

From the
SHEPHERD'S
HEART

*A collection of 10 short inspirational
messages from Psalm 23*

by

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From The Shepherd's Heart
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Against All Odds
More Than A Conqueror
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Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the New King James version of the Bible.

Rising On Wings Ministries
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Introduction

This book is a collection of ten Bible based inspirational messages taken from the verses of Psalm 23. They were all written to motivate and inspire the reader to seek after God and live in the fullness of His presence.

The chapters of this little book were originally written as weekly “eWords” for the website www.risingonwings.org. Each chapter consists of a passage of Scripture and its application. It would make an ideal “eGift” via email or can be downloaded and printed.

This book is dedicated to the Father and Shepherd of my heart – my God and King – who has wrapped me in His heart of love! I pray that this book will be a source of deep inspiration and encouragement to you, in Jesus’ name, Amen!

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CHAPTER ONE

The Lord Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23:1-3)

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.”

The imagery of a shepherd is one we see often in the Bible. Jesus Himself shared a parable about the shepherd who left all his 99 sheep to go and find the one who had gone astray. He is often referred to as the “Good Shepherd”. The chapters of this book are based on this psalm, and we will focus on the wonderful way that our Lord expresses all the many facets of a shepherd’s heart.

This message is for all the dear ones who are weighed down with the cares and concerns of the day. Stress and anxiety can cause you sleepless nights, but the Shepherd wants you to rest in His peace. He wants you to feel His sweet restoration within your soul and to walk in His strength and power all the days of your life.

When the writer of this psalm (David) confessed that God was his shepherd, he was really claiming all the security that the sheep have when they are in the care of their shepherd. Sheep (ideally) need fresh green grass, clean water to drink, shelter, and the security of being able to lie down and sleep without any threat of harm or danger. They also need to be kept clean, and free from wounds, parasites, infirmity or pain. A good shepherd takes care of all these needs of the sheep. In John 10:3, Jesus speaks about the fact that the good shepherd is known by his sheep. They know his voice and he knows them by name. They can trust him because he always has their best interests at heart.

Friend, our Shepherd wants us to know that He has our best interests at heart. He truly loves His sheep and wants us to come to that state where we will confidently say “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” In John 10, Jesus also spoke about good shepherds and bad shepherds. While the bad shepherds run away from their sheep when the going gets tough, the good shepherd covers His sheep with His constant presence and takes care of their every need at the cost of his own comfort and well being. He lays down His life so that they will live in His rest.

There may be some “sheep” who wonder why they never feel a sense of peace and restoration in their soul, and why they can never know true contentment. It could be because they choose not to lie in the green pastures the Shepherd has given them, or they dislike the field they are in. We often look over someone else’s fence and think the grass looks greener there, or we look back towards something we knew in the past and regret that it is not our present because it felt like better grass. Dear friend, God never makes mistakes, and even if we do, He is able to turn them all around for our good. Wherever we are situated, they are the pastures the Shepherd has given us to feed upon and enjoy for this season of our lives. The waters we drink are from the riches of His grace, from the River that flows from the throne of God, the new mercies that we are blessed with

each day. The Father wants us to receive our rest, our growth, our commission and calling in the pastures we are in, and by the waters He has provided as we give Him thanks and yield to the moving of His Spirit on every aspect of our lives. Although they may not seem very green and luscious to you, they are to Him and can be transformed in your eyes as you begin to see them (people and situations) through His love! Everything in your life is subject to the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. Even every unsavory situation or experience has to bow its knee to the name of Jesus, who is your Shepherd and Lord, and holds your life in His hands.

Today the Lord reminds you: *“I am your Shepherd. Hear My voice. I have promised to take care of you and be your all sufficiency. If you can trust Me you will see that I AM. I am true, I am faithful, I am trustworthy, I am your never failing, never changing Shepherd and Friend. Everything you could ever need or want to know is found in Me. If you are in want, then it is because you are still learning to be a sheep and to let me be your Shepherd. I am able to fulfill every need if you will truly trust in Me. I will never let you down. I am your healing, your deliverance, your revelation, and the One who wants to bring breakthrough into every difficulty in your life. Choose to look to Me and not to the systems of the world. I can take care of you. I have promised to do so through Eternity. I am your Shepherd and when you are in Me, you truly will not want”*.

May your day be filled with the peace that only the Shepherd brings. You are loved, you are held in His hands. You have everything you need because the Lord is your Shepherd!

CHAPTER TWO

Beside The Still Waters (Psalm 23:1-3)

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.”
(NKJV)

This message is especially for all the busy ‘sheep’ who are constantly running on a non-stop treadmill. Today the Shepherd is calling you into the quietness of His presence, and into the stillness of His very special rest. He longs for all His sons and daughters to come and sit with Him and just lean on His breast as He says *“come, lie down in my green pastures; come drink of the crystal living waters I have for you. I want to see you refreshed and whole. I want you to be filled with my presence and my strength, and walking in victory all the way.”*

1. **Stop and rest.** From the beginning of the world, God required His people to set aside time for rest. This is so important to Him that He made it the subject of one of the ten commandments. As with all the laws of the Lord, this was meant to be a blessing to us, as we took time to turn aside from the busyness of the world and simply rest in Him. Most of us would never use a machine daily without giving it some resting time and

recharging its battery or refilling it with fuel, but we do that to ourselves, working seven days a week and never taking any time to be restored. Green pastures are what every sheep would want to have – succulent fresh grass which is good to eat and good to rest upon. When we live in the Lord, we have what anyone would ever need – the Source of life and strength, and He is living on the inside of each of us! We have everything we need when we have Jesus, and He is asking us to lean into Him, to rest on Him, to come away and be with Him. In His presence we are renewed and restored. Many of us may not be able to spend many hours in the Presence, but we can turn aside from the daily grind for short pockets of time, invite the Holy Spirit to come, and just step into HIM. This is a great way to lie down briefly on those cooling green pastures and get your batteries recharged! The Psalmist wrote “He **makes** me to lie down in green pastures” and this is often true. When we continue without times of rest, the Lord finds ways of making us take a break!

2. **Learn to be led.** The sheep do not have to seek their own pasture because the shepherd leads them to it. Especially in the dry, desert regions of the Bible, sheep could get pretty stressed out if they had to find their own green grassy fields, but this is the job of the shepherd. He is responsible for meeting all the needs the sheep could have, and all He needs from them is that they follow Him to where they have to go. It may seem pretty simple but it is one of the hardest things to do. Most of us have been walking our own way for most of our life, making our own decisions and working hard to survive in a difficult world, so learning to be led by the Lord means we have to un-learn our own way, and learn to hear His voice and yield to it. The good news is that the Holy Spirit helps us when we invite Him to, and He makes it all possible when we step into partnership with Him. What God has for us is so much better than anything we could work out for ourselves, so why settle for ‘good’, when we could have the best! The Shepherd wants to lead you into all the fullness of His wonderful plans for you; do you trust Him enough to say ‘yes’ to Him and to follow where He leads?

Perhaps you are reading this message today while filled with stress and anxiety about your life, your decisions, your finances or your future. Lay all your burdens down and come and rest at His feet. You do not have to struggle and strive in your own strength anymore. The Shepherd has a good plan for your victory but you will need to let Him lead you to where you need to be. So take a step in the right direction and pray this simple prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit and take over. Help me to hear Your voice. I ask You to lead me step by step into all the awesome plans the Father has for me and into the fullness of everything Jesus died to give me. I yield to you, in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.” I believe that the Father’s heart is so pleased that you just prayed this prayer. With Him you can scale the highest heights and reach the stars, and it all happens as you allow the Shepherd to lead you, and you lie down in sweet communion in His arms where all things become possible. You are on the brink of your breakthrough!

CHAPTER THREE

Real Restoration (Psalm 23:1-3)

“He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.”

Jesus is in the restoration business! He picks us up and makes us better than we were before. He restores us and makes us whole. From the day our hearts connect to His, we begin a journey of renewal and re-creation as He takes us from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. Jesus wants to bring some restoration into your life today so read on, and receive everything He has for you.

Eat and drink what the Lord has provided. The Shepherd invites His sheep to partake of the green grass and the still waters. He wants us to eat of His Word and be filled with His Spirit. As we stop to take a break by the river and drink deep of the sweet, clear waters, we receive dynamite power for the journey! Feed daily on His Word, and let your heart and mind be renewed and changed. Worship Him, and see yourself become like Him, filled with His love and tenderness. Your days may be very crowded with things to do, but if you could take a little time to make Jesus the foundation of your day, it could totally transform your life! It would change the way you see things, and how you approach every situation in your life. As you keep this up with consistency, you will find a few weeks down the road that your attitudes and perceptions are different, and that you are seeing things from God’s perspective. You will see the wisdom of the Holy Spirit manifested in your daily life. The Word of God truly is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. (Psalm 119:105). As you saturate yourself in worship and the Word, and seek His presence daily, you will sense and hear from others that the fragrance of Jesus is filling your life and released wherever you go. You will be ‘leaking’ the sweet peace of Heaven!

Let Him restore your soul. What a wonderful relief to be able to stop having to figure everything out and to trust God instead! Restoration of the soul comes from completely trusting Him and allowing ourselves to be carried in His arms. The ‘still’ waters represent the peace that we can enjoy when we lay our lives down before Jesus and allow Him to be Lord over everything. It is the peace that comes from the presence of the Prince of Peace. It is the peace that comes from knowing that we are not expected to earn His blessings or fight our way to the front to get His attention. It is the peace that comes from knowing that we cannot change ourselves but that He is able to do it by the power of the precious Holy Spirit moving upon our hearts. It is the very special healing peace of our heavenly Father who loves us and holds our lives in His hands. He is the healer of our hearts. He is the restorer of our souls. He loves us the way we are and has called us to be His kids, joint heirs of His heavenly riches, and partners in His Kingdom. He fills our lives with His abundant love, not because of anything we have done or who we are, but because of who He is. Take a few moments to focus on Jesus and thank Him for His loving kindness to you, and let this Truth restore your soul! He loves and values you, and misses you when you are not able to take time to fellowship with Him.

I feel the Lord saying to His precious ones today: *“I will never ever leave you nor forsake you. From the very moment that you placed your hand in Mine, we became One. We are in covenant through Eternity. So let me bring my restoration to the soul wounds that you carry. Let me heal your heart. I want to break off stress and anxiety, and every kind of fear from you, so let Me take your heart into mine and bring you to where I want you to be: Completely restored, completely whole, completely filled with my power and my life. You are Mine!”*

Know that you are completely safe as you rest in God and lean on Him. His healing hand is upon you. As you feed on His presence, and trust in His love, He is restoring your soul and making you whole, in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.

CHAPTER FOUR

Restored Soul (Psalm 23:3)

“He restores my soul.”

This message is an expression of the Father’s heart as He grieves with those who grieve and hurts for those who are hurting. He longs for us to be completely restored and to live in His supernatural peace, overcoming all the challenges of this earthly life. The restoration of the soul is the key to the abundant life that Jesus promised, and this is why John wrote in 3 John 2: *“Beloved I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”* John had a revelation of the fact that the condition of the soul can influence our health and that it is the restored soul that “prosper”.

Healing for the soul. The will, emotions and mind make up the soul realm, and this is where the pain of the past may be, lodged in the memories, heartaches or soul wounds which are felt by us even many years after they occurred. If you are carrying such pain in your heart, know that God sees what you have been going through, and His heart goes out to you. God’s healing hand is upon you. You may be asking yourself if it could really be this simple. Yes! While there may be deep issues concerning soul wounds, and you may have carried long term pain, **today Daddy God is calling you to let them go!** The truth is that the challenges of the past can continue to have legitimacy to hurt us today until we, in faith, decide to forgive the ones who hurt us and break the bitter cycle. So can you take a step of faith today dear friend? Can you think of the people who caused you pain, disappointment or heartbreak and forgive them? Of course it is not easy, and yes, you have every right to stay ‘hurt’ but as you decide to forgive and bless them today, the Holy Spirit is going to help you, and He will begin a restoration of your soul which will really transform your life! It will open the way to everything John prayed for in 3 John 2 – the blessing of God in “all things” of your life.

Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. While you have every right to be “hurt” and angry with someone who hurt you, the truth is that they moved on and are probably living

their lives without knowing the pain you are experiencing. When you forgive someone, you really give yourself a gift of inner healing, as the painful memory loses its power to continue to cause you grief or torment. Give yourself that gift today. Forgive and bless the ones who let you down!

Forgive yourself. Maybe you have been angry with yourself about mistakes or wrong decisions you made, but decide to forgive yourself today. Bless yourself, your life and your work. Know that God has forgiven you completely and He loves and wants to see you living in His blessing. You are opening yourself to the possibility of a restored soul, and all the joy that comes from knowing you are forgiven.

So make a mental list of the ones you need to forgive and bring them to the Lord and pray this prayer with me: *“Father God, I thank you for your complete forgiveness through the blood of Jesus. Today I choose to forgive all these people who have wronged and hurt me. I ask you to bless them and fill their lives with your joy. I also choose to forgive myself and release myself from the burden of guilt. Help me Holy Spirit to walk this out and live in Abba’s love and grace each day, in Jesus’ name, amen.”*

God has heard your prayer and agreed with it and He is ministering to your heart, filling it with His sweet peace. Take a deep breath, yield to Him and let Him restore your soul! He is doing something new in you as you step into this new season of restoration. I pray that Abba’s holy love will permeate the deepest places in your soul and kiss every wound completely whole. May you walk into all the joy that is yours in Jesus, and as John said in 3 John 2, may you prosper in “all things”, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

CHAPTER FIVE

Paths Of Righteousness (Psalm 23:3)

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

This message is a Word of love from the Shepherd’s heart. He sees and knows His sons and daughters and He delights in them. He sees our struggles, our victories and challenges. He knows how much we want to please Him, and He says today: *“Let Me help you. Let me show you how you can overcome.”* Let the Holy Spirit minister to you as He reminds us about the simple truths contained in these few words of Psalm 23.

We cannot be righteous in our own strength and with the exercise of our will power, determination, discipline etc. Neither can anyone (God or man) punish or push a person into true righteousness. Psalm 23 tells us that **“He leads us** in the paths of righteousness”. Every good choice we make, every “God” choice, is enabled, inspired and empowered by God through His sweet Spirit dwelling in us. It is the reality of the Holy Spirit living in you and me who makes it possible for us to walk in His righteousness; to say ‘no’ to what is evil and ‘yes’ to what is good.

We do not have to grit our teeth, mortify our flesh and force ourselves on. He makes it easy and enables us. What He requires from us is that we lay our striving down and allow ourselves to be led. He is calling us to learn to trust Him and listen to His voice so that He can lead us in those paths of righteousness. They are the paths that take us into all the awesome things that Daddy God has planned for each of his kids, the upward paths that lead us from strength to strength and from glory to glory. The next time you are challenged and trying to make the right choices, just ask the Holy Spirit to help you and lead you into the Father's will. He will!

His paths of righteousness. It is such a relief to know that we do not have to figure out how to please God, because He makes it clear to us in His Word. They are **His** paths of righteousness. We are told in 2 Corinthians 5:21: *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* As we enter into relationship with God through the blood of Jesus we become His righteousness. We become new creatures in Christ! (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is all about the relationship with Him and our co-operation with His loving purposes for our lives, and the more we yield to the moving of the Holy Spirit, the more we are transformed into His likeness and image. It is good news that we can receive, in faith, what we could never achieve with all our discipline and efforts. The Word of God tells us that God's thoughts are different to ours, and His ways higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). I would rather trust Him and yield to His thoughts and His way than try to make things work out my way! Righteousness is walking His way and living in unity with Him.

It is all for His name's sake. We carry the Lord's name upon our lives (Christ-ian) and therefore, everything we do (or refrain from doing) reflects back on the family Name and upon the Father who has brought us in to be His own! There may be some believers who are concerned about living up to their (earthly) family name, or about maintaining their reputation, but they may not stop to think about how much their decisions and actions may cause an impact on the name of Jesus (positively or negatively). The good news is that Papa helps us all by the power of His Spirit because we are His kids and He has promised to do so. He helps us for His name's sake, because we are a part of Him and we carry His name.

God loves you for all the efforts you have been making, but it could be that you have not seen a breakthrough because you have been battling in your own strength or relying on the arm of flesh. Whatever you are trying to overcome, yield the situation or struggle to the Holy Spirit today. James 4:7 tells us that when we submit to the Lord and say 'no' to the devil, the devil flees from us. The more you give yourself to the Holy Spirit, the more you will know victory in every area of your life. In the power of the Spirit, you are more than a conqueror and a winner. This is what Jesus died to give you – the totality of His forgiveness, healing and freedom, which is the reality of His abundant life. **Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in His paths of righteousness and He will lead you into the fullness of Abba's awesome plans for you. God loves you and wants the best for you, and His best is what you receive when you trust Him and yield yourself to Him, praying "Come Holy Spirit and fill me. I need your help today. I give myself completely to you and I trust You to give me the victory in Jesus' name, amen." He hears your prayer and He is leading you in the right direction. You are walking in the paths of His righteousness for His name's sake!**

CHAPTER SIX

You Are With Me (Psalm 23:4)

“Yea, though 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.”

The God of all comfort is reaching out to His kids today. He releases His love and kindness and the power of the Holy Spirit to break the spirits of fear and anxiety off your life. He is calling us to change our confession from fear to faith and to say “I fear no evil for You are with me”!

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He promised His disciples that He would always be with them (Matthew 28:20) through the presence of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7 and 14:16). He kept His Word. He is always with us because the precious Holy Spirit came to make Him real to us. He is our Comforter and Helper, our very present Strength.

Valleys are a part of life. Everyone has had “valley” experiences in life, some of us more than others, and some “valleys” seem to be longer and darker than others we may have passed through. Those valley experiences are all a part of this earthly life, but they can sometimes feel painful, dark, and threatening, or they may seem so permanent that the Psalmist (David) described them as the “valley of the shadow of death”. Friend, whatever you have been going through, or whatever situation you may be facing at this time, God wants you to know that it is a temporary valley you are passing through. You will soon be getting to the other side and climbing the mountain again! You need fear no harm because God has decreed that no weapon formed against you shall prosper and no tongue that rises up against you shall stand (Isaiah 54:17).

He is with you and His rod and staff are in His hands. The rod and staff of the shepherd serve many purposes. The rod is what the shepherd traditionally used to protect himself and his sheep from danger. When we pass under the rod of the Lord by the power of the cross and the blood of Jesus, we come into His protection and under His care and authority. We are numbered as one of His own. We enter into an eternal covenant with Him. (*“I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.”* Ezekiel 20:37). The staff is normally a long pole with a curved end, which the shepherd uses to pull sheep out of ditches and thorny bushes, or to bring straying lambs back into the fold. There is much we could say about the rod and staff but most of all, they represent the Father’s loving authority, and His power to protect, sustain, guide and correct us through the murky paths of this life. It makes me feel so secure to know that my Shepherd Dad walks with me always and covers me from danger and deception. When I lose my way, He reaches out His staff and brings me back on track. When the enemy comes against me with temptation or lies and accusations, the rod of my Shepherd rises up over him and drives him away. There may be daggers sent against me, in the form of cruel words or disappointments, but my Shepherd intercepts them by with a flick of His rod. He stands in front of me and protects me from the terrors of the night and the arrows that fly by day (Psalm 91:5). When I fall into a trap, or I am just too weary to carry on, He reaches down and picks me up. He

carries me in His arms until I am strong again. My Shepherd is with me and I am completely safe in His love, hallelujah!

Today our Shepherd Dad says “Do not fear for I am with you”. You may be experiencing fear and anxiety about the future, or about some difficult situation which may seem to be impossible to change. Expect your breakthrough because His rod and staff are in His hands. Perhaps you are a person who experiences fearful dreams and disturbed sleep, but God is saying to you that you can trust yourself to Him. He is extending His rod over you today and breaking the disturbances that come against your sleep. Receive His peace flowing into your sleep right now, in Jesus’ name. Receive His peace into your heart and mind. He has the future securely in His hands. You are safe with the Shepherd.

“Father God, we yield ourselves to you today. We renounce fear and anxiety, and choose to trust in You. We choose to come under Your rod and staff and give you full control over our lives. We want to feel and know the complete comfort of Your presence every day in every way. Come Holy Spirit, please fill us up and have Your way, in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.”

Do not fear; He is near!

CHAPTER SEVEN

Promise Of Promotion (Psalm 23:5)

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.”

This message is a promise of promotion! It is a word of encouragement for all Abba’s kids who have been facing challenges. You may have been feeling like you were walking through a valley of shadows, unable to see the way ahead. Perhaps it has felt like this difficult time will never end, but I have news for you! The thing about any valley is that it cannot go on forever. Valleys are the ‘low’ place between mountains and therefore, when you have walked through the length of the valley, you come to the foot of the next mountain and you begin to climb once more. There is now only one way you can go, my friend, and that is upwards, hallelujah!

Valley times may be dark, difficult and confusing, but if you have walked through this time clinging to the hand of God, and sustained by His Word, you are stepping out stronger and better, and filled with divine power. You are stepping out into a better place. God is promising to vindicate you in the sight of those who maligned and discredited you or tried to trip you up. He will promote you and cause them to watch!

When the psalmist (David) wrote “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”, he painted a picture of a person sitting to a lavish meal while surrounded by those who

were trying to take his life. It is a picture of perfect security in the face of extreme enemy activity, and this was the story of his life for the many years he lived in the desert. David knew what it was like to be hunted by his enemies and how difficult it would be to sit at a table and eat in peace unless he had an assurance of safety in the Lord. God blessed him in the face of all the attacks and treachery that surrounded him, and the Lord is doing the same for you. His favor is opening doors for you which no man can close. He is setting up divine connections and supernatural help. He is bringing you into the fullness of His plans and purposes, and calling you to a better place in the sight of those who worked against you. The people who have maligned you and tried to cut you down will have no choice but to see God blessing you and lifting you up to higher ground. You were not meant to stay in the valley. You were meant to climb up the mountain and reach the top, and there is nothing that can stop you because this is what God wants for you!

So be encouraged dear friend. Your Abba God knows just what you have been going through and He is setting you up for promotion. He has seen your faithfulness and faith, and how you held on to Jesus despite all the discouragement that came against you. You are going to experience a level of blessing that you have never known before because He has prepared a banqueting table for you in the presence of your enemies. You will have more than enough of everything you need – your cup is meant to run over. And there is more! Lift up your head and look towards Heaven, because Daddy God wants to anoint your head with the oil of His Spirit. There is an increase of the Anointing and a deeper revelation of the things of the Spirit awaiting you. You are climbing up that mountain, and heading for a higher place, hallelujah!

Dear friend, stop looking around you and hating where you are at. You are heading for better and greater things as you cooperate with the Holy Spirit and let God take you to where He has destined you to be. So how can you cooperate with the Lord? By refraining from grumbling and negative remarks, by looking ahead to everything God is doing, by staying hungry for the Presence, by feeding on the Word and believing that God has good plans for you and wants to prosper you. You are heading for higher ground! May you walk in a deeper revelation and with great hunger for Jesus always. May your cup be filled and overflow. May God Himself anoint your head with oil and lift you up, in Jesus' mighty name, Amen!

CHAPTER EIGHT

You Anoint My Head With Oil (Psalm 23:5)

“You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.”

Shepherds are supposed to take care of the needs of their sheep, and this is what our Shepherd always does. He has promised that all who hunger for Him will be filled, so if you are one of those hungry sheep, read on. This message is especially for you!

Psalm 23 contains a promise that when we make it through the valley, we go on to higher ground and a different level of anointing. After the difficult times David experienced, he had an increased revelation of the reality of God’s love and a deeper sensitivity to the presence of the Holy Spirit. How could that be? Instead of getting angry, bitter and distanced from God, he clung to the Lord and persisted in his worship. People often seek God much more when they are going through difficult times than when things are going smoothly. Although this is not an ideal situation, it positions us for promotion simply because we persisted in prayer and experienced the presence of God in a new way. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst for Him will be filled (Matthew 5:6). Jeremiah 29:13 says that the Lord is found by those who seek Him with all their hearts. To have more of the presence of God, we have to want Him and seek after Him. He promises that when we draw near to Him, He draws near to us. (James 4:8).

Friend, **if you are longing for more of the Holy Spirit** in your life, know that He feels the same way about you! God wants to bless you and fill you with His presence. He wants you to be close to Him and living in the Secret Place. He wants to anoint your head with oil. In Old Testament days, prophets, priests and kings were physically anointed with oil when they were appointed and this empowered them for the fulfillment of their calling. A horn of oil would be poured on the head of the person and it would run all the way down their body. The Lord wants to pour out His Oil on you so that it runs over into every aspect of your life – your work, home life, health, and your walk with God, as well as the ministry, finances, relationships, etc. The Holy Spirit is longing to be an active part of everything we do. He stands at the door of our lives and waits to be asked into every room of the house. He longs to be one with us, and to have us know Him as well as He knows us. When David said “You anoint my head with oil”, he knew that he had been raised up to another level in his walk with God. He had been filled and empowered.

Because he could barely contain his joy and the wonderful sense of God’s presence upon his being, David declared **“my cup runs over”**. He was experiencing the overflow of God’s goodness upon his life! When God said through the prophet Joel that he would pour out his Spirit on all flesh, He meant it. In this end time hour, He is causing His sons and daughters to know the infinite heavenly outpouring which is changing lives and bringing back a lost generation to the heart of the Father. Friend, we were meant to have a cup that runs over –

spiritually, materially, physically, and there is a heavenly key to having an overflowing cup: Giving. **The more you receive, the more you need to pass it on into someone else's life and into the Kingdom**, and this keeps the cup constantly filling up and overflowing. The Lord does not want you to just get by. He wants you to be more than abundantly supplied with everything you need, especially His presence, hallelujah!

I feel the Holy Spirit speaking to many precious people who are feeling very weary and dry. Recent battles may have left you feeling weak and empty, but Daddy God wants to anoint your head with fresh oil and pour out His precious presence upon you so that you will be charged again and filled with His fire. He asks that you yield yourself to Him and open your heart and life to the sweet saturation of the Holy Spirit, who wants to overflow you and touch lives through you. As you lift your hands, simply say "Holy Spirit come and pour Your sweet oil upon me and let it flow into every part of my body, spirit and soul. Help me to yield to You and be led by You. I need You!"

I pray today that God's mighty presence will come upon you and fill you up till your cup overflows. I pray that His powerful holy Oil will flow into you from the top of your head to the soles of your feet, releasing you from every oppression and filling you with His zoe life. I pray that you will see His hand turning things around and making everything new. God loves you so much, and He is causing you to reflect the glory of His Son. Be filled with the Spirit and walk in His power, as He anoints your head with fresh oil, in Jesus' name, amen!

CHAPTER NINE

Goodness & Mercy Are Following You! (Psalm 23:6)

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

A shepherd always protects and watches over his sheep, and our Shepherd is no different. King David experienced this first hand when he was a fugitive in the desert. Although he was pursued by his enemies, the mighty hand of God was always upon him and his enemies could not get near enough to touch him because goodness and mercy were following him!

Today, our Shepherd Dad wants His kids to know that they are covered. He walks before us and behind us. David wrote in Psalm 139:5 "*You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*" The prophet Isaiah wrote (Isaiah 58:8) "*The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard*". We often feel we have to watch our back and protect ourselves but God is reminding us that He is watching over us and all we have to do is to stay connected to Him and open to His voice because His goodness and mercy are what we can expect to see in our lives.

Perhaps you have had some bad experiences in the past, which may have seemed to follow you from place to place, or from relationship to relationship. God wants to break you free from that negative cycle, so that you will live in the expectation of His goodness and mercy always. Decide to forgive and move on! Or perhaps you have been focusing on the mistakes of the past and are plagued by guilt and regret. Know that the blood of Jesus has cleansed you and God has forgiven you. I declare His peace and His forgiveness upon your heart and mind today, in Jesus' mighty name! No more fear, no more looking over your shoulder. The Lord is with you, close by you and behind you, and He will never leave you.

So, how was David able to confess God's goodness when he was in the midst of great difficulties? Read on!

Positive expectation: David always expected God to come through for him, and to be his rear guard. This was his experience many times, when the Lord would intervene and reveal the plots of his enemies. To change a recurring negative situation in our lives, the first step is to change our expectation. Know without any doubts that God has good plans for you and that He desires to protect you and prosper you. Know also that although He does work all things together for our good (Romans 8:28) none of the bad situations you faced were from Him. Too many children of God believe that God sends them through pain and difficulties just to teach them something. Far more than any earthly parent, He is a loving, merciful, tender Father and He wants to see His kids overcoming the tricks and trials of the enemy and living in the fullness of His blessing. Begin to change your expectations dear friend, because we usually receive what we believe for in life. David had a positive expectation and saw this fulfilled by the Lord each time.

Positive confession: David experienced many challenges but his declaration was of the goodness of God. He declared that goodness and mercy were following him and this is exactly what he saw. Our Shepherd Dad wants us to change our confession. Begin to declare **His** Word over your life, rather than **your** words, and you will begin to see many things change around you. Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21), and you will step into what you declare, whether it is good or bad. When we declare what is in the Father's heart for us, angels are mobilized to bring those words to pass. On the contrary, our negative or fear filled confessions have the opposite effect. God's Word is settled forever in heaven ((Psalm 119:89) and when we declare it in faith, it becomes a reality in our lives just as it is a reality in heaven.

Precious child of the King of kings, the Lord wants you to know how loved and cherished you are. He only has good plans for you and thinks good thoughts towards you (Jeremiah 29:11). He has dreams in His heart for you and wants to see them fulfilled. We may have grieved the heart of God multiple times and not deserved all His love and forgiveness, but we are still the recipients of His overflowing grace and tenderness. This is His goodness. This is His mercy. He never holds back and just pours it out upon us. His goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and the more we believe and expect, the more we will see the favor of Daddy God manifested in multiple ways each day.

Begin to expect His best and call it forth. Begin to walk in the abundance of the Father's love. He has great things in store for you. His goodness and mercy are following you!

CHAPTER TEN

Dwelling In The Presence (Psalm 23:6)

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”

This message is an invitation from the heart of the Shepherd as He calls His sheep to dwell in the fullness of His presence.

Although things got pretty bad for David, he constantly recognized the goodness and mercy of God in his life because he lived in the reality of God's presence. He knew that God was his source and supply and that his blessing came from this place of overflowing. David never wanted to be parted from the presence of the Lord, so he said “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” In Psalm 84, David said “How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty, My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord.” He said: “One day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere”. More than anything else, David loved the presence of God and constantly longed for more. It was this Presence he loved which manifested through his life and brought him victory over Goliath and numerous other foes.

Dear friend, this world can be a lonely place when we walk through life without the Presence, but I believe that the Lord is calling us into deeper levels of fellowship and oneness with Him. He is looking for friends who will connect to Him heart to heart and spirit to Spirit; people who desire to fellowship with Him as much as He desires to be with them. He is looking for hearts who are constantly tuned in to His voice, not just for the sake of ministry but to know Him better and hear the beating of His heart. The Holy Spirit longs to be known for who He is – the most awesome and wonderful companion and friend, the third person of the Trinity, and the infinite power of God, who has chosen to live with us and in us. He truly is God Emmanuel and He is looking for a resting place!

There are many believers who do not seek more of the Holy Spirit because they have become content with where they are spiritually. There is nothing wrong with being content but God has so much more for you! Today, the voice of the Lord is calling you into the inner courts and into His secret chamber. Not everyone gets to enter in, only those who truly seek Him with all their hearts; those who are in love with the Prince of peace. (1 Chronicles 28:9 & Jeremiah 29:13).

David's need for God was so great that he confessed in Psalm 84 that his very flesh cried out for the presence of the Lord. His body felt the need for God as much as (maybe more than) the need for food or drink. God is calling us into a David-type reawakening and revival in this season, and (for some of us) back into our first love, where His presence was the most precious thing we knew. To others He gives an invitation to know His presence and to fall in love! The King of Love wants to put His ring on your finger and draw you deep into His heart. He is calling you into intimacy so you can hear His whispers and know His sweet embrace. Will you step in, dear friend? Will you draw nearer? Will you resolve to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever” and live daily in His presence? There is far more for you than you have been walking in, and Jesus

calls you into that deeper place today. Just yield to the Holy Spirit and ask Him for a holy hunger. He is already ministering to your need!

I pray today that anything and everything that keeps you from the fullness of the presence of God will be removed from your life. May every distraction and disturbance be bound and cast out. May every lie of the enemy be broken off your mind and heart. May you draw nearer and ever nearer, and lose yourself in the endless love of Abba God, by the power of His Holy Spirit, in Jesus' mighty name, amen!

References

No commentaries or references have been used for these messages which were a gift from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. All references were taken from the New King James Version of the Bible, Thomas Nelson Inc, 1994.

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