

LACK NOTHING

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE 23rd PSALM



HE LEADS ME ON THE RIGHT PATH
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August 16, 2020

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are continuing our series called **Lack Nothing**. It is based upon one of the most well-known, most quoted, and most memorized scriptures in the Bible -- King David's 23rd Psalm. We live in a time when we have more than any generation in history, though we are more discontent than perhaps any generation in history. What we learned in week #1 is that the Good Shepherd promises to provide, protect, and care for us. This means we are under the care of someone else. We are no longer in charge. Until we come to this realization, we will run after whatever or whomever we think can satisfy us and our needs. God is telling us that there is a way to live – a path to follow --where we will not be in want – where we will lack nothing.

QUESTION: What do you think you are lacking today?

SCRIPTURE¹

Psalms 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way.

John 10:2-5 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

OBSERVATION

Throughout history, the people of God couldn't seem to stay on the right path for very long. They would disobey God, go their own way because they thought they knew better, but the result was always the same: it led to disaster when enemies defeated them. Then they would cry out to the Lord for help and God would deliver them. This cycle was repeated over and over again just like Groundhog Day. We ask, "What was the matter with them? God spoke in burning bushes, led them through a desert for forty years, parted a body of water for their passage, and gave them a promised land." Yet they couldn't be obedient! But, what about us? Haven't our lives been lived in the same way – in a cycle of **disobedience, disaster, and deliverance**? Haven't we needed to change this cycle into a journey forward on a path written uniquely for us by God?

QUESTION: What cycles have you experienced in your walk with God?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

APPLICATION

No matter how cute we think sheep are, they are actually dumb and directionless. No other class of livestock requires more careful handling and detailed direction than sheep do. Left on their own, they will wander off and follow each other into danger. Shepherds know this – they know there are two ways to move sheep. They can be driven or led. Driving requires a stick on their behinds from behind. For some of us, this is our view of God -- we see Him driving us and, when we mess up, He's going to punish us until we get back on the right path. That's not David's description of God's leadership. He sees God leading us by His own unique call as sheep -- and we also -- are led by the voice of our Shepherd.

QUESTION: How do you know Jesus' voice?

Jesus says that those of us who hear His voice and those who follow after Him will be led on the path that brings contentment and joy. If we are on the wrong path, perhaps we are listening to the wrong voice. Every stage of life brings different voices that have the potential to lead us down a wrong path. When we are teenagers, we are tempted to think all adults are stupid. When we are dating, we might listen to the voice that says, "We might save money if we move in together." Or, maybe, we ignore good financial advice because we don't think we will ever need an emergency fund. Every stage has its temptation to listen to the wrong voice.

QUESTION: When has God spoken to you and you were sure it was He, but ignored the message? How did that turn out?

It may not be an audible voice we are hearing from God. He communicates in various ways: **1) He speaks through the Bible.** God's moral will for us is already written there – that's why we need to spend a lot of study time there. **2) He guides through prayer** which not only changes the heart of God, but also actually changes the chemistry of our brains. It renews our minds. Keeping our minds on noble and righteous and lovely thoughts carves new pathways in our brains and we begin to think differently – righteously. **3) Godly counsel.** Whom we listen to will determine the direction of our lives. God uses trusted, godly people in our lives to guide us. **4) God speaks to us through circumstances.** He will often guide us through open or closed doors. As followers of Jesus, we have Him speaking from within us.

QUESTION: How has God led you in recent months? How does He communicate with you most often?

And God does it for His name's sake! His character is involved in how He leads. He doesn't say, "Well, I had 100 sheep and only lost 1!" No, He searches for the lost sheep out of loyalty to His own character. There's no hill He won't climb, no valley he won't cross to get to us. When we get off the right path, He whispers for us to come back because He loves us – and that is His character.

QUESTION: When have you gone off track and Jesus went out to find and bring you back? Did you respond to His call?

The Crossing Church goes to great effort to connect with people, even during a pandemic. We give sacrificially and partner with God-serving groups throughout our community and abroad, because we want to share our Jesus with all the world. If we are going to have the heart of God, then we have to care about those who are disconnected from Him and those who have wandered away. Maybe some of us reading these words are wandering right now because we think we can't possibly do enough good works to be saved. Jesus is calling us because He is the only way to find true freedom. When we realize that we are saved by His grace and have to only do one thing – believe in Jesus – then we have the peace and rest our souls so desperately need.

QUESTION: When have you thought that God only loves you when you are performing well? How do you feel when you realize that we are saved by grace and not works so that no man can boast.

If you haven't asked Jesus into your life because you have doubts and questions, there is a way for you to find answers through our program called **ALPHA** where there is no pressure and no wrong questions. Another

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offering for those who have accepted Jesus and then wandered away, is called **ROOTED**. This is an experience with Jesus like no other and an opportunity to bond in fellowship with new friends. Both programs begin in September and registration is open on-line now.

QUESTION: If you have doubts about Christianity, or have wandered from your first love, what is keeping you from signing up for one of these experiences?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are lost without Your shepherding. We, like sheep, are a danger to ourselves and need you to protect, and guide us into lives of purpose and love for others. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What do you think you are lacking today?

QUESTION: What cycles have you experienced in your walk with God?

QUESTION: How do you know Jesus' voice?

QUESTION: When has God spoken to you and you were sure it was He, but ignored the message? How did that turn out?

QUESTION: How has God led you in recent months? How does He communicate with you most often?

QUESTION: When have you gone off track and Jesus went out to find and bring you back? Did you respond to His call?

QUESTION: When have you thought that God only loves you when you are performing well? How do you feel when you realize that we are saved by grace and not works that no man can boast.

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