

A Mourner's Look at Psalm 23 (Part 2)

by Evan Schaible

God restores our souls and leads us in the paths of righteousness for His name and glory.

Scripture: Psalm 18:32, Psalm 23:3, Isaiah 30:21, Matthew 5:6, Romans 3:23, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:8, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:13, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Divine Restoration", "Righteous Living"

Description

Evan Schaible preaches on the divine love and restoration found in Psalms 23:3, emphasizing how God restores the broken and beaten soul, leading them in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. The sovereign hand of God brings strength and perfection to believers, guiding them in a life of habitual love and obedience. The surrendered and contrite find themselves on the path of righteousness, understanding their helplessness apart from God's strength. This path is trodden for God's glory, not for personal gain or avoidance of punishment, leading believers to true repentance and a life lived for the praise of the glory of His grace.

Transcript

"He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake"

(Psalm 23:3)

Oh the wonders of divine love! This very scripture has been the refuge of many a wandering pilgrim as they traverse this weary land. The burden of sorrow as Satan accuses, the woes of failure as humanity is realized, the dim lit night sky of the soul that wanders astray, these woeful things are thrown down at the foot of the mercy seat when it is realized, "HE restoreth my soul".

The broken and beaten soul finds solace in the glorious memories of the times past when God has moved upon his behalf. The parting of the Red Sea and Jordan are memories of God's great love that bring to the Psalmist great pangs of love and rapture as they are recalled. It is so easy to be cast down as the world presses in, but it must always be remembered that it is He that restores the soul of the believer cast upon His mercies, for they endure forever. The same sovereign hand that parted the sea can part the darkness of the deepest and sorrow and allow the weary traveller to pass through dry and safe to other side. That hand is the hand that restores the soul of all who come to God for rest.

It is a very prevalent fact in the entire tenor of holy writ that God is a sovereign God. "It God that girdeth me with strength, He maketh my way perfect". It is God that restores, but the restoration must never stop with the relief, but must be accompanied by a new surrender that allows for the following clause in the text: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name sake". These paths are little trod today, but oh that God would receive His glory in the church by this bright and hopeful truth again. This path is that of habitual and steady love and obedience to God, over and against habitual and steady hatred and disobedience to Him.

He leads the surrendered and broken believer in these paths, they are not trod by the strength that is supposedly in man as that strength is simply non-existent. They are not trod by the strength of will, as will power is fruitless and of little value to the kingdom of God. They are not trod by the faithful few that seem to have it altogether, anyone who knows the ways of God knows that one that seems to have it altogether is likely the one who is most scattered and needs restoration. The broken and contrite, the mourning believers are the ones that inhabit these paths of righteousness as they are the ones that understand the helplessness of the state they are in apart from the strength of God the Holy Spirit.

Why then is it God that does this and not man? The answer is simple. If man were able to walk these paths in the strength he presumes he has, then it would no longer be for God's name, but the glory would shift and fall on the shoulders of a filthy man, and this cannot be. This glorious path is trod for God's name and glory, and anything that vaunts itself against this knowledge must be trodden under foot as the first steps are taken on this wonderful path. If you presume upon God by pleading will power, or your own strength of moral character, you have not even begun to tread this path, you are the robbers and thieves that have tried to climb in some other way, and you will fall drastically short of that wonderful city as you find that you had not the stamina your pride told you was there.

Notice also, this is for His name sake, not to avoid hell or exalt ourselves above the unregenerate by pleading moral character. If we are living a life of reliance upon the strength of God, and we have given ourselves to seeking God, and holiness, but we have done this to escape hell, our footprints will not be found on the narrow road. You are not yet actually running the race, and this path must begin at true repentance that says, "against thee only have I sinned" with not a jot or tittle of escaping hell in the motivation. We must realize we have offended God, and forget about hell in the terror and fear of God, and cast ourselves upon Him for mercy so that the glory He deserves might be made known through us. It is for His name sake, for His glory, that we might be "to the praise of the glory of His grace".

With our thoughts concerning the loving and glorious shepherd still fresh in our minds, let us cast ourselves upon the great and glorious King. Let us enter into the pastures and allow God to lay us under the shade of the oak and gently feel the breeze of mercy as He gives us the breath of life. Let the still waters of mercy cool your blistered tongue as the things of the world grow strangely dim. He deserves all of the glory for our salvation, and as far as we have grown, we must shun taking any credit for ourselves and do all we can in order for others to see the grace of God. This we shall do, if God permits and enables.

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