



ONE

READ Psalm 23:1-5.
Using the PARAPHRASE IT
Bible study method,
WRITE your version of these verses.

*Where does our Shepherd lead us?
What stands out to you about these
different places? Who is present with
the Psalmist in each of these places?*

Not all the places the Psalmist
describes are pleasant places.
We may never have fathomed finding ourselves there,
nonetheless our God is with us in every place.
WRITE a prayer thanking God for His presence --
no matter where you are and no matter what you're facing.

TWO

READ Psalm 23:1-5 again.
**... the Shepherd's greatest provisions are
often found in the most unexpected places.**
(from the weekend message outline)

Notice what God does specifically for the Psalmist
in the presence of his enemies (v 5).
What stands out to you? What is God providing?

At times we can become so focused
on what's wrong with our situation,
we fail to recognize God's provisions in the meantime.
THINK about the things God is providing for you right now.
ASK God to open your heart and eyes to see the provisions He gives.
WRITE these down.

THREE

READ Psalm 32:7 and 10.
**... the presence of our enemies should not
be interpreted as the absence of our God.**
(from the weekend message outline)

***How might understanding this truth change
the way we view times of struggle and difficulty?***

The last part of verse 5 gives us a glimpse of the Psalmist's perspective.
"...my cup overflows."
How do you think the Psalmist maintains this type of faith and hope?

PRAY:

**Father, there are times I can't see You working in my difficulties.
There are times I can't feel Your presence.
Help me trust in the truth that You're with me,
even during those difficult times.**

FOUR

READ Acts 17:28, Colossians 1:27, and Ephesians 1:3-14.

If our lives are in Christ and His life is in ours, what does that say about
God's presence in our pain, suffering, and struggles?

In his book, **An Honest Look At A Mysterious Journey**,
John Stumbo writes,

***"Over and over I declared that God is in this and He is good...
I didn't know exactly what I should think and believe about God's
involvement in my situation, but I knew that I couldn't believe
that my illness was beyond Him. No. He was in this
- somewhere, somehow - and He can only be good."***

FIVE

READ Job 1:22, Job 2:10, Job 3:11, Job 3:24 & 26, and Job 10:1.
***At first glance, does it appear that Job struggled well?
Why or why not? What's described as a sin? (1:22)***

Job understood that it's possible for God to be good while
allowing seasons of difficulty and even heart-crushing pain.
The suffering and difficult circumstances we face
aren't the test of God's character...
God's character is never in doubt.
Despite the agony, despair, and anger Job experienced,
he trusted in the goodness of God when he cried out,
"Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him..." Job 13:15a

PRAY:

**Father, give me this kind of faith and trust in You.
As you lead me beside quiet waters, as well as the darkest of valleys,
help me to trust You completely.
When I'm surrounded by enemies of all kinds,
remind me that You're with me and that You are good.**

*NEXT WEEK:

***John Stumbo will share his mysterious journey through illness and suffering.
God's story through John's journey is both powerful and humbling.***

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