

12/01/2017

Made Alive

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world...." (Eph.2:1-2).

No feature of Christian teaching is more foundational and dear to all that the New Testament is about than the doctrine of grace... To really understand and appreciate God's grace in Christ is to comprehend the meaning of salvation from sin, and reconciliation with God... As we look at today's verses, we can see that the beginning of the path to spiritual life is the realization that all people were "dead," that is lost in sin. They were separated from God before Christ came... "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came through Jesus Christ" (Rom.3:23-24). The apostle Paul's subject to the Romans, Ephesians and us is that he did not want us to abandon our faith for the sake of "if-it-feels-good-do-it" doctrine... He directs his teaching to all people throughout the world, whatever their state of sinfulness, to move from that to the Lord. You might remember, that back in Paul's day, Jews were the first converts, and then the Gentiles came in... The Jews may have thought that they had some sort of exclusiveness when it came to Christianity, but Paul along with Peter broke that bubble. In that he addressed all that were in sin, regardless of race, in verses 4-5, Paul nails it... "But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions ----- it is by grace you have been saved." The realization that we are sinners, begins the process of healing by accepting Jesus into our lives... What happens then you ask? We are made alive....

Have a great day... T G I F      Thank God I'm Forgiven.... Love mark Phil.4:11

12/02/2017

Being Unashamed

Folks find causes and actions to devote themselves to of which they are proud or unashamed.

Today, you are to match the person or persons with the actions about which they are unashamed. Answer with confidence and don't be ashamed of your answers....

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| _____ 1. Was not ashamed of the cause of Jesus Christ.          | (a) Jesus |
| _____ 2. Were not ashamed of their nakedness until they sinned. | (b)       |
| Workers   |           |
| _____ 3. Was not ashamed that he reproached Job 10 times        | (c) Paul  |

- |           |  |          |
|-----------|--|----------|
| _____ 4.  | Was not ashamed of Paul's chains.  | (d) Paul |
| _____ 5.  | Is not ashamed to call the sanctified his brothers.<br>Bildad                                  | (e)      |
| _____ 6.  | According to John, they should not be ashamed at Jesus' coming.<br>Believers (Little children) | (f)      |
| _____ 7.  | Said Christians should not be ashamed to suffer as Christians.<br>Peter                        | (g)      |
| _____ 8.  | Need not be ashamed with how they handle (divide) God's Word<br>Isaiah                         | (h)      |
| _____ 9.  | Was not ashamed of the authority given him for edification.<br>Onesiphorus                     | (i)      |
| _____ 10. | Said that those who wait on the Lord should not be ashamed.<br>Adam and Eve                    | (j)      |

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

12/07/2017

### The Blessed Man, Part Two

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (Psa.1:2-3).

For those of you who like to read, what is it about a book that makes it readable. I think this may be different for different people, depending what their interests are, don't you think? Regardless, for us to get interested in a book, it must be readable. The psalmist takes this one important step farther. He doesn't stop with exhortations to just spend time reading the Word, but his plea is to reflect on it. "And on his law he meditates day and night." The real blessing comes from meditation and application.... Meditation can be compared to the digestion of food. The reading is the eating, but if the food is going to accomplish its intended purpose, it must be digested. Early in Jesus' ministry, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Having fasted for forty (40) days, he was weak and the devil preyed on that weakness by

tempting Jesus to turn the stones into bread. Jesus response echoes through time..."Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt.4:4).

Failing to meditate is like spiritual bulimia. It is like chewing but not swallowing, or swallowing without assimilating. The benefit is not just in hearing but in understanding and submitting. For God's Word to have its intended effect, it must be incorporated, not simply accumulated. There is a good illustration of this in Jesus' Parable of the Sower. (Lk.8:4-15). I think it is the difference between the beaten path and the fertile soil.... It is the difference between parched plants and thriving ones with deep roots. It is the difference between barren branches and fruit-laden limbs.

Rocks, thorns and hard ground describe different ways to deprive seed of the room and resources it needs for healthy growth. Poor attitudes and mental spans do not provide the fertile soil necessary for maturing and developing character... Meditation, conversely, is rich mental soil for producing a harvest of righteousness.... There is a part three to The Blessed Man tomorrow.

Have a wonderful day.... Let His light shine through you.... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

12/08/2017

The Blessed Man... Part Three

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (Psa.1:1-2).

The 1st Psalm is so important that it can be read and meditated over and over again. The psalmist reinforces what we've learned the past few days with two illustrations. First, he portrays the person who continuously delights and meditates on God's Word as a fruitful tree planted by streams of water... The water represents the Word of God, and streams express the abundance resources for spiritual growth contained in the Bible. When the Christian drinks deeply (that's reading and meditating) of God's inspired Word, he or she becomes a "tributary" of God's blessings. The Word flows then from their example and teaching into the lives of others... Jesus said this; "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of water will flow from within him" (Jn.7:37-38). The soul that is well watered by God's Word is guaranteed to produce fruit in its season. Ripe, delicious fruit is a wonderful analogy for the beautiful character and beneficial deeds produced by by a believing mind feasting of God's words... To go a step farther with the illustration, the psalmist adds that not even a leaf of his life shall wither. I think that biblical living produces not only successful living, but balanced living. Lastly, moving from figures of speech, the writer concludes the first illustration with a clear statement of fact: "Whatever he does prospers." Whenever a person loves and abides by God's Word, the result is a foregone conclusion ---- he prospers.... And

here is the crux of it all; Achievement is a byproduct of right thinking that results naturally from aligning one's mind with the mind of God. A segment of the world may not understand this achievement and success, because they base their evaluation on human standards. It takes wisdom to understand true success, (Jas.1:5) and we get that from the Lord's Word....

Have a great day.... T G I F Today God Is First Love mark  
Phil.4:11

12/09/2017

Give Me A head With Hair....

To many people, hair is an important part of the body. In today's quiz you are to match the person associated with the statement about hair... Pick an answer and don't part with it...

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ___ 1. Had red hair                           | (a) Eliphaz          |
| ___ 2. Kids laughed at his baldness           | (b) Absalom          |
| ___ 3. Wiped Jesus' feet with her hair        | (c) Esau             |
| ___ 4. Had clothes of camel hair              | (d) Samson           |
| ___ 5. Had hair like eagle feathers           | (e) John the Baptist |
| ___ 6. This person's hair weighed 200 shekels | (f) Nehemiah         |
| ___ 7. Had his long hair shaved               | (g) Nazarite         |
| ___ 8. Was not to cut his hair                | (h) Sinful woman     |
| ___ 9. He pulled out the Jew's hair           | (i) Jesus            |
| ___ 10. Saw a spirit, and his hair stood up   | (j) Elisha           |
| ___ 11. Said people's hairs were numbered     | (k) Nebuchadnezzar   |

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

12/11/2017  
Being An Approved Man

"Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men?"  
(Gal.1:10).

This week we will find a few gems of wisdom from Psalm 15. It is only five (5) verses long, so it shouldn't be hard to peruse. Since we dealt with the importance of reading and meditating upon God's law last week in the 1st Psalm, you get to do some homework... Read and meditate on Psalm 15 this week, and give me some feedback if you wish about what you glean from it. Maybe we can have some interactive dialogue here. I think that success in life often starts with asking the right questions. In the very first verse of Psalm 15, David asked a question that is still on the minds of folks today... "Lord, who may dwell (abide) in your sanctuary?(tabernacle) Who may live (dwell) on your holy hill?" When David asked "who," he wasn't looking for names but nature. I think he was asking, what kind of person can abide with God? As you can see from the Bible version I used, (NIV) the terms live, dwell and abide are used interchangeably... To abide with God is to dwell with Him or live in His presence. To me, it implies friendship and fellowship. In our relatively small congregation here in Northfield, NJ, we have what we call a "Fellowship Meal" after services each 2nd Sunday of the month. We eat and sit together for an hour or so, and get to know one another better. Sometimes I think of how great it will be when we get to "fellowship" with God in eternity. After all, isn't that what all of our lives are heading for? Back in the days when the temple was in Jerusalem, as people approached the city and looked at the temple, they probably questioned whether or not they were worthy to stand before God. Such introspection is as beneficial to us today as it was to them back then. Christians are pilgrims on a journey to the heavenly Jerusalem where they will praise the Lord throughout eternity... How about an amen for that....

Have great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two.... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

12/12/2017  
Who Gets To Abide

"O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? (Psa.15:1)

Though David penned this psalm, the answer to today's thought-provoking question was provided by God's inspiration... Those who expect to live with God must strive to live like God. That's a deep thought, but a straight-forward one. No one of us can earn salvation by living a sinless life, but those who have been forgiven through Christ must demonstrate it by the way they live. If you have read and meditated on Psalm 15, here's inside stuff... After providing three (3) positive answers, David precedes to give four (4) negative examples to crystallize his point.

What God desires and what He detests are put in sharp contrast in this short psalm... We must note the emphasis on behavior. Action verbs are used to describe the person of noteworthy character that God commends. These are words like walk and works... Although God knows that we cannot reach perfection, He does want action. As James wrote in his epistle of the New Testament, faith must be lived in order to be approved by God. Faith involves our talk being backed up by our walk. It involves works and not just words. Conduct is the most obvious clue to character and thus it is a window to the soul. The word upright means blameless, and I think it refers to the condition of the heart of a person who delights in doing the will of God. The key to walking uprightly and working righteousness is to speak the truth in one's heart... Speaking the truth is characteristic of God's people in every age. Lets also remember this; The truth speaking that David refers to is not necessarily the one that a person communicates with others, but the truth one communicates with him or herself. We must always be honest with ourselves so that we don't try to rationalize sinful behavior. So that we get to abide, lets do all we can to live and act according to God's will...

Have a great day... Do good and give God the credit... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

PS. Our congregation has a new website... You can reach us at  
[www.northfieldchurchofchrist.com](http://www.northfieldchurchofchrist.com)

12/13/2017

#### Four Examples Of Righteousness

"He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach from his friend; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; He does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent" (Psa.15:2-5a).

Lets look at the 15th psalm's stance on the righteous man today. The first example of an upright walk is found in the use of one's words (speaks truth in his heart). One of the very first places that a person's sin show its ugly face is in his or her words... Those who gossip or backbite are not behaving uprightly. This conduct is not right under any circumstances, but is especially repulsive when it is directed toward neighbors and friends, Speaking evil against those who are the nearest and dearest shows the depths to which one has sunk. The second example of working righteousness is concerned with one's associations. A righteous person chooses friends based on values and not valuables, and on principles rather than possessions.

An evil person is despised regardless of favors, and a humble one is honored despite his humble station in life. The third example of righteous behavior is found in one who keeps his or her promises. Integrity is often measured in terms of reliability. Do you say what you mean and

mean what you say? Can you be counted upon to "follow through?" Vague agreements and half-hearted commitments are not for holy people. The last example given by the psalmist for upright living regards one's finances. What a person will do for money reveals a great deal about their character and what is really in their hearts... Any time that money becomes an impediment to a close and personal communion with the Lord, it then becomes a stumbling block. What do all of David's four answers have in common? Each one of them illustrates that folks who aim to please God and enjoy fellowship with Him, are those who also care deeply for others.... They will promote the interests and well-being of others, rather than their own narrow self-interests. A lack of consideration for others can show up in a myriad of ways and will show people that are selfish rather than selfless.... How are we all doing with these four examples of righteousness? "He who does these things will never be shaken" (Psa.15:5b)

Have a great day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

12/14/2017  
Psalm 15 Revisited

"He who does these things will never be shaken (moved)" (Psa.15:5).

As we come to the end of the 15th psalm, there is a promise. After posing a question and providing the answer, that promise is found in today's short verse.... He who does these things shall never be shaken (moved). I used the two words to make a point. To be moved is to be shaken, so as to fall. It implies failure or defeat. This picture of frustration and disappointment is set in contrast to the joy of continual communion with God... As David was inspired to write these words, we see that these divergent outcomes can be traced directly back to the way a person chooses to live. Let's take a look at two important words in this promise. The word "never" is an absolute term that permits no exceptions! It is God's guarantee that His word is good. You may notice that the Lord does not promise the absence of adversity. Satan will always try to get us off track, but the Lord does pledge to keep His people from being overwhelmed. His promise is that those who love and obey Him cannot be moved ---- ever! The other word I want to examine is "move." Its a word whose definition implies a relocation. Moving can be an exciting or exhilarating experience, but hardly anyone looks to a move that is forced upon him. This is the reason that heaven is such a comforting thought, as it is the eternal home of the righteous. It is not a place to be visited for the weekend or a tourist destination for the curious. It is a godly person's home forever... Hearse or moving vans won't be there, and there will be no eviction, foreclosure or dispossession. The mortgage was paid, and the deed secured by Jesus on the cross. Psalm 15 is a story about those who will enjoy permanent residence with God in glory. The people who will reside there were compassionate, servant-like, loving, obedient, humble, patient, good and kind in their lives on earth. To dwell in His sanctuary or live on His holy hill requires one to abide in God's love....

Have a wonderful day.... Let His light shine through you..... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

12/15/2017  
Raised Up

Good Morning to all,

It is a partly cloudy 23 here in NJ this morning. It will be a mostly cloudy day with highs in the low 30s.

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even though we were dead in transgressions ---- it is by grace that you are saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in the kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph.2:4-7).

There is certainly a contrast between the human condition before and after coming to Christ, and it can be expressed in the words "dead" and "alive." People are dead when they have yielded to transgressions of the flesh, and it might have ended there if it were not for God. He did not give up! God acted to raise folks up from the dead. A couple of quick questions.... What was God's motivation for this? Did God have anything to gain from this? The unequivocal answer is a resounding NO! God acted to save because of qualities related to, and inherent of, His nature... He would not have been less holy, less sovereign or less good had He turned His back on the morally responsible, choice driven people He created. He had no internal compulsion or external case to prove. Then why did he make alive the race who had chosen death, you ask? The apostle Paul's answer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, explains why God chose to open the door to the dead. He does it in four (4) points in today's verses; (1) His mercy was rich and free, (2) His love was unending and unexplainable, (3) His grace was eternal in its capacity to give, (4) His kindness found expression in the coming of Jesus Christ, His Son... All the initiative to save has been expressed by a God of grace. Having given life from the dead, God raised a people to sit with Him in the heavenly places.... In verse seven (7) of today's verses, it explains that in the coming ages, the fullness of life will be the reward for God's people.... Amazing....

Have a great day.... T G I F Today God Is First  
mark Phil.4:11

Love



12/18/2017

God... His Works And His Word

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Psa.19:1).

Why believe in God? Or for that matter, why believe in anything at all? The 19th psalm provides answers to these age-old questions and then some as it directs the attention of readers to the self-disclosure of God. I believe that it gives us not only a rational for belief, but practical reasons why God is to be believed, loved and obeyed. God, who created and cares for man, has made Himself known in two distinct ways; First through the natural world itself, and through special revelation. This week we'll explore how the 19th psalm considers the evidence for God's existence, and argues that He should be trusted. It completes its task with a plea for help in obeying his inspired Word.

The psalm begins by presenting the evidence for God's existence that is inherent in nature itself... The awesomeness of God manifests itself in everything He has made, as creation declares His glory... I think that the glory of God referred to in today's verse, speaks of His majesty and greatness. This splendor, authority and power are not withheld from mankind, but are openly on display... The world serves as a witness as it speaks in its own unique language to affirm God as its maker and sustainer. Unlike a witness giving a testimony in a courtroom, nature's proclamation never ceases. If my thinking is correct, whenever something is created, its very existence bears witness to the one who made it. Whether it is the landscape of rolling hills, or the beauty of looking from the beach at the ocean, those scenes show us His wondrous handiwork. I think that today's simple verse is exhibit A to affirm the existence of a Great Creator... The realm of the stars, (including our sun) the planets and our moon are testimony to the Creator. Their regularity and radiance are a continuous revelation of the righteousness and reliability of their Sovereign. Lets all read and meditate upon Psalm 19 this week. We will all be better for it....

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

12/19/2017

God's Sunny Works

"In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun, which is the bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat" (Psa.19:4-6).

As the psalmist sets about proving the existence of God through natural means, he sets his focus on one particular heavenly body, the sun... He compares the rest of the world to a gigantic tabernacle where the sun has its dwelling. In lovely poetic language, the sun emerges

from a tent as it peeks over the horizon at dawn. In its impressiveness, he proclaims it to be like a bridegroom emerging from his chamber on the morning of his wedding... His words continue to be magnificent, as he compares its consistency with that of a champion looking forward to running his race. Then he goes on in beautiful language to suggest that as no one can escape its warming heat, that no one can completely avoid the sun's wisdom. Its message is manifest, and is not hidden or hard to understand. Failure to really contemplate this wonderful message is not a problem of communication, but one of conscience. It is a difficulty of the heart and not of the hearing... It is a crisis of choice rather than that of perception or reasoning. The psalmist is saying that one cannot escape responsibility by avoiding the truth. Those who suppress the knowledge of God supplied by natural revelation will be held in account for at the judgement... In the New Testament, the apostle Paul frames it this way; "For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rom.1:20). The excuse that non-believers use is that God was negligent in not supplying sufficient proof of His existence will simply not stand. I am in awe of how the psalmist unfolds all of this for us....

Have a great day... Do good and give God the credit.... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

12/20/2017

God's Word... Special Revelation

"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart" (Psa.19:7-8).

After explaining the importance of the sun to the body, the psalmist now turns his attention from nature to special revelation to reinforce his case for the existence of God. From the standpoint of nature, God has left His hand print on everything He made, but there's a lot more. He did not stop there, but now went a step further by providing direct, explicit supernatural revelation of the perfect will of God. At many times during history, God revealed His mind through prophets, using them as a "mouthpiece" for man. In New Testament days, He divulged His will by speaking through His Son, Jesus Christ. From the manger to the cross, God revealed His concern for people. The manger spoke of His care for the poor and a repudiation of worldly values. The cross showed how limitless His love actually is, and the sacrificial nature that is expected of His followers. The New Testament has wonderfully preserved this knowledge in a permanent form for future readers. Natural revelation declares that God is powerful, wise and good, but this special revelation provides us with the details of God's will for man... As we can see in Psalm19:7-11, the writer takes a pragmatic approach to prove the reliability of Scripture, and thus the reliability and reality of God. The proof that the law of the Lord is perfect is in its ability to convert the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making the simple wise...

The confirmation of the Lord's words are shown by their ability to give joy to the heart... All who study God's words will get their minimum adult requirement of forgiveness, gladness, holiness and peacefulness. They are perfect, sure, pure and right because they reflect the character of the One who gave it. Because the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous they are to be highly coveted. The psalmist states categorically that one must keep the Word to enjoy its advantages. So.... Lets all keep it....

Have a great day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

12/22/2017  
Saved

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph.2:8-9).

There is a religious doctrine out there that maintains that a sinner can believe in Christ only as a result of some miraculous event from God. In Eph.2:8, however, "that" in the phrase "that not of yourselves" does not refer to faith. Rather, it refers to the overarching concept that salvation is by God's initiative and a product of grace, and that salvation is made effective through the embracing of Christ by a lost soul... The apostle Paul's focus here was on salvation ---- a salvation that God initiated by His grace. When he asserts that salvation is not of yourselves, the implication is that faith is the part of the Christian. The dead have been made to live by God's grace realized in the presentation of the gospel and the demand for a decision... When the dead choose to follow the path of faith, they are raised to live. We all ought to earmark Eph.2:8, because the apostle's doctrine of human salvation from sin is captured here as in few other places... Faith does not result in any merit, and allows no one to claim justification by right. Faith in of itself, takes away no sins and offers no justification. God's grace is evidenced by the sending of His Son to pay the price for sin... Faith is something the sinner must have, but it is no work of merit. It is rather of a submission. Because salvation is by grace through faith, it logically cannot be by works. There is no room for a Christian to feel or act like he is superior to anyone, because his salvation is a result of God's great gift. Let me leave you with this thought today....

The believer is saved not "by good works" but "for good works..."

Have a wonderful day.... T G I F Today God Is First Love  
mark Phil.4:11

12/26/2017  
Fear Of Aloneness

"The Lord in my Shepherd; I shall not want" (Psa.23:1).

The 23rd psalm is perhaps the most well known of the psalms in the Bible, but it may be the most misunderstood as well... David has written this psalm as a grand celebration of life as God intended it to be lived. Why is it so important? I think that it is a well painted portrait of a life free from the restrictions of fear because of an unwavering confidence in the goodness of God. Today's verse, the beginning of this short psalm, provides the outlook, philosophy or worldview that is needed to live life successfully. In its simplicity, it states unequivocally, The Lord is my shepherd... In these five words David asserts three things... There is a God; He is the Lord; He is my Shepherd. Most of the problems experienced by people in the world today can be in some way attributed to a failure to grasp one or more of these essential truths. First, there is a segment of mankind that does not believe in the existence of God. (atheists) Second, many folks believe in a higher power, but have grossly misidentified Him. (idolaters) Third, and perhaps most dangerous, some acknowledge His existence and properly identify Him as the God of the Bible, but do not have a personal relationship with Him. (hypocrites) Does it make a difference whether one thinks of God as a shepherd? The answer is a resounding, YES! The idea of God as a shepherd emphasizes several of the important qualities of God... For instance, it is a reminder that God is close, caring and committed to people's needs. No shepherd worthy of his name can be distant, cold or selfish. "Shepherd" speaks of the presence of God, the heart of God and the resources of God in relationship to the needs of His people. He is not just near, but He is dear... Although it is important to comprehend God's unlimited power and infinite wisdom, something is lacking without an understanding of His endless love.... Shepherd explains the "why" behind the "what" of God's actions.

Have a great day....Performing a RAK or two would be splendid.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

12/27/2017  
The Fear Involved In Lack

"I shall not want" (Psa.23:1b).

When folks know God as the Shepherd, they possess a set of beliefs that help them to live life well. As believers, we know that we are never truly alone because we are under His ever watchful eye. We know that as long as we abide in Him that there is also no danger. The 2nd part of the 1st verse that I've used as the scripture this morning says that we will never lack anything essential to our well-being while we remain under His care... The rest of the psalm provides examples of things most feared by human beings and demonstrates that such fear is

unnecessary for those who belong to God... "I shall not want..." It is important to know what David is suggesting about this "want." It is not implying to people that all of their desires will be indulged. From his boyhood, David knew hardship. He confronted bears and lions as a shepherd boy, and was challenged by the giant Goliath. Even though he was anointed as the king, he was hounded by his predecessor Saul. As the king, he was even betrayed by his own son Absalom. Through all of this, whatever circumstances that arose to challenge his faith, he found that his Lord was more than sufficient to help him overcome.... When he wrote, "I shall not want, he was speaking from personal experience. Our lesson from today's four short words is this; God will keep faith with those who keep faith with Him, and will never leave or forsake them. His believers will never want for His personal touch or attention. Over a lifetime, adversity will come and go, but the thing that remains constant is the care of the shepherd. He will not allow His sheep to lack for things that matter the most. God is not indifferent to the needs of the body, but it may still betray us one day. This, however, we can be confident of; Our God is first and foremost the Shepherd of the human spirit...

Have a great day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

12/28/2017

Fear Of Hunger, Thirst Or Rejection

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psa.23:3-4).

Although God's priority is caring for the incorruptible spirit, people are preoccupied with lesser things. Obviously one of these is about acquiring their daily provision of food and water. Eating and drinking are touchstones of our animal nature and are reminders of our dependence upon God. I believe that hunger and thirst are designed to point us to God, yet so many are preoccupied with their pursuit of daily necessities that they forget Him. In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus taught his disciples to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles whose thoughts were consumed with what they would eat, drink or wear. It is not wrong to give thought to the requirements of the body, but it is wrong to place such concerns at the pinnacle of one's priorities and constantly worry over them. After speaking about food, drink and clothing, Jesus offered this classic teaching; "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt.6:33). When humans become anxious about provisions of the flesh, they lose touch with God as their shepherd who knows the needs of his flock and delights in providing them. Turning to another issue, straying sheep may become injured or malnourished as a result of their waywardness. Christians may wonder if they can recover from episodes of sinfulness when they have wandered away from God. They question whether they are lovable or repairable... David boasts that God actually specializes in reclaiming those who have lost their way. God is dedicated to restoring souls and setting them back on right path... He

guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.... Hobbyists who restore cars, try to bring them back to their original condition, and that's what God does... To restore the soul is to return it to the health it enjoyed before the effects of sin. When life gets "off track," God does not shun the sinner but sets out to salvage him....

Have a wonderful day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

12/29/2017

### Fear Of Mortality, Emptiness Or The Future

"Even though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of death, I will feel no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psa.23:4-6).

Death anxiety can be a major obstacle to living a full and satisfying life, as people may go to great lengths to avoid thinking of their mortality. They may stay away from nursing homes, hospitals, funeral services or even church assemblies where reminders of death are frequently encountered. The problem is that death is real, and confronting it is a key to abundant life. Death should not be underestimated or overestimated. Faith in God puts mortality in its proper perspective and frees one to live life to the fullest... though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feel no evil, for you are with me... Another fear that this psalm addresses is that of emptiness. David states his case about emptiness when he says, my cup overflows... Unfortunately, secular minded people who believe they are filled with the good things of life are totally bare in their souls. One can be of meager means, but still be spiritually wealthy... To make room for God's blessings, one may need to let go of what is either secondary or sinful. By letting God's blessing to spill over into the lives of others, God will increase the supply to sustain the flow. The Christian life is a continual process of being emptied and filled, as God's desire is to give his children a life that is full to overflowing. Finally, there is that greatest of all needs... It is the need to secure one's future destiny. Every single day of a Christian's life will be filled with God's goodness and mercy, though the form may be different than what is desired or expected... Though folks may dream of early retirement, great wealth or abundant health, God would have them yearn for spiritual transformation and service to others... When life is lived under the supervision of the shepherding God, it takes on a goodness and graciousness that reflect God's work in and for His people. God is not good and merciful some days, but all days...As the psalm ends, David is thinking about the future. Assurance of salvation is vital for victorious living, thus the psalm says this; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever

Have a great day... T G I F Thank God I'm Forgiven Love mark  
Phil.4:11