Session 2: Still Waters (Psalm 23:2)

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point–what we want to walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: When the Lord is our shepherd, he leads us in to perpetual rest for the restoration of our souls.

Head Change: To believe that all promises of rest apart from the Lord are ultimately empty.

Heart Change: To feel a tangible sense of rest from the chaos of life.

Life Change: To repent of whatever false forms of rest we are chasing, and pursue only the promise of rest extended by the Lord.

OPEN

Think back over your week. **When did you feel the most rested? What made that moment restful for you?**

Rest is important. It's even commanded in the Bible. We started off this study talking about how God is our shepherd who provides for our needs. Today's study will continue to look at that idea as Matt Chandler talks about how the shepherd leads us into rest.

READ

Read Psalm 23:1–6.

Show Session 2: *Psalm 23:2* (7 minutes).

DISCUSS

While God is sovereign, all-knowing, and all- powerful, he is also a shepherd who cares for his sheep. When we belong to his flock, we enjoy his tender protection. And the ultimate goal is to find all that we long for in him. Because Jesus is God, we see this attribute of God expressed through the earthly life of our Savior. He is the good shepherd and his sheep follow his voice. But that brings us to an important question we have to consider: Where is Jesus leading us?

Take a minute to reflect back on what you learned from session one. **Over the past week, have you identified any ways in which you find yourself in want? Where are you struggling to agree with David in saying, "I shall not want"?**

How have you seen the Lord provide for you over the past week?

How have you followed his voice?

Over the next four weeks, we're going to consider where our good shepherd is leading us as we walk with him by faith. This week, we're going to take a look at one of the specific destinations—rest.

Read Psalm 23:2.

What are some images that come to mind when you think about rest? What does rest look like for you?

What grade would you give your ability to rest at this stage of your life? Why?

As Matt pointed out in the session, God invites us to follow him out of drought and weariness and in to spaces of rest. It's a perpetual invitation because our need for rest ebbs and flows throughout life, but it will always remain a need this side of glory.

Where do you find yourself facing weariness? What causes that exhaustion?

What are some ways that you have sought rest outside of the Lord as a response to your exhaustion, either today or at some point in the past?

The primary way God invites us in to rest is through his Son, Jesus Christ. Outside of him, there is no true rest because we do not have peace with God. Beneath the surface, it is our separation from God that fuels our feelings of unrest. Being able to breathe out requires a true commitment to Jesus Christ.

READ

Read John 10:7–10.

According to John 10:9, what are the two benefits of following Jesus?

GO DEEPER

Read more about peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ in the following verses:

Gal. 1:3–5; 1 John 3:18–20

According to Paul in Galatians, what is the basis for our deliverance from "the present evil age" to a place of peace?

Because of our deliverance, how does John instruct us to "reassure our hearts"?

Taken together, how should these two passages inform the way we pursue peace?

True rest begins with the peace we receive through faith in Jesus Christ. But that doesn't change the fact that we still live in a world that is frenetically busy. Our to-do lists are never finished. There's always more work to be done and, if the finish line is our target for rest, then we will never truly reach it. Rest happens through surrender to Jesus Christ in the midst of the to-do lists, trusting that he is enough. And this rest is more than merely external. Take a look at 23:3a.

According to this verse, how does the Lord restore those follow him?

DUST OFF THE HEBREW

Most English translations render the beginning of verse 3 either "He restores" or "He refreshes" when describing the impact the Lord's rest has on the soul. While neither of these is incorrect, they don't quite convey the gravity of the work God does within us by providing the rest we need. The Hebrew term *shub* in this context carries the literal meaning "to bring back liveliness" or "vitality." The prophet Isaiah uses it in this sense to describe the restoration of a demolished house (Is. 58:12). David uses the term to paint an astounding picture of God's restorative work. When he is our shepherd, he leads us to spaces that can revitalize the areas of our lives that have ceased to flourish. He can inject life where death has reigned. He can rebuild what has been torn down. His rest is the peace our hearts most desperately crave.

What do you need to surrender to the Lord today?

What is keeping you from following his voice to green pastures, still waters, and the restoration of your soul?

LAST WORD

Everyone needs rest. The world offers us many places to look for it, but it can never deliver on the rest our souls long for. When the Lord is our shepherd, he leads us to the places of peace we need, though they may not always look like the ones we want. But he does so in order to restore us.

Whether you find yourself in a time of rest or in need of an elusive state of peace, look to the Lord. Allow him to lead you into green pastures and guide you alongside still waters. Trust him to take you where you need to go for the restoration of your soul.

LIVE IT OUT

Memorize: Continue working on memorizing Psalm 23. This week, focus on verse two reciting it to yourself over the next few days.

Pray: Spend at least five minutes in prayer each day this week specifically confessing to the Lord the places where you have found yourself in need of rest as a result of this session.

Encourage: If you are currently in a season of enjoying rest in the Lord, look for someone in your life who is struggling and make an intentional effort to encourage them with the truths you learned from this session.

RightNow Presents
Psalm 23 STUDY GUIDE

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