

Sunday, June 21st, 2020

Wise and Familiar Words

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These **2 scriptures** were pressed upon my heart this week.

They speak to our **need for peace, rest, and God's care**.

I find great **solace in these wise and familiar words**, and maybe you can too.

Hear the Word of the Lord:

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;^[a] he restores my soul.^[b]

He leads me in right paths^[c] for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^[d] I fear no evil;
for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely^[e] goodness and mercy^[f] shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.^[g]

Matthew 6

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,^[i] or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ **And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?**^[k] ²⁸ ³¹ **Therefore do not worry**, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God^[l] and his^[m] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

PRAYER

THINK about what you just heard.

The Lord is our shepherd, wanting to give us **goodness, and rest**.

And can any of us by WORRYING add a single hour to our lives? No, we can't.

Talk about **GOOD News in a world full of change, and stress!**

Isn't the **CHANGE in our world unbelievable right now?**

I'm recording this on Friday, and **by Sunday** things could be different!

The only constant right now is change.

Some of it is **good and necessary**.

Some of it is causing us **incredible stress!**

Is the COVID crisis wearing you down?

It sure is making me tired!

Sadly, the COVID-19 numbers are rising exponentially in our county.

We **feel 'done'** with lockdown, distancing, and masks,

But sadly, the virus is not done.

So, we are **urged to keep doing** those things that help mitigate our risks—wearing masks, social distancing, staying home as much as possible.

This is **why we are not 'back to normal'** here at our church,

but instead in the coming weeks will have smaller and outdoor church, while we continue online worship as well.

All out of wisdom, caution, and most of all--**love for our neighbors**.

During this strange time of coronavirus, we hear these words:

Do not worry.

Seek first the kingdom of God.

What does that mean to you?

Are we **trusting God the Good Shepherd to give** us what we need, so that we don't need to worry?

Are we allowing time for **reflecting and receiving God's word and goodness**—the still waters and green pastures?

Are we **seeking above all else to FOCUS on our loving and gracious God?**
What if that's really important, especially in this time of stress and uncertainty?
I believe it is.

And then we have the **events of our world, our country, and our community.**
We have the **long-needed emphasis on black lives,**
who have often not mattered as much as people who are white.

We have this **exciting and challenging time,**
when we are called to **love our neighbors,** especially those who are black,
When we are called to **stand with people of all** colors, backgrounds and beliefs,
not just for equality,
but because **we are all children of God.**
And our God has a desire for **love and justice for all of humanity.**
Our Savior **Jesus** cared especially for the **least** of these.

I wonder, how are you dealing with all of this?

Are we taking time to not only pay **attention** to the world,
To **stand and speak** up when needed,
but also to **REST?**
To **PRAY?**

To **READ God's word and meditate** on what it means in this time and place?

Because we have **a Savior Jesus who DID just that.**

He worked to change the world,
And he **RESTED, and PRAYED and let himself be FILLED** with the Holy Spirit,
so that he had something **to give** to the world.

I don't know about you, **but I haven't had hardly anything to give lately.**
Not too surprising after a **major surgery.**

But I wonder, haven't we **ALL had surgery** so to speak?
Our lives turned upside down with COVID, and all of this social change?

If so, *how are we being FILLED*,
that we might love and serve one another as Christians?
How are **YOU** being filled?

Maybe that is *a question we all need to consider*.
And maybe we find some *answers* from these *wise and familiar words*
in the Psalms, and from Jesus.

I believe that is some *news we need to hear*,
and it is **Good News**.
And for this, may all God's people say, Amen.