul sickness.
  - (3) He had been healed by God's restoring grace.
  
12. Now: The sickness of the soul.

## I. The Causes of Soul Sickness

### 1. Two dark background truths:

- (1) The intimations of David's repeated soul sickness:
  - (a) If David had said: "He restored my soul," it would have perhaps indicated only one spell of soul sickness.
  - (b) When he said: "He restoreth my soul," it perhaps indicates repeated attacks.
- (2) The possibility and almost-certainty of our repeated attacks of soul sickness.

### 2. Two bright background truths:

- (1) David's testimony that the Lord had repeatedly restored his soul.
- (2) God's promise to us that he will repeatedly restore our soul:
- (3) I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

### 3. Two firmly-fixed truths:

- (1) All life-threatening diseases have their medically-defined causes.
- (2) Soul sickness, which is also a life-threatening disease, has its divinely-defined causes; among them:

### 4. The neglect of:

- (1) Prayer.
- (2) Praise.
- (3) Thanksgiving.
- (4) The Lord's day.
- (5) The Lord's house.
- (6) Worship.
- (7) The needs of others around us.

5. The neglect of God's word:

- (1) A closed and dusty Bible.
- (2) Spiritual health is inseparably connected with God's word.
- (3) The strength that comes from quiet hours with God's word is vital to the health of the soul.
- (4) Spiritual infection follows long periods of separation from God's word.
- (5) Large doses of the word of God are spiritual vaccinations against the ravages of soul sickness.

6. Neglect of a known commandment:

- (1) In varying degrees, all of us must plead guilty at this point.
- (2) Most of our doubts, questions and troubles come from our neglect of known commandments.
- (3) If every child of God who is now fencing with a known commandment would surrender and obey, God would be honored and we would be blessed.

7. Unconfessed sin:

- (1) "If we say that we have no sin, the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive our sin." (I John 1:8-9)
- (2) Estranged friends will endeavor to avoid meeting one another.
- (3) If they do meet, there will be a painful coldness and restraint.
- (4) The estrangement can be healed only by the confession of faults and failures.
- (5) This is also true when sin has estranged a soul from God.
- (6) Consider the example of Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden:
- (7) The happiest hour of their day was in the cool of the evening when God came down to walk and talk with them.

- (8) Then, sin entered; and, unconfessed, it made them try to hide from God.
- (9) Unconfessed sin will make all of us try to hide from God.
- (10) And unconfessed sin will infect and contaminate the soul.

8. The love of the world:

- (1) The Bible often uses "the world" to indicate that which should not be desired or loved.
- (2) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15)
- (3) Illustration: It is impossible to touch the wings of a butterfly, no matter how lightly, without retaining some of the microscopic feathers which cover its wings.
- (4) It is also impossible to lovingly embrace "the things of the world" without staining the soul.

9. Too much of self:

- (1) Self-seeking.
- (2) Self-serving.
- (3) Self-assertion.
- (4) Self-advancement.
- (5) Self-righteousness.
- (6) Self-justification.
- (7) Self-complacency.

10. And, finally: Captious criticism and copious judgment of others.

## II. The Signs of Soul Sickness

1. Physical diseases:

- (1) Have their accompanying signs.
- (2) Signs which assert themselves in bodies, eyes, voices, words and actions.

- (3) A memory: Melvin Daniels was young, strong, vigorous, hale and hearty; and was deeply loved by all of us who knew him. Then, with frightening suddenness, small pimples began to appear in his face and eyes. Two sorrowful months later we profusely wept as we lowered the remains of his cancer-ridden and wasted body into a lonely and silent grave.
2. Soul sickness:
- (1) Has its accompanying signs.  
 (2) Signs which assert themselves in bodies, faces, eyes, voices, words and actions; and minds, hearts and souls.
3. Serious signs of soul sickness:
- (1) Restlessness.  
 (2) Loss of interest.  
 (3) Inability to testify for Christ.  
 (4) Complaining and criticizing.  
 (5) Wincing and rebelling against the word of God.  
 (6) Resentment of those who are spiritually healthy and happy.  
 (7) An angry and stubborn refusal to admit that anything is wrong.
4. Then: After many sorrowful and wasted years, the heartbroken admission that we are afflicted with soul sickness.
5. And, finally: The dark, negative and despairing cry: "Too late! Too late!"

### III. The Cure for Soul Sickness

1. The restoring grace of God" "He restoreth my soul."

2. Consider nature's restoratives:

- (1) A drought-scorched earth: Soft and gentle rain.
- (2) A snow-and-ice locked land: Spring, balmy breezes, and warm sunshine.
- (3) A fire-ravaged forest: Seedlings, saplings, and a towering forest.
- (4) A rent in a pastoral meadow: Grass, ferns, and flowers.
- (5) A wound in the flesh: Red blood, corpuscles, and oxygen.
- (6) A crushing loneliness: A true and faithful friend or companion.
- (7) A wound in the heart, emotions or soul: Time, patience, and distance.

3. Some simple spiritual restoratives:

- (1) A quiet word, verse or phrase from the Bible.
- (2) The melody and message of a beloved hymn of our faith.
- (3) The silent voice of conscience.
- (4) The confession of sin.
- (5) The secret place of prayer.
- (6) The prayers of family and friends.
- (7) Memories of answered prayers.

4. The sublime spiritual restoratives:

- (1) A sense of God's presence.
- (2) The word of God.
- (3) The love of God.
- (4) The promises of God.
- (5) Prayer.
- (6) Faith.
- (7) Trust.

5. "He restoreth my soul" embraces:

- (1) David's memories.
- (2) David's thanksgiving.
- (3) David's faith in God's faithfulness.

6. David's faith:

- (1) In all of David's Old Testament words, and in his 73 psalms, he never once spoke the word "faith."
- (2) It may surprise you that "faith" appears only twice in the King James Version of the Old Testament. (Deu. 32:20) (Hab. 2:4)
- (3) But in his 73 psalms, the word "trust" rings again, and again, and again.
- (4) And, also, in his 73 psalms:
  - (a) "God is my defense."
  - (b) "God is my deliverer."
  - (c) "God is my fortress."
  - (d) "God is my glory."
  - (e) "God is my God."
  - (f) "God is my health."
  - (g) "God is my help."
  - (h) "God is my helper."
  - (i) "God is my hiding place."
  - (j) "God is my hope."
  - (k) "God is my king."
  - (l) "God is my light."
  - (m) "God is my rock."
  - (n) "God is my salvation."
  - (o) "God is my shelter."
  - (p) "God is my shield."
  - (q) "God is my shield and buckler."
  - (r) "God is my strength."
  - (s) "God is my strong habitation."
  - (t) "God is my strong refuge."
  - (u) "God is my strong tower."



- (5) David's faith was never more tenderly implied than when he said: "The Lord is my shepherd."
7. Reminders of our faith:
- (1) "The just shall live by faith." (Hab. 2:4)
  - (2) "We walk by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7)
  - (3) "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8)
  - (4) "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5)
  - (5) "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1)
  - (6) "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6)
  - (7) "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:2)
8. Reminders of God's faithfulness:
- (1) "The faithful God." (Deu. 7:8-9)
  - (2) "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." (Psa. 119:90)
  - (3) "The Lord is faithful." (Isa. 49:7)
  - (4) "Great is thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:23)
  - (5) "God is faithful." (I Cor. 1:9)
9. With the fingers of his heart, David strummed the strings of his faith, and sang: "He restoreth my soul."
10. Now, 3000 years later, with the fingers of our hearts, we strum the strings of our faith, and sing: "He restoreth my soul."

### Conclusion

1. Transition:
- (1) Come with me:
  - (2) From the Old Testament to the New Testament.
  - (3) From 1000 B.C. to 33 A.D.
  - (4) From David to Peter.

2. Peter's soul sickness:
  - (1) He slept while Jesus agonized in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Mark 14:32-38)
  - (2) He followed Jesus afar off. (Mark 14:54)
  - (3) With vile curses and oaths, he denied Jesus. (Mark 14:66-71)
  - (4) Peter's problem: His soul was sick.
  
3. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter:
  - (1) On a mountain in Galilee. (Mat. 28:16-18)
  - (2) In the upper room. (John 20:19-21)
  - (3) By the Sea of Galilee. (John 21:1-2)
  - (4) In none of these appearances did Jesus criticize Peter for his soul sickness.
  - (5) Instead, Christ's gentle words and actions implied: "Come, Peter, put your head on my shoulder, confess your soul sickness, and receive restoring grace."
  
4. After our resurrection:
  - (1) Over there in eternity.
  - (2) Our first meeting with Christ.
  - (3) He will not criticize and condemn us for our soul sickness.
  - (4) Instead, He shall say: "Come, put your head upon my shoulder and receive restoring grace for all eternity."
  
5. O indeed, indeed! "He restoreth my soul!"

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