

# (The Man God Blesses) Psalm 23

by Zac Poonen

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*God wants us to be weak and dependent on Him, and He promises to meet our needs if we seek His kingdom and His righteousness first.*

**Duration:** 53:34

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:3, Psalm 23:1-4, Matthew 10:16, James 4:13-15

**Topics:** "Faithfulness To God", "Spiritual Guidance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following God and listening to His word. The speaker highlights the promise that if we faithfully follow God, we will never lack anything we need in life. The concept of the 'valley of the shadow of death' is discussed, with the speaker suggesting that the world is a valley of suffering and trial. The speaker also draws a parallel between believers and sheep, emphasizing the need to look up to God and take time to hear His voice amidst the busyness of life.

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## Transcript

Like God's word says, we should try and understand the message it has for us at this time. The Lord is my shepherd. It's interesting that both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, God likens us to sheep.

Jesus emphasized that more than once. He told his disciples, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. So, Jesus described the world as a pack of wolves.

And his people are like sheep. We must keep that picture in our mind always. The world is full of people who are snapping at each other and trying to attack the sheep.

And Jesus said that his disciples would be like sheep. He didn't say that we would be like lions. We would be like sheep.

Helpless, weak. That's the way God wants us to be. So that we would depend on our shepherd and not on ourselves to protect us from the evils.

And there are in the world from wolves and lions and snakes and everything. God intends his people to be weak. If you read the Old Testament, you find that God never allowed Israel to be strong in themselves.

Many times in the Old Testament you read how they were surrounded by a multitude of enemies far stronger than them. Because he wanted them to depend on him. And that carries over into the New Testament.

Jesus pictured the church sometimes like a widow. A widow without a male member in the house is one of the most helpless of human beings. He pictured the church like sheep.

Helpless and weak. So, it's when we don't recognize that and we are strong in ourselves that we have so many problems. Because then we don't depend on the Lord as our shepherd.

The other thing that encourages us. I read somewhere that among all the animals that there are, it's sheep that tend to get sick more often. Sheep and human beings, they are the ones who get sick most often.

More than all the other animals in the world. I mean, pigs and dogs can eat almost anything and they never get sick. But you know how easy it is for us to get a tummy upset with any little thing.

We are among the weakest of all. God has made us like that. The other thing about sheep is, a sheep is not very clever.

It's pretty stupid. And it's humbling for us to recognize that God compares us to sheep. We are not that smart as we think we are.

We are not as clever as at least in spiritual things. And that's why it's good for us to humble ourselves. And say, Lord, if you don't lead me, I'll go astray.

That's why we need a shepherd. Now, if we were lions, lions don't need shepherds. Even dogs don't need shepherds.

But a sheep will always go astray if it doesn't have a shepherd. The other thing about sheep is, now I've seen this in India. We have sometimes on the main roads in our city, a man driving a bunch of sheep down to the slaughterhouse to be slaughtered.

And it's so, we see it regularly, almost every day. And it's so interesting to see that all the sheep will follow the one in front. And if that one turns left, they turn left.

If that one turns right, turns right. If they go jump in a pit, they'll all jump into the pit. This is how stupid sheep are.

And the Lord says, you're like that. The question is, do you recognize that? If you recognize it, how easily we follow leaders who are, whether they're leading us astray, into a ditch. We just follow and look at the multitudes of even Christians who've gone into cults.

It only proves they're sheep. And that's why we need the Lord as our shepherd. Each of us must be able to say, the Lord is my personal shepherd.

That's the first thing we need to see here. To be a blessed man, a man whom God can bless, you need to know the Lord as your personal shepherd. Now it's true that in the church, God has placed a lot of under-shepherds to guide us and lead us.

But that under-shepherd, a pastor, must never be a substitute for your personal connection with the Lord. Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice. And they follow me.

Now it's wonderful if you come on Sundays and hear a pastor's voice, a preacher's voice. That's good. That's better than sitting at home.

But, that should never be a substitute for hearing the Lord's voice. Because the Lord said, my sheep hear my voice. And so, one good question that all of us could ask ourselves is, is it only on Sunday morning that I hear the Lord speaking to me? Is it only when I come to a meeting that I hear the Lord speaking to me? Then you need to ask yourself whether you really are one of the Lord's sheep.

Because the Lord says, my sheep hear my voice. I remember one young person who once went to a godly man and asked this question, which is a very sensible question. He was very honest.

He said, I read in the scriptures that the Lord says, my sheep hear my voice, but I don't seem to hear him. And that godly man said, it's true. The sheep hear his voice, but the lambs need to learn to distinguish his voice from other voices.

See, when we are young, we hear so many voices in our mind. And we don't know which is the Lord's voice. And one reason we don't know which is the Lord's voice, I'll tell you this, is because we don't read God's word enough.

If we had read God's word more, in the multitude of voices that we hear, we'd be able to distinguish which is the Lord's voice. How is it you're able to recognize your dad's voice on the other side of a wall, in the midst of other voices? You hear many voices there and say, that's my dad, or that's my husband, or that's my wife. It's only because we've heard it, and heard it, and heard it.

We're able to pick up that one voice from a hundred other voices over there. That's the type of relationship God wants us to have with him. And that can only come as we read God's word.

The more we read God's word, the more we become familiar with which is God's voice compared to all the other voices. Which is my voice, and the voice of my self-life, and which is the voice of the devil, and which is the voice of so many other people. So this is something which I want to encourage all of you to develop.

I believe it's one of the single most important habit that we could develop is to learn to listen. To listen. The reason why I say that is, there was a time when Jesus visited a home in Bethany.

There were two sisters there called Mary and Martha. And one was very busy serving Martha, cooking food, not for herself, very unselfishly, sacrificially for the Lord. And there was the other sister, just sitting at Jesus' feet and listening.

Now, it's a very wonderful thing to serve the Lord, like Martha. And particularly if you're serving unselfishly and sacrificially. And that's what she was doing.

But when she was doing that, she came to the Lord and said, will you tell this lazy sister of mine to come and help me? And Jesus told her, never forget this. Martha, you're worried about many things. But one thing is needful.

That's Luke 10.42, he said it. What Mary has chosen, that is more important than what you're doing in the kitchen. What is the message there? That to listen to my voice is more important than your serving me.

Have you heard that? Many of us find a satisfaction in doing something for the Lord. In helping the poor or the needy or visiting the prisons. It's all good.

It's exactly what Martha was doing. Sacrificially doing something for God's people. But Jesus told her, that's not more important than listening to my voice.

So please remember this, my dear brothers and sisters. When we say the Lord is my shepherd, Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and follow me. It's when we follow Him that we can become fishers of men.

He didn't say, I'll make you fishers of men. He said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. So the most important thing or the first step, we shouldn't put the cart in front of the horse.

The first step is to follow. And we can't follow if we don't hear. The Lord is my shepherd.

And because He is my shepherd, I shall not want. Which means, I shall not lack anything that I need in my life. That's a wonderful promise.

That if I keep following and to the best of my ability. We make mistakes. But if we make mistakes, the Lord will bring us back.

But it's a wonderful promise. That if I, to the best of my knowledge and ability, seek to follow the Lord in whatever He tells me to do. I will never lack anything I need in my life.

Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 says, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all the other things that you need will be added to you. God hasn't promised to give us all that we want.

Now, we probably heard that many times. There's a difference between what we want and what we need. And the best example is our children.

When children are small, there are many things they ask their parents for. Which they want. But a wise parent doesn't give it all to them.

And God is much wiser. He does not give us everything we ask for. Just like we don't give our children everything they ask for.

Some of it can hurt our children. A six month old child would not know how to handle a knife. And a knife is very useful, but not in the hands of a six month old child.

Or a one year old doesn't know how to handle a twenty dollar note. He wouldn't give it. It's a good thing.

But you wouldn't give it because he's not yet ready for it. And there are a lot of things that God doesn't give us because we're not ready for it. We don't know how to handle it yet.

So God doesn't give us all that we want. And that's why a lot of our prayers are not answered. Well, they are answered, but the answer is no.

I always say, God answers every prayer. There's no unanswered prayer. The thing is, some answers are yes and some answers are no.

But he doesn't give us everything we want. He gives us everything we need. And that's a promise.

Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 It's one of those wonderful promises that Jesus gave. There's a condition attached to it. And if you fulfill the condition, God says, I'll meet it.

I'll fulfill the promise. Now, there are some promises without any condition. In the Bible.

Did you know that? For example, God makes the sun to rise on the good and the evil. So, if you want the sun to rise on you tomorrow morning, you've got to be either good or evil. That's all.

Everybody qualifies. The rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. Everybody qualifies.

But there are certain other promises in Scripture which there's a condition. If you, it's like a contract, you know, you sign with somebody, they say they'll do that, and you'll do this, and you both sign it. It's exactly like that.

God makes a contract with me. He signed it already. The name of Jesus is there.

Now, if I put my signature also, the contract is complete. That is, if you seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first, all the things that the Gentiles seek after, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear, how will we take care of our earthly needs. Not wants, but needs.

It's promised. It will be supplied. And it doesn't matter which century we live in, which economy we live in, which country we live in.

Many years ago, when we started the church that we have a number of churches now in India that have come up over the last 25 years, and this is the promise that I wanted to see whether it works in a poor country or not in the 20th, 21st century. Things are different in India if you know something about it. There's no social security, no food stamps, no you can't get anything free, even education you have to pay for and everything you have to pay for.

And if you are not able to pay for it, you actually live on the streets with a whole family. We have many families like that in India that live on the streets with all their possessions, people who live in the slums. Now is it possible in a country like this with tremendous amount of unemployment with 18 million people being born every year rather than not being born but the addition of population which is births minus deaths is 18 million every year which means so much more need so much more jobs to be made available that are not available.

In a country like this, is it possible for people to seek God's kingdom first and find all their needs are met. Now I can tell you after 28 years I've never seen a single case in any of our churches where that promise has not been fulfilled. It's always been fulfilled in the poorest of the poor.

We've seen people come into our church with debt, ridden with debt who are on the verge of suicide. I know one family where they were planning to take poison and commit suicide one day with their three little children because they were so much in debt and somehow the Lord prompted me to visit that home that day and they were saved and they have come and came to our church and are free from debt not because we gave them if we start giving money in our church in India, we'll have the whole of India at our doors but we taught them to seek God's kingdom first and when they sought God's kingdom first the other things were added to them that's not just one case there are many cases like that that I can tell you. We have never seen a single case till today of a person who sought God's kingdom first and his righteousness and found that the basic necessities of life were not added to them.

In every single case their earthly needs were met so this is absolutely true. If a person makes the Lord his shepherd his life is perfectly secure he shall not lack for anything he needs spiritually or physically or materially to make the Lord your shepherd, God gives you the best retirement benefits and everything you shall not lack anything what does he do? It says here in verse 2 we're gonna go through verse by verse to try and understand what we, what the Lord does for those who belong to him I wanna say one more thing before we proceed remember that when a shepherd has sheep, Jesus spoke about a shepherd who had a hundred sheep every one of those sheep are totally his he owns them they don't have any will of their own they can't go where they like he owns them totally and this is what it means to have this type of relationship with Jesus where he owns me totally every part of me belongs to him and you don't realize what a blessed position that is. I feel sorry for those people who give themselves half to the Lord, half for the world, who got other interests in life.

I'm not talking about such Christians. I'm talking about those who wanna belong to the Lord one hundred percent who wanna give their whole life to Jesus their whole, all their ambitions their future plans every part of their life and say Lord I'm totally yours.

That's the person who can say the Lord is my shepherd he's bought me I was in the market and he bought me I'm his sheep now I shall not lack anything he makes me to lie down in green pastures now I want you to notice something here in verse 2 and verse 3 he makes me lie down notice the emphasis on he he leads me he restores my soul he guides me in the paths of righteousness for his names it's possible for us in the Christian life to be so taken up with what we have to do for the Lord that we don't think enough about what he does remember this, it's a very simple principle that the foundation for the Christian life is not what I do, but what he does and what he has done what he did on the cross is the basis of my forgiveness and even what I do for the Lord the Bible says God works in you

to will and to do his good pleasure it's not just that he died for me on the cross everybody knows that, I mean all of us know that we can never work to get our sins forgiven there are many people in the world many religions teach that you got to do something to have your sins forgiven but we know we can do nothing to have our sins forgiven he did it all but the mistake, and this is where you know, Christians become legalistic and try to live under the law the mistake we make is that after we are saved, we think now, ok Jesus did that for us on the cross and now we are on our own, now we got to do something no, it's not like that even after we are saved we still need to depend on the Holy Spirit to do something in us, just like we depended on Christ to die on the cross for us, we need to

depend on the Holy Spirit to do something in us, to work in us to will and to do his good pleasure it's God who produces in us the desire and the ability to do his will it's he who makes me lie down, it's he who leads me it's he who restores my soul, I don't have to restore it myself he'll do it, I've got to submit you know, that's wonderful to see that in the first chapter of Genesis when God said something the earth just submitted and something happened God said, let there be trees what did the earth do? ok, sure if you want trees, let trees come forth they came forth that's how it's supposed to be and that's why the whole work was finished in six days that's why it takes so long with us that we don't respond as quickly so here we see something right at the beginning of this psalm which

is very wonderful it's what Christ has done and it's very interesting that the first things that are written here have nothing to do with service, it's not a question of how much we're going to do for the Lord that'll come later it's to do with what the Lord does in me, he makes me to lie down I believe that's very important it's speaking about a life of rest Jesus said, come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give

you rest and I believe the world in which we live is in such a situation of being constantly busy and constantly in a rush it's so different even in India from what I've seen India 25 years ago from what I see today people are so busy at work and that they have hardly any time to listen to God that's we gotta be very very careful that that doesn't happen he

makes me to lie down, God ordained one day in seven for Adam to fellowship with him, he said you can work six days but you need to spend one day in fellowship with me you need to lie down he makes me lie down I remember about 20 years ago when I had to go in to hospital for minor surgery and before I went in the hospital I prayed that God would heal me without surgery and God could do that and I prayed and prayed and he didn't heal me so I had to go to hospital and the surgery fixed the problem but when I was lying down there in hospital I said Lord why don't you heal me I've got so many here I'm tied up for so many days here when I could be serving you somewhere and the Lord said something to me at that time that it was not because he could not heal me without surgery it's the Lord said

you've been running around so much I hardly get any time to talk to you so you've got to lie down here for a little while and I believe the Lord's got to say that to some of us don't wait till he puts you in a hospital bed before there's one good thing about lying in a hospital bed there's only one direction you can look and that's out and that's where we need to look a little more when we're not in a hospital bed but to listen he makes me lie down and I thought of that at that time he made me lie down because I was too busy running around are some of you so busy running around that you don't have time to hear what God is trying to say to you green pastures speaking of something that God wants to speak to your heart to bring rest to your troubled soul Jesus always took time for that

usually he was a very busy person Jesus was very very busy more busy than any of us sitting here some of us think we're busy not as busy as Jesus was people were always coming to him with some need or the other so he would sometimes get up before everyone else was up to sit with his father to hear think of this, that he who was the perfect son of God who never committed a single sin needed to sit and listen to his father how proud and conceited we are to think that we don't need that time to think that we can get along without spending time with God that's a mark, it's not a mark of our busyness, it's a mark of our conceit and our pride we gotta humble ourselves and say Lord if you needed times like that how much more I needed now it's not a question of which time of the day you do it,

for some people it's not convenient early in the morning maybe late at night, but I wanna tell you this we need to hear God's word, God's speaking to us quietly wherever we are, somewhere or the other sometime every day you need to take a little time for that you need to make time for it and I believe that there are times when God can speak to us when we can't hear what God is saying because we've always got some music going that's another way, it could be Christian music too if you have Christian music going morning till night you won't be able to hear God now that Christian music is good but don't let it ever you know, block out time that you should have to be alone with God He makes us lie down and as I said, don't wait till He puts us in a hospital bed He makes us lie down in green

pastures, He leads us beside the quiet waters now it's interesting to see how right through scripture you find this balance between God's word and the Holy Spirit the green pastures speak about God's word on which He feeds us and the quiet waters speak about the Holy Spirit right from the beginning of scripture till the end of scripture you find this balance and I believe this is so important we're not to be academic students of scripture, you know, studying the book scripture like we study some history book or something like that to get the answers neither are we to think that we can be so sure that the Holy Spirit is leading us

without God's word in both these extremes we have Christians who have gone astray but throughout scripture, if you read carefully there's this balance He makes

me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside the quiet waters, He leads me into a life where the Holy Spirit speaks to me and if I keep on reading God's word, I'll find that at other times the Holy Spirit speaks to me in line with scripture when I'm not reading scripture it's wonderful, this is how the Christian life is supposed to be we're supposed to be hearing the Holy Spirit leading and then when we're like that we can have some amazing experiences with the Holy Spirit, Jesus lived like that throughout His earthly life He would walk down a road and the Holy Spirit would say just look up into the tree now, and there'd be a man sitting on the tree Zacchaeus, spend time in his home and we say well, can I experience that?

Yes we can, if we begin in the kindergarten by reading God's word and allowing the Holy Spirit first to speak to us many people are looking for those supernatural experiences first, and that's why they go completely astray we got to start with allowing Him to speak to us from God's word first because here is what the Holy Spirit's written down first so He leads us in the green pastures and beside the quiet waters verse 3 He restores my soul now there are a number of things we can learn from this, first of all it means He constantly revives me and encourages me that's one ministry of the Holy Spirit we live in a world where we can see so many things and so many things can happen to us that discourage us and if I have developed this habit of listening to the Holy Spirit speaking to me through His word and at other times He will always encourage me, remember this, God never discourages us, He's called a God of encouragement, if you hear a word in a meeting that discourages you, you can be sure that wasn't from God if you hear a word in a meeting that condemns you, you can be sure that wasn't from God, if you read the Bible and you felt it condemned you you can be sure you interpreted it wrongly because God's not a God of discouragement God's not a God of condemnation and any person who comes and says something to you that discourages you you can be sure God didn't send them, that's clear, because He's come to restore my soul, He's come to revive me, He's come to encourage me, He's a God who's always out to encourage us that's the first meaning of restoration, and the other thing is this soul is what is the biblical word for our personality and because of sin all of us, our personality is warped and crooked and here's the wonderful promise that He's come to restore my personality into the beauty of Jesus Christ into that original image that He planned for Adam and this restoration work is under progress in all of our life that's why we need to be patient with one another, you know I've seen some of these places we have them in India where some you have them here too I suppose where in an airport for example they have some renovation work going on and there'll be a board there saying renovation work in progress, please be patient, we want to serve you better, inconvenience is regretted we must see that board on everybody hanging, there's an invisible board hanging on everyone renovation work is in progress I want to serve you better inconvenience is regretted I'm sorry I hurt you with what I said or did, but the work's going on, once it's done I'll be perfect he is in that process of restoration not only in my life but in other people's lives I remember years ago where I was thinking of one of our brothers in one of our churches in India where he had been in some years ago a bit of a disappointment and the Lord said to me do you want people to think of you as you were a few years ago?

I said no Lord, I think I'm a little better today than I was a few years ago, I want them to think of me as I am right now and the Lord said to me, why don't you allow for the possibility that that person who was a disappointment to you some years ago has also changed that he's not the same today why do I want other people to think of me not as I was two years ago or five years ago and why do I think of that person as my experience was with him some years ago God is in the process of restoration none of us are perfect but

that work is going on and as long as the work is going on there's a certain amount of inconvenience it's natural, but he restores our soul it says here further, he guides us in the path of righteousness now that means first of all he leads me to be justified in Christ to

be justified in Christ means to be declared righteous that's the first place of righteousness to which the Lord leads me the path of righteousness begins with being declared righteous in Christ, I can never never attain to the righteousness of God and that's why God's made a way by which he can accept me where I come as a sinner and I confess my sin and he clothes me with the righteousness of Christ or to use another example he imputes or puts the righteousness of Christ into my bank account I've got nothing in my bank account but he puts his millions there and all of a sudden I become a millionaire without working for it, that's the meaning of justification the righteousness of Christ put to my account clothing me, but from there he leads me to actually become righteous in my daily life

the first righteousness is imputed and the second is imparted where it becomes part of my own nature but so we see here that he guides us in parts of righteousness and remember this you can know whether the Lord is leading you by asking whether that path is a righteous path or not do you have peace in your heart as you consider it he will never guide us in parts that are not righteous he will never lead us into parts where we have to cheat somebody or cheat the government of taxes or take advantage of someone or where we have to tell a lie in order to get along get by, no, he will always guide me in the parts of righteousness because that's his nature and he can never act contrary to his nature and that's one way by which we can know whether it's the Lord leading me or some other voice

trying to lead me, he guides me in parts of righteousness in India we had very strict rules concerning customs duties of what people are allowed to bring into the country and not allowed in a very heavy customs duties for various things so it's a very common practice for many people who visit foreign countries and come back to India to try and sneak things past the customs by hiding it in their luggage and things like that very very common practice I remember in that connection what the Lord said to me years ago said never be hesitant to pay any tax or duty that you are supposed to pay to the government whether income tax or customs duty because the Lord said I have no shortage of money I can give you money to pay your tax you know that Jesus gave money to Peter to pay his tax even

miraculously he asked him to go and catch a fish and there was a gold coin in the fish's mouth and the Lord said you pay my tax and yours, the Lord is interested in helping me pay my taxes I get that from that story so the Lord said to me I have no shortage of money but I have a shortage of righteous people remember that he has no shortage of money but he has a shortage of righteous people and don't add to that shortage by being unrighteous yourself he guides us in the paths of righteousness and you'll ultimately find at the end of life that that is the safest path to walk upon the Bible calls it the highway of holiness in Isaiah 35 where no lion can walk many people encounter the devil because they're not on paths of righteousness on the path of righteousness the devil can't touch you

it's not possible, it may be a difficult path it's a narrow path but it's a path of absolute safety and the other thing I want you to see here is he guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake it's not to show other people what a wonderful fellow I am no God does a work in us so that he will be glorified it's not good for us to get glory not on this earth, one day he'll give us glory when we get to heaven, there we can bear it but here we can't bear it and that's why he it's not that he doesn't want to give it to us he'll give it to us when we can bear it but here it'll destroy us if we get glory that's why he says do everything for my name's sake the first prayer he taught us to pray was hallowed be thy name and that's where the Lord has

to deliver us from this character

which is characteristic of all the children of Adam to seek glory for ourselves we do something, it could be preaching a sermon, it could be singing a song to draw attention to ourselves the more we do that, the more we miss the path of righteousness he guides us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake God created us for his glory this is how God wants us to meditate on scripture we can get such a lot from three verses if we meditate on it I'm just trying to explain to you how you should be reading all of scripture all the time, otherwise we miss so much, many of you read Psalm 23 I wonder if you've seen these things that I pointed out to you we go to verse 4 even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me the shadow of death I

believe this whole world is a valley it's not a mountain top it's a valley of suffering and trial difficult situations where the shadow of death is always looming none of us can predict when we will die James says even James says to believers in James 4 don't say tomorrow I will do this he says say like this, if the Lord wills, we shall live tomorrow and then we will do this so the valley of the shadow of death is there for believers we don't know there's a shadow of death looming over us, but we live without fear because for us anyway it's not death itself we're not afraid of death because death has been conquered on Calvary, one of the wonderful truths that's delivered me from fear is to recognize what the Bible says when Jesus died he destroyed Satan's power and took away the fear of

death the fear of death is the greatest fear that people have and if that's taken away, all the other fears are taken away so it's not death itself, it's only the shadow you know, it's just like if you're going through a zoo and there's a lion in the cage and you see its shadow oh, I can walk through the shadow without any fear so what if it's the shadow of a lion I wouldn't like to encounter the lion but the shadow is okay have you understood the shadow of death? it's not death, death's been conquered Jesus conquered death I'm not afraid anymore I'm there, because I'm a human being death is there, but it's not something that brings any fear, because it's been conquered and when I walk through this valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil fear is not to be found in the heart of a

Christian, any type of fear because of one reason because thou art with me you know, in the Old Testament there is an incident where Moses where the Lord told Moses I'm sick and tired of these Israelites who disobeyed me in the wilderness I will not come with you anymore it's in Exodus 32 I'll send my angel with you Moses said, no Lord if your presence doesn't go with us we're staying right here what a word to say Lord I never want to move one step anywhere if you're not going to go with me I don't want any angel I want you you thou art with me therefore I don't fear thy rod and thy staff they comfort me there are two things here the rod speaks of discipline and the staff speaks of God's promises we need both of them we need God's promises to deliver us from fear we also need the rod to

protect us from going astray I heard a story of a shepherd who with his sheep and somebody was looking at his sheep and saw one of them was lame limping along limping along close to the shepherd and he asked him how did this sheep become lame and the shepherd said well he was this little sheep was always wandering off and getting lost and getting caught in the bushes and in great danger that one day I took my rod and made it lame so that it wouldn't wander anymore like that and ever since then it's always stuck close to me has the lord done that to some of you you know the reason why he made you lame so that you wouldn't wander off anymore so that you can be close to him thank God for such experiences it's not those people who have never made a mistake in life who are most useful to God

it's the ones who made blunders mistakes, failed the lord badly, perhaps failed the lord even after they were saved but when the lord has succeeded in disciplining, made lame there's a there's a limp in your life today, thank God for that that's what even the apostle Paul needed, he said God made me weak so that I realized my need of him so that rod is so important he uses it on us, the bible says if you're without discipline, you're not really children you're illegitimate children thank God for his discipline thank God also for his staff his promises, they comfort us they assure us that no harm can come to us I will fear no evil God protects us in the valley of the shadow of death from all the evil that the devil can do to us, I heard a story once of John Wesley the great servant of God

in England 18th century people were mad at him because you know, he was emptying the bars and the drinking saloons of people people were getting converted and those who were selling alcohol, were losing their business and there were people who actually wanted to kill him, because he was converting so many people to Christ and I heard, he used to write he used to go horse riding early in the morning and come back late at night, preaching all over the countryside and some evil people who knew the path he would be going by, once tied a rope across two trees in the path where he would come, riding his horse in the night hoping to knock him off the horse and kill him and he came riding along full speed and just before this pitch dark night just before he reached this rope an ant bit him in his

leg and he bent down to scratch his leg, fast and just under the rope he came up you know why God created ants now they are a nuisance most of the time, but sometimes they save the lives of God's servants that's what happened you don't have to fear a man who lived like that, he used to say when people tried to kill him, he says God sent me to serve him and nobody can kill me, till my life's work is done it's wonderful you know when you belong totally to the Lord when you're a sheep, he's your shepherd I'll fear no evil because he's with me thou preparest a table before me verse 5 in the presence of my enemies see this is the interesting thing that God doesn't take away the enemies we sometimes pray, God get rid of those enemies the Lord says no, I'll do something even more wonderful let

them be there and I'll make a table for you, you and I sit and have breakfast together and let the enemies watch let them see that I'm with you sometimes we wish that God would get rid of some of our enemies and he doesn't he does something more wonderful that in the presence of those enemies he sits and has breakfast with us we have fellowship with him and he wants us to concentrate on the table and not on the enemies that's how we are delivered from fear in the presence of our enemies this is so true to life the enemies will be there but the Lord prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies and anoints our head with oil this emphasis on the Holy Spirit comes again and again and again and again first of all he leads us beside the quiet waters for our own life and now he's

thinking of using us after all these verses talking about our personal relationship with him, he says that's not all in the Christian life I want to make you a blessing to other people I'm going to anoint you with my Holy Spirit my brothers and sisters you read the Old Testament you see nobody ever served God without being anointed even Jesus was anointed before he went out to serve the Father he prayed you and I need to pray God anoint me anoint me with the Holy Spirit and when we are anointed it says our cup overflows you find it difficult to serve the Lord you need to be anointed then your cup will overflow and what will be the result goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life I look at it like this that when my cup overflows wherever I go I'm just leaving goodness

and mercy behind me I go to a home, I've left it I've left some goodness and mercy there I go and meet a brother and I leave him I've left some goodness and mercy with him I go somewhere else and I leave

some goodness and mercy think of living a life like this where you become a blessing to every home you visit every person you visit just like the blessing of Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed through you that's God's will for us and I will dwell in the house permanently that's my ultimate goal the house of the Lord forever and ever this is the man God blesses Amen [www.touchtellindia.net](http://www.touchtellindia.net) The Lord bless you richly.

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