

Psalm 23

**Read Responsively; Congregation reads highlighted words.*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your 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 mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hebrews 3:10

Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have **not known my ways.**

Principle:

The more alert and abandoned I am to the ways of Yahweh, the more aware I will be of His presence.

Psalm 23:5a

You **prepare a table** before me ...

Luke 19:7

And when they saw it, they all **grumbled**, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

Being at the table = HOW God is WITH us // His ways of dealing with us

Psalm 23:5

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

His ways are NOT our ways ...

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, **neither are your ways my ways**, declares the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways higher** than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

His ways are **NOT** our ways; therefore, **faith** must always be exercised.

Romans 1:17b

... it is written, “The righteous shall **live by faith.**”

Four Insights into the Ways of Yahweh

1) God pays **attention to the details**: *small things are part of His ways.*

Zechariah 4:10a (NLT)

Do not despise these **small beginnings**, for the Lord rejoices to see the work **begin** ...

2) God—in His ways—is committed to our **abundance** because ...

Half-Truths We Must Deal With:

- It’s about right beliefs
- It’s about going to a better place
- If it’s hard, then it can’t be good

2) God is committed to our abundance **because of Who He is.**

- He cannot be **indifferent** to our happiness.
- **Unholy** happiness does not last.
- He works not from **obligation** but from His **character.**

Avoid a **scarcity** mentality toward God.

Stay in a **receptive posture** toward Him.

The question is NOT: will God bless me but HOW?

Remember: Coram Deo = being with God

- Transformational presence

3) God’s ways include the **permission** He gives to our **enemies** and how they serve His good **purposes.**

When seen correctly as under God’s good authority, our enemies become **our servants.**

- a) The **truth** may come from them.
- b) They can help us get **closer to God.**
- c) They help us count the **right blessings.**
- d) They can make us **more like Jesus.**

Blessed: what we **receive** from God is **greater** than the **work of our enemies** ... even when I am my own enemy!!

Luke 6:27-28 (CSB)

But I say to you who listen: **Love your enemies**, **do what is good** to those who hate you, ²⁸ **bles** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you.

What is worse than your enemy?

- A **bad response** to enemy!

4) God's ways require us to take the **long-range view (keep *forever* in mind!)**

Psalm 23:6

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me **all** the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord (*Yahweh*) **forever**.

Take Some Things Off the Table:

- **Panic**
- **Fret**

Holy Affirmations (agreements with the ways of God):

- a) Yahweh has His **ways** and has **prerogatives**; He does **all things well**.
- b) Yahweh can do more by His **grace and goodness** than I can by **control**.
- c) Nothing comes against me that **my "with God" life cannot handle**.
- d) Everything will be **great in the end**; if it's not great yet, it's not the end yet.
- e) My **confidence** is in Yahweh

Psalm 23:6

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.