

Message Discussion Guide THE SHEPHERD WHO SATISFIES

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

May 2, 2010

Psalm 23

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Ask members of your group to share about any previous experiences they've had in which Psalm 23 proved especially significant or comforting to them. The contexts may be the death of a loved one, personal illness, or personal difficulty, etc. Why did they or someone close to them turn to this Psalm for comfort? Why do you think this Psalm is so well loved?

Today we will explore Psalm 23 more deeply and see how Christ is the Shepherd who satisfies.

Option 2

Ask members of your group where they go or what they do to find peace in the midst of trial or stress. How might this relate to "green pastures" and "still waters"? How can our spirits be quieted? How does the Shepherd of Psalm 23 meet all our needs?

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Review the Message . . .

THE SHEPHERD WHO SATISFIES Psalm 23

- Your Shepherd's care is extremely _____ **personal** _____.

Discussion . . .

- Read Psalm 23. Notice how many times the writer uses personal pronouns (17 times).
- How does this emphasis on a personal relationship contrast with much of the Old Testament? How can God be both "my" God and "our" God?
- How does the imagery of Psalm 23 show us that God knows all the details of our lives and thus all our needs?

Application . . .

- How does understanding God's tender care for us give us strength and encouragement in times of difficulty?
- Will God ever leave His people alone?

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- Who is the only One who knows exactly how we feel? How should this affect our attitudes and behaviors as we go through times of difficulty, sadness, grief, or trial? How should this fact make us humble as we try to comfort others?
- Your Shepherd never stops giving to you.

Discussion . . .

- Read Job 1:21. And reread Psalm 23:1-3.
- How does God give even when He takes away?

Application . . .

- How have you seen God's giving play out in your life, especially in the midst of loss or illness or trial?
- Do you think God gives willingly or grudgingly to His people?
- Your Shepherd's provision is based on His grace, not your ability.
 - By His grace, He refreshes you.
 - By His grace, He restores you.
 - By His grace, He makes you righteous.

Discussion . . .

- In Psalm 23:2-3, who is the initiator of the action?
- Do sheep lead or follow? Is the sheep's life (his eating, drinking, resting) determined by himself or His shepherd? How much depends on the sheep's abilities?

Application . . .

- Can we refresh or restore ourselves? Can we make ourselves righteous? How do we often act like we can? Why?
- How can we move from a do-it-yourself mentality to a watch-Him-do-it mentality?
- How does trusting in His ability rather than our ability free us to be radical spiritually?
- Your Shepherd's grace results in your Shepherd's glory.

Discussion . . .

- Why and how would leading us in paths of righteousness result in glory for God's name?
- Why is it a very good thing that God has connected His reputation to His caring and provision for us?

Application . . .

- Since God is our Provider (Jehovah-Jireh), our Peace (Jehovah-Shalom), our Healer (Jehovah-Rapha), and our Righteousness (Jehovah-Tsidkenu), what can we be confident He will do for us?

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- Since God is love, how will He treat us for His name's sake?
- Since God's character never changes is there any reason to worry that He will stop providing or stop loving?
- **Because your Shepherd gives you everything, He leaves you nothing to fear.**

Discussion . . .

- Read Psalm 23:4.
- How does God's presence drive out fear and bring comfort?
- How do the truths of verses 1-3 give David the confidence to face the valley of the shadow of death?

Application . . .

- How does confidence and even joy in the face of death bring glory to God? Have you seen examples of this in your life?
- Ultimately, what does death bring to the believer?
- **Your Shepherd not only sustains you; He satisfies you.**

Discussion . . .

- Read Psalm 23:5.
- Is this a picture of providing just enough or is it a picture of abundance?
- Read Romans 5:1-5.
- Can we experience joy even in suffering?

Application . . .

- What satisfies? God or His gifts?
- **Your Shepherd pursues You with His love.**

Discussion . . .

- Read Psalm 23:6.
- Since "follow" here means active pursuit, how does that change or affect your view of this verse?
- Do we want God's goodness and mercy to trail behind us or overtake us?

Application . . .

- Since God is actively pursuing us, what does that mean for us when we stray or struggle?
- How does this relate to the shepherd seeking the lost sheep?
- **Your experience with this Shepherd will never end.**
 - **His goodness to you is eternal.**

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- Your fellowship with Him will be everlasting.

Discussion . . .

- Read John 10:11-18.
- What did Jesus willingly do for us? How does this give us confidence in His eternal goodness to us? What did Jesus defeat on the Cross and through the Resurrection?
- Read Revelation 7:15-17.
- How long will Jesus shepherd us? What will be absent from heaven? What will we enjoy in heaven forever?

Application . . .

- How do we experience fellowship with Christ today? What can break that experience of fellowship? Ultimately, what can separate the believer from Christ?