

## IN PASTURES OF PERFECT REST

### PART 2 OF PSALM 23

This most quoted Psalm has so many hidden truths missed on surface level. It is a wonderful experience to travel slowly through its verses and discover its hidden treasures ...

#### Psalm 23:1-2 **SLIDE**

*The Lord is my **Shepherd** ... <sup>2</sup>He makes me to lie down in green pastures...*

It's interesting where this psalm sits in the list of the psalms.

It comes after Psalm 22.

Psalm 22 used to be called, '**THE PSALM OF THE CROSS**'. It begins with Jesus' cry from the cross '*My God ... why have you forsaken me*'.

It is a prophetic Psalm about Jesus, the suffering Saviour, who died for our sins.

**THERE ARE NO GREEN PASTURES HERE IN PSALM 22 ... NO STILL WATERS ... NO TABLE OF THE LORD ... OR OVERFLOWING CUPS.** Up until verse 21 there is just the judgement and death of the sacrificial Lamb, for us. It is a dark psalm ...

**BUT THIS IS THE COST THAT HAD TO BE PAID TO BRING YOU AND ME TO PSALM 23 ... THIS IS THE COST THAT WAS PAID TO GIVE US OUR NEW SHEEP NATURE ...**

**AND A NEW SHEEP NATURE WE HAVE.**

We were once goats ... but now we've had a dramatic change of nature.

We've been radically changed from a goat nature to a sheep nature.

(See the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats – Matthew 25:31-46 and also [Psalm 79:13](#) and [Psalm 95:7](#).)

#### Psalm 100:3 **SLIDE**

*Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; **we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.***

A 'sheep' is a symbol of a believer in Jesus Christ ...

**SO PSALM 23 STARTS AFTER WE HAVE BEEN SAVED** AND WE HAVE A NEW NATURE IN CHRIST. Psalm 23 is written about the people who are **no longer sinners** but have been born again with a new nature – people who are 'His sheep'.

**PASLM 23 ALSO INTRODUCES US TO THE SHEPHERD ... NOT TO THE SAVIOUR.**  
**FOR PSALM 23 TO BE APPLICABLE OR INDEED RELEVANT ... WE MUST FIRST HAVE HAD AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE SAVIOUR ...**

THE SAVIOUR BRINGS US SALVATION. HE BOUGHT IT FOR US ... HE BROUGHT IT TO US.

THE SHEPHERD'S WORK BEGINS AFTER WE'RE SAVED ... NOT TO GET US SAVED.

**NOW AS NEWLY BORN LAMBS WE NEED A SHEPHERD & JESUS BECOMES THAT SHEPHERD.**

**Revelation 7:17** Berean Study Bible

*For the Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

### **THE SHEPHERD ONLY RELATES TO OUR NEW (SHEEP) NATURE.**

He doesn't have anything to do with our old sinful nature because this has GONE.

Romans 6:6

*Knowing this, that our **Old Man was crucified** with Him (Jesus) ...*

Romans 6:11 Darby Bible

*... Reckon yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God ...*

### **THE SHEPHERD AWAKENS US TO A NEW DAY ...**

Not only do we have a new nature ... we have also been born again into a new day ... into a new and living way ...

Hebrews 10:20 NLT **SLIDE**

*By his death, **Jesus opened a new and life-giving way** through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.*

Romans 6:4 God's Word Translation **SLIDE**

*... [Just] as Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life.*

### **THE QUESTION IS ... HOW DO WE LIVE THIS NEW LIFE?**

It's one thing to be born again into a new life ... **but how do we live in it?**

*So many of us have struggled for so many years trying to live the new life.*

***Many have** fumbled around ... fallen down ... got back up ... tried again ... failed again ...*

*And many at this point just give up ... being sick and tired of walking around in circles ... **ending up where they first began** ...*

Why? Because ... **WE'VE NEVER BEEN TAUGHT WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO GO IT ALONE!**  
**WE HAVE A SHEPHERD WHO IS HERE TO LEAD & FEED US PERSONALLY IN OUR NEW LIFE.**

*Some of us have been taught to live by principles and programs which may have worked for a while but left us empty and still struggling on the inside ...*

### **WE DON'T LIVE BY PRINCIPLES & PROGRAMS ... WE LIVE BY A PERSON -**

THE PERSON OF THE SHEPHERD HIMSELF ...

## **SO, THE SHEPHERD CALLS US TO HIMSELF AT THE START OF THE DAY**

*In Israel, early in the morning ... **at the start of a new day** ... the shepherd stands at the gate of the sheepfold and calls all His sheep by name and they gather around Him. Here he begins to lead them. They are full of excitement. **They know this voice** ... They have heard it before when they were born again.*

### **JOHN 5:25**

*Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the [spiritually] dead will hear **the voice of the Son of God**; and those who hear will live.*

### **John 10:4 NIV**

*When he has brought out all who are **his own**, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because **they know his voice**.*

**HIS VOICE OF CALM & ASSURANCE... I LOVE YOU! I UNDERSTAND YOU! I AM WITH YOU.**  
**... Gentle ... full of compassion ... never angry ...**

## **THE PRIORITY OF PASTURES**

So, when we finally come to a point where we realise **WE CANNOT LIVE THIS LIFE BY OURSELVES** ...

When we see the Shepherd is here to lead and feed us ... AND ... we submit to His ways ...

HE LEADS US FIRSTLY TO A PROFOUND PLACE ... THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE ...

**HE LEADS US TO GREEN PASTURES.**

## **GOAT-FLESH OR SHEEP-NATURE**

DO WE NOW ALLOW OUR GOAT-FLESH OR OUR SHEEP-NATURE TO LEAD US?  
GOAT-FLESH LEADS AWAY FROM THE SHEPHERD AND INTO INDEPENDENCE.  
SHEEP NATURE BRINGS US GLADLY TO THE SHEPHERD IN TRUST ...

*SOME OF US HAVE STUMBLERD INTO THESE GREEN PASTURES ...*

*WE'VE HAD TASTES OF THEM ...*

*BUT STILL SELF-WILLED, WE'VE TRUDGED THROUGH THEM ONTO WHAT WE BELIEVE WAS MORE IMPORTANT ... INTO WHAT I'M GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ... WHAT I AM GOING TO BE ...*

**PERSUING POSTION ... POWER ... PRESTIGE ... PROMINANCE ...**

*WE'VE TRAMPLED THROUGH LIKE TOURISTS ... TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE.*

**THIS IS THE GOAT FLESH** which doesn't understand or appreciate lying down in green pastures with the Shepherd ...

*Following the Goat-flesh, we can end up fallen down a ravine ...  
And the Shepherd comes and carries us back to the flock and the green pastures ...*

*However, your new sheep nature is gentle ... It is sensitive ... It needs to, wants to rest and feed in these green pastures ...*

FRIENDS ... **DON'T RUN OFF WITH THE GOATS ... LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMBS** ...  
YOU HAVE A NEW NATURE NOW & THERE IS A NEW WAY OF LIVING ... AND THAT IS WITH THE SHEPHERD

**SO WE ARRIVE AT THE GREEN PASTURES AND THE SHEPHERD MAKES US LIE DOWN**

**SLIDE HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES**

**Ezekiel 34:14-15** Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

*'I will feed them in good pasture, and the lofty mountains of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in a good grazing land; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.  
<sup>15</sup>I will tend My flock and make them lie down', declares the Lord GOD.*

**HE DOESN'T STIR US UP! HE CALMS US DOWN!  
WHAT IS THIS LYING DOWN?**

**HERE'S THE LOW-DOWN ON THE LIE-DOWN**

**IT MEANS REST ... TO COME INTO REST ... THE ULTIMATE REST ...  
IS TO REST IN HIS REST ...**

HE PRIORITISES REST

**REST WAS THE LAST MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN THE OLD CREATION ...  
THE FIRST EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW CREATION ...**

**BUT YOU SAY, 'WAIT ON!! REST AT THE START OF THE DAY?**

**PEOPLE REST AT THE END OF THE DAY ... NOT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY  
PEOPLE REST WHEN THEY'VE DONE A GOOD DAY'S WORK ... THEY EARN THEIR REST ...**

**A poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which my Dad used to quote states this idea of earning our rest profoundly well ...**

*THE SMITHY  
Under a spreading chestnut-tree  
The village smithy stands;  
The smith, a mighty man is he,  
With large and sinewy hands ...*

*His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
He earns whate'er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.*

**SLIDE** *(One of the last verses)*  
*Each morning sees some task begin,  
Each evening sees it close.  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*So the other day, whilst meditating on this Psalm ... I quoted that poem to the Lord ...*

*I said, 'Lord, it's understandable that people rest at the end of the day, after a good day's work with a great sense of achievement. It's a great feeling ...'*

***BUT THEN I HEARD THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAK TO MY HEART ...***

***'YES INDEED IT CERTAINLY IS TIME TO REST WHEN THE WORK HAS BEEN FINISHED'***

***THEN I SAW IT. IN MY MIND'S EYE ... I SAW JESUS ON THE CROSS CRYING OUT ... 'IT IS FINISHED!'***

**JESUS HAS FINISHED THE WORK ON THE CROSS ... IT IS FINISHED!  
HE HAS EARNED REST ... NOT ONLY FOR HIMSELF ... BUT FOR US!**

**SLIDE NOW IT'S TIME TO REST ... BEFORE WE DO ANYTHING ...**

**JESUS HAS WORKED THE FULL DAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FINISHED IT.**

**JESUS WALKED THE JOURNEY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS & COMPLETED IT.**

**THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR YOU TO DO BUT ENTER INTO HIS REST.**

**ALL THE WORK HAS BEEN DONE ... IT IS FINISHED!**

**SO THIS SHEPHERD, FIRST OF ALL BRINGS US INTO THE GREATEST REST ANYONE HAS EVER KNOWN.**

*There was an Irish farmer sitting on a gate in the country, outside Dublin.  
A British guy pulls up in a jaguar and asks, 'I say my good man, can you tell me the way to Dublin please?'*

*The Irishman answers, 'To be sure, you just go down the road there and you turn left ...' and he explains the way.*

*The British guy says, 'Thank-you very much. And by the way, what do you do?'*

*The Irishman replies, 'Nothing ... I just sit here all day on the gate enjoying the sun ...'*

*The British guy answers, 'Well that's no good. You need to do something with your life. Go out and get a job and earn some money and make something of yourself ... Buy a house and a car and get a family ... Then you'll have something to retire with ...'*

*The Irishman asks, 'And what would I do then?'*

*'Sit and relax', replies the British man.*

*'Well that's what I'm doing now ...'*

This is what God wants to bring us to ... The place of absolute peace and rest that He has provided for us.

Romans 4:4-5 NLT

*When people work, their wages are **not a gift**, but something **they have earned** <sup>5</sup>But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but **because of their faith in God** who forgives sinners.*

Hebrews 4:3 & 10 NIV & KJV **SLIDE**

*Now we who have believed enter that rest. <sup>10</sup>For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.*

*Years ago, when I was in business, I had been unwell and was now trying to catch up. I was driving through the Blue Mountains in NSW ... and autumn leaves were falling, lining the road in golden tones ... I had lovely flute music playing in the CD player ... when the Lord spoke to my heart.*

*He said to me ... 'YOU KNOW THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD EVER ACCOMPLISH THAT I HAVE NOT ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED ... THERE IS NOTHING MORE FOR YOU TO DO THAT I HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE'.*

**THIS REPOSE / REST IS NOT EARNED ... IT'S GIVEN AT THE START OF THE DAY ... FREE. IT CAN'T BE EARNED ... IT'S BY GRACE ... UNDESERVED ...**

**SO MANY CHRISTIANS & CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE STILL TRYING TO FINISH THE WORK BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED THIS PLACE OF REST ... THESE PASTURES OF REST.**

**IT'S NOT ABOUT US DOING ...**

**ITS ABOUT ENTERING INTO ALL CHRIST HAS DONE**

**SLIDE THE SHEPHERD-LED BELIEVER DOESN'T WORK TO FIND REST ... THEY WORK IN THE REST THEY'VE REALISED THAT CHRIST PROVIDED ...**

**GOD HAD TO TAKE PAUL THE APOSTLE OUT OF ACTION FOR 14 YEARS ...**  
**TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES ... there he learned the message of grace.**

**THIS 'PLACE OF REST' IN OUR LIVES IS PRIORITY NUMBER 1.**  
**IT IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR THE REST OF OUR JOURNEY.**  
**THOSE WHO DON'T ENTER INTO THAT REST ... KEEP COMING BACK TO ENTER**  
**IT AGAIN ...**

**SLIDE HE MAKES ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES**  
**SO, HOW DOES HE MAKE US LIE DOWN?**

**NOT BY WHACKING WITH THE STAFF (THAT WAS FOR THE ENEMIES)**  
**NOT BY BREAKING LEGS (-horrible)**  
**BUT BY HIS VERY PRESENCE ...**  
**HIS VERY PRESENCE EMINATES REST & PEACE ...**

**SO, THE FIRST PLACE THE SHEPHERD BRINGS US, IS INTO HIS REST ...**  
**THE REST OF THE FINISHED WORK OF THE CROSS ...**  
**BY HIS PRESENCE.**

**BUT THEN ...**  
**HE TAKES US FURTHER AND FEEDS US WITH TENDER GRASS & HERBS**  
**SLIDE THE SHEPHERD BRINGS US INTO HIS REST BY HIS PRESENCE**  
**THE SHEPHERD BRINGS HIS REST INTO US BY FEEDING US ON HIS GOSPEL -**

**SLIDE HE MAKES ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES**  
***in pastures of tender grass.***

**THE SHEPHERD DOESN'T MAKE US LIE DOWN JUST ANYWHERE ...**  
**HE MAKES US LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES ...**  
**There is something incredibly profound and wonderful in these green fields ...**  
**That causes the sheep to lie down and equips them for the rest of the**  
**journey ...**

**WHAT ARE THESE GREEN PASTURES OF GOD?**  
**GREEN PASTURES IS THE ONGOING TEACHING OF THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST ...**

**SLIDE THIS IS THE NEW FOOD OF THE NEW DAY ...**  
**FIT FOR THE NEW NATURE**

**- THE NEW DIET OF THE NEW CREATION BELIEVER IN CHRIST ...**

**Jeremiah 3:15** Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

*Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

**EVERY BELIEVER ALREADY HAS REST ... THEY EXPERIENCE IT AS THE SHEPHERD MINISTERS TO THEM ...**

**BUT THEY DON'T NECESSARILY LIVE IN THE REST THEY HAVE ... *BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'VE GOT ...***

**THE SAVIOUR BOUGHT THIS REST FOR US ...**

**BUT THE SHEPHERD BRINGS US INTO THIS REST ...**

**AND BRINGS REST INTO US ...**

**HE FEEDS US ON THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.**

LYING DOWN WITH THE SHEPHERD WE INITIALLY **EXPERIENCE THE REST OF HIS PRESENCE.**  
BUT FEEDING ON THIS GREEN GRASS OF GOD **ESTABLISHES THE REST OF HIS TRUTH IN US.**

### **THE SWEETNESS OF HIS DOCTRINE**

MANY WRONGLY ASSOCIATE DOCTRINE WITH RELIGION -- 1-DIMENSIONAL, DIDACTIC, STERILE TEACHING FROM A SOULESS TEACHER WITHOUT A PERSONALITY ...

*WE USED TO SAY ... I'M NOT INTO DOCTRINE ... AND WE UNDERSTOOD NOTHING ... AND WENT AROUND IN CIRCLES OF HIGHS & LOWS ...*

DOCTRINE JUST MEANS TEACHING. AND GOD'S DOCTRINE OR TEACHING IS INSPIRING, ENCOURAGING, ENLIGHTENING, COMFORTING AND REFRESHING ...  
AND **THIS MESSAGE KEEPS US IN HIS REST.**

**Deuteronomy 32:2** NET Bible **SLIDE**

*My teaching [doctrine] will drop like the rain, my sayings will **drip like the dew**, as rain drops upon the grass, and showers upon new growth.*

**Deuteronomy 32:2** New Heart English Bible

*My doctrine shall drop as the rain. My speech shall condense as the dew, as the small rain on the tender grass, as the showers on the herb.*

**Matthew 11:28-29** King James 2000 Bible **SLIDE**

<sup>28</sup> *Come unto Me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.***

<sup>29</sup> *Take my yoke upon you, and **learn of me**; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and **you shall find rest unto your souls.***

Jesus spoke of two experiences of rest:

- Rest in the Saviour's presence ... ***I will give you rest.***



- Rest from the Shepherd's knowledge and understanding ... *you shall find rest unto your souls.*

THIS IS NOT THE PERSONAL RHEMA WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT ...

THIS TENDER FOOD IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION ... THE REVELATION OF THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.

THIS BEAUTIFUL GOSPEL OF GRACE IS THE TENDEREST TRUTH YOUR SOUL COULD EVER TASTE ... IT IS LIKE FRESH, DEW COVERED, GREEN PASTURES ...

GREEN IS THE COLOUR OF GRACE ...

**HIS GOSPEL OF GRACE IS LIKE 'FRESH GREEN PASTURES' ...**

THIS IS FRESH FOOD OF TENDER TRUTH ... TENDER ... TASTY ... WET WITH DEW ...  
(DEW = DOCTRINE ... TRUTH)

## **Mary & Martha**

*Martha loved Jesus ... She invited Him into her home ...*

*She honoured Him, calling Him Lord ... She wanted to serve Him ...*

### **WHAT WAS WRONG**

SHE DIDN'T PRIORITISE HER TIME

- JESUS BEFORE SERVICE
- REST BEFORE WORK

MARY'S BETTER PART ... WAS IN PRIORITISING HER TIME

- SETTING HER FOCUS ON HEARING HIS TEACHING (LOGOS)

**JESUS' TEACHING IS PART OF THE SHEPHERD'S PRIORITY FOR US ...**

**IT'S NOT WHAT WE CAN BE DOING FOR HIM ...**