

Psalms 19-01-17b

Let's resume our study now in Psalm 23, we're just about halfway through, and we've seen that not only does God provide our spiritual nourishment, not only does He provide refreshment and restoration and cleansing, but He brings us into the fellowship, into the encampment, into the assembly area of righteousness. Those who love righteousness, those who are characterized by God's justice, recognizing the perfection of God's plan and purpose are going to be there, and we will be one of that number. And like any flock or herd animal, it is comforting and encouraging and restorative to be in that number.

Even when the saints go marching in, He doesn't say, I want to go marching in all by my lonesome, does He? He says, all of the saints are going to be marching in, and I want to be one of that number. And we cannot function well in lone wolf mode. We are designed to be in fellowship.

We have difficulty fulfilling any of the more than five dozen one another commands in the New Testament if there's not another that we are one with. So this is a significant and helpful recognition, that this isn't just merely a trench or a path. I've got perfectly good words for roads and paths.

This is an assembly area. This is a place where you put your stuff down, you take off your pack, and you take refreshment, and you rest. Then He says in verse four, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. This is a very familiar phrase, the valley of the shadow of death. Obviously, the shadow of death means that death is near.

If you're in a shadow, something is close by. You remember Psalm 91 that we memorized together? He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. If you're in His secret place, His special location, and you're in His shadow, God is near.

Unless it is very close to sunrise or sunset on a cloudless day, you've got to be close to something to be in its shadow. One of my favorite songs to hate is The Best Love of All is Loving Yourself, and The Wind Beneath My Wings. It must have been cold there in my shadow.

Oh, well, don't let me get started. But you would have to be close to somebody. I like to call that song The Air Beneath My Armpits.

It must be cold there in my shadow because I'm soaking up all the warmth for myself. At any rate, the shadow here means that the presence of death is close at hand. And the valley means that visibility is limited.

These are fairly obvious things to note. If you're traveling in a narrow way and the light is not

able to penetrate, you feel danger near at hand. There is a commentary on Psalms written by a man named Briggs who says, The hill country of Judah is broken up by narrow and precipitous ravines or wadis, difficult to descend and ascend, dark, gloomy, abounding in caves, the abode of wild beasts and robbers.

And I understand from many sources that this is true. David knew this terrain intimately, knew the places that should be avoided because of those dangers. And yet I'm sure there were occasions where he had to take his flocks through there to get from one place to another.

And it was inevitable. So we're talking about things that are giving the potential for death or injury. But again, this is a metaphor and it's talking about the spiritual realm.

What is the shadow of death in spiritual terms? More so than feeling that we are in mortal physical danger, we can have a dread. We can have the sense that we are under assault by those principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age that oppress us and that oppose us and that often seem to be active in people and circumstances around us. And you can have a healthy sense of spiritual dread.

Look at the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was in the Father's plan. He had done no wrong.

There was no fault. He committed no sin. And yet He was troubled.

He had just told His disciples a few hours earlier, Let not your hearts be troubled. But Scripture says He was troubled in His spirit and prayed to His Father, Deliver me from this hour. It's not a sin to feel that oppression.

But we know where to turn. And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. The word valley here is often construed, it's very close to the word for darkness.

And some translators and some word mechanics in Hebrew see in this the darkness of death. Sheol was thought to be a dark and shadowy abode. And the terrors of thick darkness are something that are discussed in Scripture.

Job 24.17, the morning is the same as the shadow of death. If someone recognizes them, they are in terrors of the shadow of death. It's mentioned twice in Job 24.17. Jeremiah in Jeremiah 13.16 says, Give glory to the Lord your God before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.

And while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness. It is found in Job 10.21. He says, Before I go to the place from which I shall not return to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. And so the possibility of death, the fact of death, death around us, death in our periphery, is certainly in view.

The land of darkness, the valley of death darkness, might be a rather vivid way to translate it.

Why is it that David has no fear? For you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Now, pop quiz.

What do you notice here? There is a detail of form that you can easily see if you have your glasses on and your thinking cap planted firmly on your head. And it has to do with person in the grammatical sense. How did David begin this psalm? How does he talk about God? What person? He maketh me.

He leadeth me. He restores. What person is that? Third person.

I'm the first person. You are the second person. He, she, and it are the third person, right? So David began and has consistently used the third person all the way through verse 1, verse 2, verse 3 and then in verse 4 he says, Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, thou art with me.

As I've mentioned before, this is one of the deplorable things that's happened in English is we used to have a perfectly good way of distinguishing the singular and the plural second person pronoun because if you were talking to a single individual, it was thou. Thou art. Thou wert.

And so on. And if you were talking to more than one, it was you. And the King James is helpful, especially in the New Testament.

If he says, for example, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, well he's talking about you individually or you as a group. Well, in the King James, it's you. And that means he's talking plural.

The pronoun is plural. I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. That's the second person singular.

Thou. The. I pray thee.

You, an individual. Anyway, you have a change here. Why? Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Now, what did we have in the previous verse that I was at great pains to point out? You will lead me to the encampment of righteousness, the place where the righteous come and dwell and pitch their tents and lay out their sleeping mats and so on. Now, where is he? Even though I'm not in the camp of the righteous, even though I'm not in the lush green meadows, feasting on the grass, even though I'm not beside the still waters, being refreshed and restored and cleansed, even though I'm not in the place where you are renewing me, I am now in a narrow place. Valley here is a narrow place, a tight spot.

And I'm in the proximity of the darkness of death. But I will not fear calamity. I will not fear evil.

Why? I'm not looking around for the comfort of the flock. I'm not being refreshed and renewed and restored with water and grass. What is it? You can pretty much only get visibility in one direction, and that's up.

And in the shadow, David looks up and he says, Now I'm talking to you, O my shepherd. You are with me. When I am tempted to be, and these sheep, animals have a sense of danger.

I was pointing out, I had the privilege of being a chicken farmer in my earlier life, but Patty has just recently begun to enjoy that same experience and observing the chickens seemingly bursting into a run and fleeing under the deck or around the house or whatever for no apparent reason. And I said, Look up. Well, here's a hawk.

Here's an owl. Here's something that they construe as a danger, and rightfully so. This is how they continue to live.

The ones that have continued to live, our numbers have dwindled from an original 21 to 15, actually 16 if you count the rooster. But they have a healthy sense of danger. They've got an instinctive knowledge that something can potentially get them.

And what do they do? They are programmed to hide themselves, to get undercover, to get out of sight, to be out of the path where a swooping flying predator can sink its talons into them and carry them off or break their neck and pick them to pieces. So I will fear no calamity. This is not evil in the moral sense.

This is calamity. I am not going to come to some calamitous end. There's not going to be a disaster.

It can be a disaster in the spiritual realm, but this is not I will fear no moral evil so much as when God says, I form light and create darkness, I produce good and create evil. This is calamity. And in the context of this traverse, this dangerous valley, this is evil in the sense of harm, of something bad happening.

It can certainly stand in for the operations of the powers of darkness. But I will fear no calamity because you are with me. Now, how close is he? We know that death is near at hand.

The shadow is being cast. The darkness of death is blocking a lot of the light and a lot of the visibility. But he says, I'm not afraid of calamity because you are with me.

What's the next thing he says? Your rod and your staff comfort me. And there is an emphatic here, the word they. It's much as when you have the first person pronoun repeated when it's implicit in the verb.

Comfort is already in a third person plural here, but you have an emphatic idea. Your rod and your staff, they are what comforts me. You would say, you are with me, and that is comfort in the sense of presence.

But aside from all the other technicalities of a rod and a staff and the difference between them and what they're used for and everything else, what's the one thing you can say about a rod and a staff when it comes to a shepherd and his sheep? They're not just waved. They contact

the sheep. These are points of contact.

The shepherd is not necessarily going to reach out with his hand to protect them as they traverse this. There's a lot of sheep there, but what can he do? He is near in hand, but the rod and the staff are contact. That's a thump on the head.

That's a crook pulling you out of a crevasse or going down a wrong path or getting into the brambles and the thorns or fleeing into a cave and getting eaten by whatever dwells in there. It's contact. The rod and the staff connect the shepherd to the sheep, and that's why he says, they, these two pieces of wood, comfort me.

I am comforted not just by the presence, which is real. I'm not going to fear because of the presence. I'm going to be comforted.

Lack of fear, it's like that negative at the beginning. I will experience no lack. Well, I will experience no fear because of God's presence.

I'm not going to fear evil, but I'm going to be actively comforted and encouraged by these contact points, the rod and the staff. The word rod here is shiv, shivit, shivtikah, your rod. You wonder if our word for thin knife, a shiv, something to stab with, might have derived somehow from Yiddish and back to Hebrew.

But shivit here has the notion, the verb form that this noun comes from, it means to strike, to smite, actually to strike and kill, to slay a thing by striking. But it is, although it has the potential, it's kind of like an ornamental sword. It's a stabbing and slashing weapon, but in the military today it's more symbolic and ornamental and marks out those who hold an officer rank and so on or an NCO rank.

But this word is used in Leviticus 27.32. Remember when Scripture talks about the flock, the tithe of the herd or the flock, whatever passes under the rod I will cause you to pass under the rod. That's this word. So it's used for judgment.

I'm going to tap some and send them away. I'm going to allow others to pass under and to go in. I'm sorting the sheep with this rod.

I tap some on the bottom and they go forward. I tap others on the shoulder and they go away. I'm putting the sheep here and the goats here.

My rod is a rod of discernment. It is a rod of sorting and counting. In Ezekiel 20.37 he uses a similar phrase.

I will make you pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And if you read the context in Ezekiel 20 for that verse 37, you find out that this prohibits some from entering and allows others. To bring them into the bond of the covenant, what does he have to do? Those who are inveterate covenant breakers are not going to go in.

He will bring the nation of Israel into the bond of the covenant by only allowing those into the land and into the nation and into the millennial Jerusalem who are covenant keepers, who are faithful. So I will cause you to pass under the rod. Well, guess what? This rod, David says, is a source of comfort.

The staff is a word, sha'an. So there's the Shabbat and the sha'an. And this staff is something you lean on.

Leaning on his staff. This is the prop. This is your walking stick.

This is what stabilizes the shepherd in many cases. And it's for both support and protection. You know, a lot of these walking sticks had a sword inside or had a knob on top and you could grab the thing and bonk somebody on the head if they give you trouble.

So you find in Zechariah 8, verse 4, Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand, because of great age. So it's a support if you're the one holding it. Of course, this particular shepherd doesn't need to support himself with a staff.

So what is he using it for? He's using it as a, it accompanies him. It's his badge of identification. You see the shepherd and he's got his shepherd's staff.

And he can also use it as a weapon. He can use it for the defense of the sheep. I say again, he can use it as a defense.

Where is David traveling now? Where is he located? Valley of the shadow, darkness of death. I fear no calamity. Your presence is with me.

Your rod and your staff comfort me. The rod is a tool of guidance. I'll keep you on the path that will get you safely through this difficulty.

The staff is the shepherd's weapon against adversary, against threat, against that which might come in and harm the sheep. God doesn't need the staff to support himself. And this shepherd is not old.

This is his badge. And it is also his actual defensive weapon. Defensive weapon, keep that thought.

Defensive weapon. They comfort me. They comfort me.

Now, all the way up to this point, we've sustained, as I said before the break, the shepherd and sheep metaphor. Suddenly, without warning, without clue, without preparation of any kind, he says, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil.

My cup runs over. This is commonly understood to have now abandoned the sheep and

shepherd idea and to be talking about David himself as an individual. Now, I don't know about you, but ever since I first heard the 23rd Psalm as a little kid, when you get to this verse, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, I get this vivid mental picture.

There is a vast plain, and the enemies are arrayed at some distance in chariots with spears and flags and ram's horns and shields. They're arrayed. The enemies are out there.

I'm in the presence of these enemies, and it's just a vast horde. God takes me and sits me in my little spot in the plain at a table. Here's my enemies, horses snorting, pawing the dirt, and God sets the table and says, Sit down and eat.

And I've never been able to... I've heard everything. I've read everything. I know what everybody says about this.

I just can't get that to lay down unwrinkled in my mind. How could I digest? How could I savor and enjoy? I would have to be a person of such great faith that it doesn't say God will hold the enemies at bay while I eat. It just says, here's my enemies surrounding me, and time to eat.

This is the same David that said, Blessed be the Lord who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight. If there's enemies out there, I'm in the Lord's army. I'm in artillery and cavalry and the rest of it.

Here's the enemies. I just... I've never personally been able to be utterly reconciled to that. And it could just be me.

But perhaps because of that, I looked very closely at this statement. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. The word for table is in Hebrew, Shulchan.

Shulchan. S-H-U-L-C-H-A-N. Shulchan.

And oddly enough, it means table. The next word in the sentence begins with the letter N, which is the same letter that ends the word Shulchan. So, in the presence of is neged.

N-E-G-E-D. So we have Shulchan neged. You prepare a table in the presence of my enemies.

Shulchan neged. N-N. Here is the proposal.

It's not original to me, but I like it. That early on in the transmission of this psalm, this N may have gotten doubled. And there shouldn't be two N's there.

There should only be one. You can imagine if somebody is reading a text out loud, and others are writing it down, and you say Shulchan neged, Shulchan neged, that you might think, especially based on the verb to prepare or whatever, that this is table. And it well could be.

It may actually be table. I'm not saying it isn't. Let me just tell you a possibility, and you can throw it in the hopper and see what you think.

Let's begin with the first word, which is you prepare. You prepare. This is arak, A-R-A-K.

And it means to arrange or set in order. It is almost always in scripture used for arraying battle. The first time you find it is in Genesis chapter 14, verse 8. You remember this is in the career of Abraham and the armies that are arrayed for battle, Genesis 14, 8. It is also used in Genesis 22, verse 9, for Abraham up on the mountain with Isaac, arranging the wood.

So you can organize, you can order, you can arrange your armies, you can order, you can organize, you can arrange wood on the altar for burning. It means to take things and put them in a desired order, in a beneficial arrangement. In Exodus, talking about the priests and the sons of Aaron, Exodus 27, 21.

Aaron and his sons are going to keep it in order. So it means to take things and put them in a particular order. And it is often used of arraying or arranging troops for battle.

It is used for arranging wood on the altar, arranging the pieces, Leviticus chapter 1, verses 7 and 8 and 12 all use this word in the context of sacrifice. And throughout Leviticus it is used for keeping things orderly when it comes to sacrifice and the functions within the tabernacle. So why do we care about that? Well, let's keep going in the verse.

You arrange, you set in order for me or before my face. Le'pane here literally means to or for or before my face. Pan is face.

You arrange before me. Shulkan negid tzorai, in the presence of my enemies. If there is an extra N there and we take it out, this becomes the word for a spear, a javelin, or a weapon in general.

You order, you prepare before my face weapons in the presence of my enemies. Now, me personally, and you can't go to the versions and say, yeah, see, look, the Septuagint sees it the same way. If this was a change, it was very early on, and this is purely conjecture.

But based on the context, if I'm in the presence of my enemies, what do I want in front of me? You order in front of me weapons in the presence of my adversaries. Do you want a table or do you want adversaries in the presence of your enemies? You take the table, I'm taking the weapons, the weapons of God. God arranges weapons.

And keeping with the metaphor here, remember in the previous verse he had the staff that comforts? It's a defensive weapon against adversaries, against danger, against evil and calamity. Here, continuing that thought, possibly, you arrange in front of me weapons in the presence of my adversaries. Adversaries is also a very interesting word here.

This is the word sarar as a verb, which means to bind, to tie up. Now, I see here a beautiful word play because David has just talked about the rod and the staff that are made of wood. And then he uses the word arrange.

And then, keeping in mind that David has pictured himself as the sheep and God as the shepherd, instead of arranging the wood on the altar and turning the sheep into a sacrifice, he is arranging these wooden weapons. The javelins were made of wood in those days. The spears were made of wood.

And the rod and the staff are made of wood. But you deploy these in front of me. You arrange them, not like wood for the altar, and I'm going to be consumed, but in the presence of my adversaries.

And the word adversary here is unusual. There are plenty of words in Hebrew for enemy, two or three really good ones that are commonly used. But this word comes from the word that means to be hostile, to bind, to restrict, to cramp, to confine.

Those who put me in a bind is what it literally means. Those that oppress in the sense of, I'm pressed because I'm wrapped up. They wrap me up.

What do you do with a sacrifice when you arrange the wood and you put it on the altar? Bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar. And so David is using all of these words that apply to sacrifice. Bind, wood, arrange.

You've got the sheep here. But instead of being bound and arranged for sacrifice, those who would bind him and produce calamity and harm, these hostiles, these adversaries, when they are present, God turns this arrangement of wood into a defense. The rod, the staff, and, in my view, these weapons, are put between hostile adversaries and me, David says.

You can easily remember everything you've ever heard about God causing you to be relaxed and have a big meal in the presence of your enemies, and I have no argument with that. But I will tell you that I personally think that we've got one extra letter here. It's just a little stroke with a couple of edges on it that's a noon.

And it could have just as easily been a wow or not been there at all and be translated even. You arrange these even in the presence of my adversaries. And it makes more sense to me.

It just semantically and in the flow of ideas, and guess what? We haven't left the sheep metaphor. The adversaries of the sheep, the shepherd is there with three different kinds of protection. He's got the rod and the staff that both comfort the sheep.

The staff can also serve as a defensive weapon. And he's got another weapon. He's got a pointy stick or spear or some sort of a weapon that he is going to stand between the adversary and his sheep.

And it is the presence of God. It is the power of God. It is the tools that God uses to protect his sheep.

You prepare a defense. You prepare defensive weapons between me and my adversary. And it

says here, you anoint my head with oil.

Now, you remember words associated with anointing, right? Who is the anointed in Israel? What's he called? The Mashiach, right? The Messiah is the anointed one. Christ is the Greek translation of that. This is not the word for anointing that means to anoint with oil in the sense of commissioning as a king or some other priest or whatever.

This word for anoint means to rub into for comfort, for medicine, for benefit, for the shine. This is to, not so much, anoint is really not a good, but you rub into, you apply for cosmetic reasons this oil. Now, are we talking about a person? You can easily understand the anointing of Samuel on David.

David has experienced this, no doubt, by the time he wrote this psalm. You anoint my head with oil and he could be referring back to his anointing as king. But if he is sticking with the sheep metaphor here, sheep, special sheep, prized sheep, just as they do today, show animals and so on, are groomed.

And they would take oil which cleansed and brought out the luster and the sheen and the luxurious fullness of their wool, their hair, their fur, whatever it is they have. And also, if a sheep had gotten injured on its face or whatever, if it got bonked on the head, maybe the shepherd had to bonk it really hard with the rod and the staff, and it's got a little bump there, well, you rub a little bit of salve, a little bit of oil into the head. So it is possible.

I'm not saying it is, I'm just suggesting it's an interesting path to follow. If David is not abandoning the metaphor with which he began the psalm, then these things can easily be understood as a continuation. And these are things the shepherd does for his charge, his sheep.

And he defends them. You know what this is like if you've ever groomed your pet, your dog or whatever you may have, and you're stroking their fur, you're rubbing medicine into a sore place or a place where they've gotten injured or maybe where they've chewed a hole in their own hide. We've done this innumerable times.

Working with their ears or their face where they've gotten, we've had dogs get snake bit and so on, but I don't so much see that here as anointing the head with oil. This is a sign of, regardless of how you take it, favor and personal attention. And the presence that we saw earlier that is in the vicinity and the contact point is the rod and the staff.

Well, you don't rub anointing oil into the head. And whatever else you want to say, this is not pouring the oil on the head, as was done for ceremonial anointing. This is massaging into the head.

This word strongly connotes manual manipulation of the oil into the head. This is massaging it. This is spending time in close personal hand-to-head contact.

That's what it means. It's not a pouring. It is a close personal application.

So the presence of the shepherd has moved from a rod's distance or a staff distance to hands-on. And not just a pat on the rear, but all of the comfort and all of the intimacy that is associated with this luxurious application of oil to the head. You anoint, you apply with love and tenderness oil to my head.

That's about the best way I can express it. There are more graphic ways that some of the lexicons will talk about the way this word is used. It has a very sensual connotation, is what I'll say.

But it's close personal contact, not standing at a distance and dumping it. Then he says, my cup runs over. My cup runs over.

Cup is a normal word. It's got the possessive suffix on it. But the word for running over means saturation.

And it doesn't so much mean that it is overflowing as it means it is as full as it can get. Something saturated is holding as much as it can hold. So there's not spillage here.

There's not a mess being made. But the cup is as full as it can be. And it actually comes from the same root as Ruach, which is breath.

Or that which something is imbued with, that fills you. You are filled with the Ruach Chaim, the spirit of life, the breath of life. And so this fullness is a picture of, and you get the idea that this cup is his capacity, right? And it would be a metaphor even for, if you don't abandon the sheep and shepherd picture, and it's a figure of speech that means I could not be more fully blessed.

I could not be more fully blessed. My cup is at the very brim. Does not mean to run over.

It means to be utterly full, full to the maximum. Then he closes with, Surely goodness and Chesed, loyal love, grace, Tov and Chesed will follow me all the days of my life. What usually follows after the sheep? It's the shepherd, right? And mercy doesn't exist in the abstract.

It's not a cloud that passes by and drops rain of benefit. For there to be mercy, there has to be a merciful one, right? For there to be goodness, there has to be a source of that goodness. This isn't goodness personified or mercy personified.

What is he saying? My merciful and good shepherd. My faithfully loving and intrinsically good shepherd will follow me. The goodness and mercy here belongs to someone.

It belongs to God. It belongs to the shepherd. So Tov and Chesed will follow me.

And this literally means something that is behind, something that pursues. It's used for pursuing someone. When Jeroboam or Jehu or one of these guys is pursuing somebody to take them out or down, it doesn't just aimlessly ramshackle along behind.

It doesn't sort of follow the trail at a distance. This means it's right at my heels. It's right behind me.

It's following close after. This word is even used in some context meaning to persecute. But of course, if it's goodness and mercy persecuting you, is that a problem? Persecution is something you just can't seem to escape.

You can't get away from it. Well, David sort of smilingly I think uses this word. The goodness and mercy of my shepherd is right behind me.

All the days of my life. Right behind me. All the days.

The word for day here is yom. Y-O-M. This is yom in the sense of evening and morning, day one in Genesis chapter one.

And of course, days are put for some indefinite period of time. You wouldn't press it and say each of the days of your life. But all of the span.

All of the time of my life. And I will dwell. I will abide.

I will sit. I will remain. Sit down in the house of the Lord.

And you might think that this is la'olam, forever. But it's not. How long is the good and merciful shepherd going to persecute and follow right behind all the days of his life? And I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as la'orech.

It's used for length. It's used for physical length. To the length of days.

Yomim, yomim is the final word of the psalm. It's days. Now, why is that significant? What is David talking about here? During the days that he is a sheep and has the shepherd.

During the days that there's a possibility going through the valley of the shadow. During the time when you can be in the presence of adversaries. None of that is going to pertain forever.

Right? But so long as I have my days. Sadly, for a lot of sermons and a lot of points of application. This is not talking about David saying, one of these days I'm going to be resurrected and dwell in God's presence forever.

He says, I will dwell in the earthly house. The Beit. Beit Lechem is where he's from.

The house of bread. But I will be in the dwelling place of God for the length of my days. As long as I live.

And that's really the best translation. I will dwell in the house of the Lord. I will sit down and abide.

I will be safe and secure. I will be fed, sheltered, nurtured, comforted, encouraged,

strengthened, renewed. That's what happens in God's house for the length of my days.

As long as I live. So forever, cross it out. It doesn't say forever.

It's got a perfectly good forever in Hebrew. It's not here. This is for the length of days.

And my isn't even there. It just says, for whatever days I have, that's how long the good and merciful shepherd will follow hard after me. And I will dwell in his dwelling place.

His house. For all those days. Whatever length.

He's referring back to the yom earlier in the verse. The days of my life. For whatever days I have in this life, I'm going to be under God's roof, so to speak.

Well, wonderful psalm. Hopefully a few fresh ideas to think about here. But what a wonderful encouragement to see the constant presence, the provision, the power, the ongoing presence of the shepherd for David and by extension for us.

It is a comfort. And to recognize these great provisions of God are ours specifically and particularly in our age and in our time through the Lord Jesus Christ. And the things that were wonderful in the Old Testament are surpassingly wonderful in this age because they are augmented by the fulsomeness of God's word, by the presence and power of God's spirit, by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if these things were true for David in his day, how much greater and exponentially fulsome are they for us? Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for these wonderful revelations and insights into the relationship that you claim for your people, the watch care and the grace and goodness that you express toward each one of us. We thank you for your word.

We thank you for your spirit. We pray that as we reflect on these things that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to each heart in a way that is an encouragement and motivation and a challenge to redeem the time and to make the most of the days that remain to us here so that we are prepared for service and function and reflecting your glory in the ages that are to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.