**MY CUP OVERFLOWS**

Psalm 23:1-6

Key Verse 5

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

**Introduction**



 This Psalm is known as a Psalm of David. It was probably written when he was a king by remembering his youth as a shepherd. He had been a shepherd, and he was not ashamed of his former occupation. No matter what happens in this world, we have a sure hope to live forever with our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. In this thanksgiving day, we would like to think about King David's Psalm 23. It's a song about Jehovah's tender care and intimate relationship with the ones he loves. May we have the same comfort knowing that the Lord is our shepherd, and the same hope to dwell in God's house forever as we try to sing this beautiful song. In particular, each one of us may confess thankfully, “My cup overflows” by remembering what God has done.

1. Read verse 1-3. How does David view the Lord? (1a) How does the Lord meet all our needs? (1b) Where does the Lord lead us? (2) How can we be refreshed in our souls? (3a) Why does the shepherd guide his sheep to the right path? (3b)

1-1, Read verse 1-3.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. **2** He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, **3** he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.

1-2, How does David view the Lord? (1a)

***The Lord is my shepherd,***



* David declares that the Lord is his shepherd. It also gives us a glimpse of David’s relationship with God.
* The relationship between shepherd and sheep is a graceful and intimate relationship. David saw himself as the Lord’s sheep.
* To describe the Lord as his shepherd was a very natural expression since in Israel shepherding sheep was one of the major careers.
* However, this psalm talks about David’s personal relationship with God more than anything else without anyone in between.
* David was intimately aware of the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep, having been a shepherd of his father’s flock.
* Among all animals sheep seem to be the weakest and need the most care. They cannot defend themselves. This is why sheep cannot survive without a shepherd.
* Sheep have poor eyesight and are not very intelligent. A shepherd tends them for their wool and milk.
* The quality of their wool depends on how the shepherd takes care of them. A shepherd understand his sheep and does his best to take care of them.
* While tending his father’s flock, David learned a shepherd heart for the sheep. He kept the flock safe even risking his life for them.
* He shepherded the flock with love. When a lion or bear snatched a sheep away, David went after it, struck and killed it to save the sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-35).
* He must have learned great courage, faithfulness and a shepherd heart by shepherding his father’s flock.
* He also trusted in God Almighty the true Shepherd of all souls. When he was staying out alone with the flock, he must have been afraid often.
* But he thought about God who was the chief Shepherd watching over him as he watched over his father’s flock.
* Later, it was out of his shepherd heart and his trust in God that he challenged Goliath and defeated him with a sling and a stone.
* Then he was crowned king of Israel when the right time came. As a king of Israel, David shepherded his people with God’s shepherd heart not as a tyrant.
* The people loved David because of his shepherd heart for them. When David looked back on his life, he confessed that the Lord was his shepherd. This was the real secret of David’s success.

1-3, How does the Lord meet all our needs? (1b)

***I lack nothing.***

* As the Lord’s sheep, David also declared, “I shall not be in want.” Verse 1 means, “The Lord is my shepherd, therefore, I shall want no thing.”
* Human beings are full of desires like Jacob in Genesis. The more we have the more we want. Our human desires seem to be endless and never satisfied.
* *The Rolling Stones wrote a song called, “I can’t get no satisfaction.”* They were right. We can never be satisfied with the things of the world, not even human love.
* When we do not know the Lord as our shepherd we still miss something essential even if we get all the things we want and achieve all our desires.
* Without the Lord as our Shepherd we cannot but become a slave of material things and human ambitions without knowing any contentment.
* Fundamentally, man is a thankless creature (Rom 1:21). Without knowing the Lord as our shepherd, we can only despair endlessly after getting everything.
* However, those who accept the Lord as their shepherd are filled with joy and a thankful heart. They know how to be content in all circumstances.
* May the Lord help us to confess the same like David. We can find peace and contentment in our deep heart only when we find the Lord.
* Paul spoke of the secret of contentment when he said: “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty...I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:12-13).

1-4, Where does the Lord lead us? (2)

 ***He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,***



* Sheep need good pasture to graze in. They don’t know how to find it on their own. This is the shepherd’s job. He knows how to lead them to green pastures.
* Afterward, he must find them cool water. But the shepherd knows that sheep cannot drink from fast running streams, for fast running water makes them nervous.
* In fact, water can make sheep nervous since they don’t know how to swim with their thick wool. So the shepherd must look for quiet waters.
* The most ideal place is a quiet pool where the sheep can be alone and drink quietly. Sometimes, he cannot find such a place so he makes a little dam and causes some of the water from a stream to run off and form a quiet pool for the sheep to drink from. This is what the LORD does for us.
* Our good shepherd Jesus leads our tired and weary souls to green pasture and feeds us with the abundant word of life and the flowing living waters.
* When Jesus saw all the burdened people coming out to him, he invited them, saying, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).
* Jesus alone can give us true rest. The way of true rest is to come to Jesus the Good Shepherd.

1-5, How can we be refreshed in our souls? (3a)

 ***he refreshes my soul.***

* Sometimes sheep wander far away from the flock. They become fearful and anxious. Then the shepherd comes and calls them back again. They hear his voice and follow him.
* While sheep have very poor eyesight, they do have sharp ears. They can distinguish their shepherd’s voice. They will never follow a stranger because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.
* People are much like sheep. We have very poor spiritual eyes. We cannot see our own spiritual condition very well nor discern the future. But we have ears to hear the voice of Jesus the good shepherd.
* If we are Jesus’ sheep we will never follow the voice of strangers. Although we may get lost in sin or confused by human philosophies for a time, we will eventually follow Jesus the good shepherd because we can recognize his voice.
* When we hear the voice of Jesus, our souls are refreshed. We are led along the right paths by following his voice.
* This is why we must not wander spiritually by drifting away from God’s word. We must not neglect our quiet time. Then we become weary and tired spiritually.
* But when we go to Jesus and repent of our sins and hold on to the word of God, we are restored. Then the Lord revives our souls again.
* Once, David committed adultery and murder. He tried to cover up his sin but he was miserable when his relationship with God was broken.
* David repented when he heard the word of God through Nathan. He repented and God forgave his sins.
* Although he had to bear the consequences of sin, David’s soul was restored through sincere repentance and prayer based on God’s word.
* This is what our reflection writing is all about. It is the opportunity to come to God in repentance and be restored by the blood of Jesus.

1-6, Why does the shepherd guide his sheep to the right path? (3b)

***He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.***

* The Lord God guides David along the right paths. As usual shepherds has to guide their sheep to green pasture. Some road should be avoid because of danger ahead.
* Likewise God guides us into the right paths for His name’s sake. It means that our blessed lives reflect God’s name and His glory. (Eph 1:5-6)
* What an assurance it is! Just as parents are evaluated by the way they care for their children, shepherds are judged by the condition of their flocks. We are in good hands of our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

2. Read verse 4. How can we overcome the fear of evil while walking through the darkest valley? (4a) How does God comfort us? (4b)

2-1, Read verse 4.

**4** Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

2-2, How can we overcome the fear of evil while walking through the darkest valley? (4a)

***Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;***

* From verse 4, he calls God personally using the pronoun “you,” focusing on the intimate relationship between David and his Lord God.
* David speaks here of walking through the darkest valley. Some versions translate this phrase as “the valley of the shadow of death.” In verse 3, right paths(righteous path) are not necessarily easy paths. It has rough roads too.
* Life is also full of valleys and peaks. When we are on the peak, everything is going well. But when we are in the valley, our faith is tested.
* The valleys in life are very important because it is only in the valleys that we can truly depend on God and know that he is near.
* When we observe David’s life, he had many ups and downs. But his relationship with God was a constant.
* He praised God in times of success and trusted in God in times of despair and disappointment. Living by faith doesn’t mean that we never have any more valleys.
* David himself said, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil…”
* David’s own testimony reveals that he was sometimes in valleys and that sometimes he must have been afraid. But he found comfort knowing that the Lord his God was with him.

2-3, How does God comfort us? (4b)

***your rod and your staff, they comfort me.***

* The shepherd’s staff is the symbol of his authority and protection. When sheep see the shepherd’s staff, they knew he is leading them.
* The rod was a smaller stick used to sometimes prod the sheep when they were stubborn. It was a symbol of discipline that is necessary to correct them.
* Discipline may seem unpleasant at the moment, but it is a comfort in the long term (Heb. 12:5-12) and a motivation for us to “make our paths straight” (Heb. 12:13).
* While God may not always use His power to keep us out of trials, His presence and His power will always be with us to keep us through our trials.
* God’s word and the Holy Spirit give us both comfort and discipline along life’s narrow road.
* When we receive God’s word in our times of trial, we are comforted and rejoice in the Lord like David.

3. Read verses 5-6. What does God do for us in the presence of our enemies? (5) Describe how the Lord has made your cup overflow this year? What assurance does David have about his life? (6)

3-1, Read verses 5-6.

**5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. **6** Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

3-2, What does God do for us in the presence of our enemies? (5)

***5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.***

* Here, the picture changes. In verses 1-4, David spoke of the shepherd-sheep relationship with the Lord.
* From verses 5-6, he seems to give us a different picture that a king or a host gives a victory dinner to his subjects or guests even in the midst of enemies.
* In the ancient Middle East, a person could have many enemies. But one place of safety was in the tent of a conquering king who was a powerful host.
* For instance, Abraham in Genesis 18 graciously entertained three “men” who passed by as strangers.
* Even if his enemies were all around David, he was safe in the tent or the home of the reigning king.
* To sit as a guest at the table of a host was to be assured of food, housing, fellowship and protection. Jesus is our King who gives us victory and prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.

***You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.***

* The psalmist’s head was anointed with oil, a generous gesture which bestowed honor on him as an esteemed guest.

3-3, Describe how the Lord has made your cup overflow this year?

 ***my cup overflows.***

* The cup was likewise a gesture of generosity. It was not half-filled, but running over. 
* David was not served “leftovers,” but was abundantly given the finest provisions in the house.
* Satisfaction, significance, and security are all abundantly supplied to the believer by God, as indicated by the imagery of the hospitable host.
* He anoints our heads with the oil of gladness and our cup of joy overflows. Even though the devil tempts us and tries to destroy the church, as far as we are in Christ, our cup overflows.

3-4, What assurance does David have about his life? (6)

 ***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

* As God’s people, we live a victorious life. We have the conviction that goodness and love will follow us all our days instead of our enemies.
* Goodness and lovingkindness are probably the two most comforting attributes of God’s character for the Christian. They are especially consoling in times of distress. These characteristics of God are linked to His covenant with Israel.
* Not only this, our final home is our Father’s house: “And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”
* Our comfort as heavenly pilgrims is that when this life is over, we will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. He will wipe away all our tears. Praise Jesus who has prepared for us rooms in our Father’s house (Jn 14:1-3).
* The most precious treasure we have is our relationship with God. With Jesus in our hearts, we have peace and joy; we lack nothing.
* Most significantly, David is not a guest for a few days at the home of his gracious host; he is a permanent part of this household.
* There is an old Greek saying that goes something like this: “A guest is like a fish … After three days, he stinks.” To be a guest in God’s house is not limited to three days. David is assured that he will “dwell in the house of the Lord”forever.

**Conclusion**

 As far as we are in the flock of Christ, we are sitting at the table of victory. Everyone in Christ is a new creation and a co-heir with Christ who has defeated Satan through his death and resurrection. It is an individual and personal shepherding of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although we are the body of Christ, he cares each and every person with His personal love. Praise Jesus and His hospitality and love. My cup overflows! We have this confidence today and tomorrow whatever happens. Especially when we are in difficult times, still the Lord cares and leads us to His right paths. We have nothing to fear because we belong to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

**One word: My cup overflows!**