

How Psalm 23 Can Be Dangerous at Funerals

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman explores the deeper meanings of Psalm 23, emphasizing the importance of true relationship with God and the necessity of repentance.

Duration: 18:09

Scripture: Psalm 23:1

Topics: "Repentance And Faith", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

This sermon delves into the comforting and guiding aspects of Psalm 23, highlighting God's role as a shepherd who leads, restores, and comforts His people. It emphasizes the importance of repentance, knowing God personally, and the transformative power of God's love and grace. The speaker challenges the audience to embrace the truth of the Gospel, including the need for repentance and surrender to God's will, despite it being uncomfortable or offensive to some.

Transcript

Many of you know Psalm 23, it's a familiar verse at memorials. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. So that starts out pretty encouraging, doesn't it? Rest, still water, sleep, restoration.

I don't know about you, but all those sound really good right now. To sleep, to relax, the still waters. And I was actually remembering, I don't know, I think we met Paul and Buster in the 1970s, and then the relationship grew from there, but we would often go camping up in the high Sierra mountains and thinking about those calm streams where you could hear the birds in those summer days.

And that's what the imagery here is, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me lie down in green pastures. And it's interesting, He makes me. He knows what's best.

It's challenging sometimes, isn't it, for us? That God knows what's best, but I want my way. I want my direction. The Lord says, no, come back, follow my way, I know what's best for you.

I will lead you down the best path for your life. That's why He says, I will lead. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lead you.

And I was reminded of many verses on humility. The Bible says, the humble He teaches His way. The humble He teaches His way.

He will lead those who are willing to follow. If you're willing to follow God, He will lead you. The Lord is my shepherd, He shall lead me, He shall make me lie down in green pastures.

And He restores my soul. This word, restores, is interesting because God will restore what it really is, is bring back. Like the prodigal son.

Many of you have heard that story, correct? Where the son wanders from the father and the father brings that son back. So the Lord leads, He makes, and He restores. He brings back the soul that wanders.

Thank God for that. Because without His loving rebukes and bringing me back, I would not be here today. And many of you know it, I mean, let's talk about the elephant in the room.

Everybody's going, what is Shane Eidelman doing pastoring a church? Right? I should be on my fourth marriage, I should be hung over, actually I should be buried in a cemetery in Lancaster. I was on a detour, the quick detour, life in the fast lane. But by the grace of God, He saved me and He pulled the prodigal son home.

And the Bible also says when the prodigal son was feeding the pig and eating with the pigs, he finally came to himself. And God had to rip everything from me for me to finally see my need for Him. And He called me back to Him.

And I love that story because it's not a mean father, you know, going like, where were you this whole time? I can't believe it. The picture is the father running towards the son. He's waiting.

He's saying, I'm just waiting for you. I'm waiting for you. Once you come back to me and you start to run back to God, He embraces.

And sometimes I think in the church we have this wrong view of God. We either have this view of God as a mean, angry, you know, throwing light bolts at you, lightning bolts, or this other version of God that is a doting grandfather. Just kind of winks at sin, right? Just this loving, doting, cosmic ball of love.

But really the truth is in the middle. God is love, but God is just. God is graceful and mercy, but He is holy and righteous.

All the attributes of God. But then it shifts on us. He makes me lie down in still waters and green pastures, but then it takes a shift.

Verse 4, yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. It doesn't say if I do. It's when I do.

When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over. For surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Now this is used primarily for physical death and that is true, but also the overlapping principle applies that when we're walking through a valley, the shadow of death is a heavy look. It's a grief that we wear on our

face sometimes. There's a tremendous valley.

Have you went through those valleys of the shadow of death where it's just the grief and the pressures of life? See, God is still God in the good times and the bad times. He leads us in green pastures, but He also leads us through the storm. And He is there with us.

But when He is the shepherd, I will fear no evil. When He's the shepherd, I will fear no evil. Paul said, oh death, where is your sting? Where is your sting? One of the songs we like to sing here at the church, I'll just share the lyrics with you briefly.

I think it would be helpful. The Savior of the world was fallen, His body on the cross. His blood poured out for us, the weight of every curse upon Him.

One final breath He gave as heaven looked away. The Son of God was laid in darkness. A battle in the grave, the war on death was waged, the power of hell forever broken.

The ground began to shake, the stone was rolled away, His perfect love could not be overcome. Now death, where is your sting? Our resurrected King has rendered you defeated. Forever He is glorified, forever He is lifted high, forever He is risen, He is alive, He is alive.

And that's powerful because though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because the Lord is my comforter, the Lord is my shield. I remember when I was living on the brink of hell, but now I see the glories of heaven. I was addicted and bound by sin, but now I'm set free.

I was blind, but now I see. Come on guys, we all know the song, Amazing Grace, right? Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I was lost, but now I'm found.

I was blind, but now I see, 't'was grace that taught my heart to fear, and fear my heart relieved. How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed. Amazing Grace.

God's amazing grace. I can hear it now, sometimes people say, Shane, Shane, settle down, settle down, what's the big deal? What's the big deal? We get more excited over the Super Bowl than what Christ did on the cross. I have a problem with that.

I mean, if Paula was here, she would spend the entire service, I'll tell you what she'd do, she would spend the entire service telling you about Christ. She would say, stop the picture, Shane, get out of the way, and let me tell you about the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, a Savior coming down to save us. What wonderful truth.

Oh, Shane, that's just fairy tales. No, it's not. It's not.

It's the truth of God's Word. And sometimes the truth hurts, doesn't it? Psalms 23 says, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

And if any of you know anything about preaching and Bible-based, Spirit-filled preaching is it steps on toes. And when I finally surrendered and submitted my life to God, I made Him a vow, if you will, and I said, God, I want to leave after I preach saying, Lord, did I do what you called me to do, versus the accolades of men, because you can't have both. When you talk about absolute truth, when you talk about these subjects, it will offend.

The gospel offends. The gospel offends, and rightly so. And I believe that Psalms 23, what we just read, can be dangerous at funerals.

I can't believe he's saying that, and I'm saying it. It's dangerous. How is it dangerous? Because many say, the Lord is my shepherd, and He is not.

Think about the disservice I would do. I would do the greatest disservice if I preach a powerless gospel. If I preach a gospel that will let me fit it into what people want, not into what people need.

I mean, who would, what parent would feed their kid, give their kid's antifreeze in their drink, or tell my wife, hey, go park on the train tracks for a couple of days. Same thing with the gospel. Same thing with the gospel.

We have these wonderful truths, and we read, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down a green pasture.

He restores my soul. Shane, tell me more about anointing my head with oil. Tell me more about making a lunch for me in the presence of my enemies, the blessing of God.

Tell me about all those things. Okay, but I can't avoid the difficult things. See, many know about Christ, but they don't know Him.

Many know about Christ. We know Him. We know about Him, but we don't know Him.

So you can see my heart, my passion is for those who, we read through this, but we have to stop and pause. Do you truly know Him? Because love tells the truth. Doesn't it? True love tells the truth.

If we love somebody enough to tell them the truth, the truth is this, that we are dead in our sins and trespasses. We have sinned against God. The wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's a wonderful message. And I liken it to, many of you know Billy Graham, and if he were here this morning and sitting up there, you know, I could say, Dr. Graham, I've read all your books. I've listened to countless sermons.

I know all about you. What would he tell me? Boy, I don't know you. Son, I don't know you.

What's the difference? There was no relationship. See, one of the most offensive words to the American society today is the word repentance. You're not going to turn on Sunday morning and hear Joel Osteen talk about these types of things because it offends.

And I'm just shooting you straight. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action. And we see sin the way God sees it.

I will never talk to most of you again. I've got maybe ten minutes, if that. What kind of person would I be if I didn't share the truth? You tell me.

If you say, well, that's incorrect, then show me where the Bible is incorrect. Show me historically, prophetically, scientifically, and archaeologically. This is absolute truth.

And I'm getting ready to debate an atheist at the college next month, and I had the privilege of meeting with them. And I said, sir, could you tell me where the Bible is wrong? Your whole case is against it. Where's it wrong? And he said, well, it says don't eat shellfish.

I didn't know to laugh or cry because you are banking eternity off that statement. It was the dietary laws of the Hebrew nation. We know today in the nutrition industry that shellfish are not healthy.

They are like the septic tank of the ocean. They eat all that junk. The Bible's correct in every area.

That's all he had. That's all he had. So I would encourage you, the prodigal son, prodigal daughter, come back home.

Come home to Christ, because once he fills you with his love and his grace, you've got to tell other people. But you have to talk about the difficult things. See, Shane, if you could just talk about love, please, and joy, and peace, please, just stay over there.

Just stay there, could you? Now, here you go again talking about the things I don't want to hear. But it's the things we don't want to hear that we need to hear. What is this all about? This is about repentance.

It's about the blood of Christ. It's about the judgment of God. It's wonderful truths that can't be avoided.

They should be shouted from the rooftops. Because it wasn't until this arrogant prideful man, me, was slapped in the face with God's truth that I finally repented. Acts 3.19 says, repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord.

Jesus didn't send out his disciples to preach love. Although I love God, thank God for God's love, without that I would be lost. But Jesus said, you go out and you preach repentance.

Jesus said, for this purpose, I was called to preach repentance. John the Baptist goes out and preaches repentance. Peter, in his first sermon, repents.

You can follow this throughout the entire, you can go to the old prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, all these prophets. The whole role of the prophet was to call the people back to God. To do what? To repent.

So now we come to the church today and they're like, well let me not say any of these things that upset. Because I guarantee you, as God is my witness, Paul would be encouraging all of us, are you ready to face your Savior? Are you ready? What is more important than that? Repentance. But it is a good reminder, God's heart is not to condemn.

John 3.17 said, for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Now a lot of people have questions, I'll be the first to admit, I have questions. If I didn't have questions, God wouldn't be God.

I would be God. So it's okay to have questions, but I'm not going to spend eternity separated from God and live my life with a question mark. And allow a question to stop me from making that full commitment.

Romans 5.8 declares, I've got just two minutes, stay with me. But God demonstrated his own love toward us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for me. I just preached a memorial last Saturday and this really stuck out because I started to think, wait a minute, wait a minute.

When I was in my drunken binges in Palm Springs and on my drug-induced highs in Las Vegas, that you still died for me? Christ, you still died for me in my sin, in my trespasses? When I mock God, when I blaspheme him, when I spit on him, I don't have anything to do with God. How dare you? Yet he's still there like the loving Father saying, come home, son, just come home. You can spit on me, you can hit me, you can blaspheme me, but my everlasting love will set you free if you embrace it.

But prideful, arrogant, human hearts do not want to embrace it. That's just the truth. I love you enough to tell the truth.

I'm not telling you anything I will not tell my kids. Well, you're a mean parent. No, I'm not.

That's like letting my kids go run on the freeway. God's love. I told this story on Sunday and I knew I wanted to tell it here.

But it's the example of a mom, thinking, of course, of Paula, the unconditional love of a mom. Have you ever experienced that? I mean, when it comes to parenting, mom and dads are way different. They run to mom when they're hurt, they run to me when they hear some noise outside.

And it's this unconditional love of a mom and you see the love of God in that same thing, just loving us even where we're at. It's a story of a young boy who was drunk and high and running from God. He was in rebellion and he came home again at two in the morning, passed out on his bed and just laid there asleep.

He didn't even know that he made it home, didn't remember how he got there. And the father heard the mom get up out of bed and he said, finally, she's going to let him have it. We're done dealing with this guy.

Finally, we're going to let him have it. And after about five minutes, he didn't hear anything. So he went in the room and he saw the mom on the bed with the son, just rubbing his hair and holding him.

And he said, what are you doing? What are you doing? And she said, he would not let me love him while he's awake, so I will love him while he's asleep. Guys, that's a love of God. That's a love of God.

And we have to stop apologizing for the gospel. And start proclaiming it and letting people know this is how you truly know God. To turn and repent and fully surrender our lives and commit our lives again to him.

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