

Psalm 23 is such a wonderful account of the nature and character of God and how He is so concerned for the well-being of His children. Last month we looked at verse 2 and how God makes us to lie down in green pastures. We saw that sometimes it is necessary for God to draw us aside for Him to get our attention and to enable us to rest and to be still in His presence.



In verse 3 we read that our divine shepherd; “...restores our soul.” So when God pulls us aside for a while He is looking to restore our soul. The fact that something has to be restored implies that the nature and or quality of the thing or person have deteriorated considerably. From a spiritual point of view we can find our lives becoming dry and parched of the living water. It is just so easy to find ourselves drifting in our walk with God. Like sheep, we can wander off the path and it usually is not long before we are in trouble. The problem with drifting in our walk with God is that it can happen so slowly that we hardly notice we have drifted.

A number of years ago I went up Geraldton, a city four hours north of Perth, for a fishing trip. It was one of those rare occasions when the traditional south-easterly wind was not blowing a gale. In fact the ocean was so flat it could have been described as a mill-pond, and you could bring out the bar of soap and have a bath. Because the ocean was so flat we decided we did not need to put out the anchor, although I did take the opportunity to note where we were located by lining the boat up with a spot on shore.

For sometime we operated without an anchor in the water, and to us who were busy fishing from the boat we had not moved from our original position. However, when I tried to match up the boat with the spot I had selected on shore, we had moved significantly away from our original location. This is exactly what happens in our Christian lives when we stop doing certain disciplines in our walk with God. We think that it will not make any difference to the quality of our spiritual lives, but over time we begin to realise that the absence of them does make a difference. We find that we come to a point of recognizing that we are in deep need of restoration.

In his excellent little devotional book on Psalm 23, J.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- His healing hand upon our South African director and his wife (Cobus & Christa Britz) as they have recently recovered from Covid
- The ongoing good health of our team over these winter months
- The ongoing encouragement we receive from people regarding the quality of the paper

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Wilbur Chapman gives us some ways to identify if our souls need restoring or not :

1. We are in need of restoration when we are marked by a restlessness and general dissatisfaction with ourselves and everything around us. It appears that nothing is right, and that everybody is wrong and we are not content with our lot in life.
2. We are in need of restoration when we find that we are not interested in the things of the kingdom of God. Our lives are totally taken up with this world and the idea of being burdened about lost men and women seems almost foreign.
3. We are in need of restoration when our lives are characterised by an attitude of impatience and intolerance of others.
4. We are in need of restoration when there is neglect in the reading and study of the Bible.
5. We are in need of restoration when we are happy to tolerate unconfessed sin in our lives.
6. We are in need of restoration when we are walking in disobedience to God's call on our lives.

Where do you stand on these things Chapman mentions? Sadly for many Christians their lives are in drift mode and are in need of restoration.

A number of years ago my wife and I returned from a trip to the USA. As you can imagine it is a long way to travel. However, just before we landed the flight attendants handed out hot towels to help refresh their passengers before heading through customs.

Just being able to wipe our faces helped to refresh us physically; so the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit restores our soul. There are Christians who are in desperate need of restoration because they have drifted far from God over a long period of time. For some it is not until a crisis hits that someone gets the revelation that spiritually things are not going as well as he or she had assumed.

PRAYER needed for:

- Our team (journalism/ production) as they continue to source stories for each month. May we always operate with one heart, mind and vision
- Impact WA as Kevin Taffurelli continues to work with churches to encourage them with outreach into their communities
- Carl Carmody and Kevin as they travel to South Australia (23/8-6/9) to develop new contacts as well as catching up with regular users of the paper

Making us lie down is part of God's way of alerting us to the need of restoration physically, emotionally and most of all spiritually. So if you find yourself pulled aside for a while do not kick against it, but let God use it for His restoration work. I know how much I need this and I am sure I am no orphan.

Why don't you start the process by getting right with God by confessing sin that you have been tolerating in your life?

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