PSALM 23
TEACHING GUIDE
WEEK 3

MAIN SCRIPTURES:	MAIN POINT:	JESUS CONNECTION:
Psalm 23:5-6 **SECONDARY:** John 10:1-18	God is crazy about you and wants to be with you forever.	Jesus is our Good Shepherd and through faith in Him we have full life.

THE WHAT

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-4 min)

ME

- **Share a Personal Story of a time where you felt like a V.I.P.**
- *(For example, On my 18th birthday, I received a gift from my dad with two tickets to Super Bowl XXXV. These tickets were given to my dad from his company to wine & dine an important potential client…(share details about your VIP experience)… I remember asking my dad on the drive back home, "You could've chosen any of your important clients to take to the Super Bowl, why did you choose me?" He said to me, "Outside of your mom, you're the most important person in my life, and I love you. Why wouldn't I chose you?"*

WE

- Have you ever had a time in your life where you received something you felt like you didn't deserve or earn? Something that you're almost embarrassed to accept, because you did nothing for it?
- *(Tie to your story: My dad could've taken the CEO of any major company to the Super Bowl with him, but he didn't, he chose me.)*
- Similarly, God has also chosen me, and He's chosen you, and wants to give us something much more than a Super Bowl ticket.

TRANSITION

- Tonight, we're wrapping up our series, Psalm 23, where we have been taking a deeper look at what it means to have the Good Shepherd in our lives. In the first week we talked about how **(Wk1 BOTTOM LINE) Jesus is our Good Shepherd in life's highest highs and lowest lows.** When we feel like we can't go on, or that we messed up so much, He is there continually fighting for us. Cheering us on, protecting us, and never giving up. Last week, we took a look at what it really looks to "rest" with God. To let go of the weight we carry, and give it to Him.
- We learned that **(Wk2 BL) When God/Jesus is our Shepherd, our souls are continually restored.** Which leads right into what we're going to look at today:

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SO WHAT

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (6-8 min)

GOD

- King David, the writer of the 23rd Psalm, has a great reminder for us when it comes to our relationship with our Creator. Let's read through Psalm 23 once again, with a focus on verses 5 & 6.

READ PSALM 23 TOGETHER.

- Let me tell you, I love verse 5, but at first glance it's really confusing. What in the world does it mean that **God is "preparing a table"** for me? Like, God is building a physical table??
- No, that's not what's happening, but rather God is throwing the biggest party you can imagine, and YOU are the guest of honor! The V.I.P.! It's like Times Square on NYE multiplied by a billion! No matter what mistakes, mess-ups, darkness, hurts, or pains that you were in while in the valley, He/God still celebrates you.
- Notice He doesn't just throw you a private party in secret, but rather it's in public in front of everyone, enemies included, so that they are aware of His pleasure/love/acceptance over you! Know that God is not embarrassed that you are His.
- On top of that, **He anoints you with oil**, which again can be confusing and weird because being a human living in the year 2021 we don't run around pouring oil on top of each other do we?
- But back in the day when people were in mourning and wanted to publicly express and show regret for having done something wrong, they would wear sackcloth, imagine an extremely itchy & uncomfortable shirt made of goat hair. They also would rub ashes over their bodies for others to know that they messed up, that they were sorry and wanted to make things right. As a symbol of trying to move toward goodness, they might anoint themselves with oil so others would know they were on the right path.
- But when someone else anoints you with oil, it was to show that you are the guest of honor, that you are a prized relationship, that you are a V.I.P.
- Sometimes we may feel that God just tolerates us. Although He "accepts" our failures and our mistakes, we tend to live in this state that He is always/perpetually disappointed in us or that we exhaust Him, and maybe one day I can make Him really like me.
- Rather the opposite is true. You come out of this valley/hard time, and you've shown up and He's running toward you and He's pouring oil to show everybody at the table that He's prepared for you and that you are His. He starts to pour into your cup out of His infinite fullness until your cup overflows. This right here is a beautiful picture of the Shepherd's love, pursuit, and gladness in those who are in His flock. This right here is why I love verse 5, because it shows that the creator of the universe/of all things is crazy about me. Even if I mess up, He's there with open arms ready to give me His best.
- Verse 5 is beautifully placed coming right after this idea that you and I are going to endure difficult seasons in life. Seasons where we feel like God's abandoned us. But as what V4 says, we're going to find Him in those places as the great comforter with His rod and His staff being there to guide, comfort, and protect us. And that difficult season will eventually give way into this season of celebration.
- Let me ask you, is it possible for you to accept this idea of the party and oil and the VIP treatment? Is it possible for you to accept that God not only loves you, but He really LIKES you too?
- Because I think if we don't understand or accept this, then what happens is you spend all the days of your life trying to earn this kind of love and acceptance. It would be a shame if you grew weary and tired trying to earn something that God is freely handing to you simply by being a part of His flock.

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GOD CONTINUED

- Here's what I want you to know: **God is crazy about you, and wants to be with you forever.**
- Which brings us to verse 6. ***Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* (Psalm 23:6 NKJV)**
- I want to focus on that last part, "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Notice that it's not just future-tense, but also present-tense. Meaning, we don't just get to hang out with God whenever we die and are in heaven, but if you are a Christian, if you are already a part of the Good Shepherd's flock, then the Holy Spirit is living in you right now, giving you full access to God.
- You can approach God with confidence because the spirit of Christ lives inside of you and the righteousness of Christ has been placed upon you. So that when God sees you, he sees you as perfect and spotless in His sight. He sees the perfection of Jesus and not all your faults, mess ups, and mistakes. You don't have to wait until the future to be in the presence of God, but rather you can experience His goodness and mercy right now and all the days of your life, for those in His flock will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Know that **God is crazy about you, and wants to be with you forever.**

TRANSITION

- So after taking a deep dive into one of the most famous & well known pieces of scripture in the Bible, what does this mean for you?

NOW WHAT

NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-4 min)

YOU

- For those of you in here that consider themselves Christ-followers, those that are already a part of the Good Shepherd's flock, then I want to encourage you to resist the voices of the thieves and robbers, and listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Surrender the weights that you are carrying, and take rest in the green pastures with your Creator. Fully embrace the goodness and mercy of the God who is chasing after you because you are His VIP.
- **JESUS CONNECTION:** For those of you who haven't claimed the name of Christ or aren't sure if you're a part of His flock, then I want to know that the Good Shepherd is crazy about you too! That He fights and protects you with His rod and staff. That He has already done what was needed for you to rest. That He has a VIP party waiting just for you. What He offers you is much more valuable than a pair of Super Bowl tickets or whatever you value highest.
- Jesus, our Good Shepherd, gave up His life to rescue us from our sin/mistakes/mess-ups, so that we may dwell in the house of the Lord forever. If you want to make Jesus the Good Shepherd in your life, then pray this prayer with me…*(pray).*

WE

- The 23rd Psalm is teaching us that God is for us, He is pursuing us, He is gracious and good and kind to us.
- Even if this is the darkest season of your life, you have not been abandoned, you have not been forgotten.
- Goodness and mercy is chasing after you. Know that **God is crazy about you, and wants to be with you forever.**

PRAY

- Close your time together in prayer.

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