

Singing to your Shepherd!

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[0:00] Can everybody hear me? Good. Eh? What? You'll see me flip these up and down like nobody's business today.

Well, I get the very lovely job of speaking on a very familiar psalm today. Well, it's good in one way and it's not so easy in another, but because you're worried that people are just going to be very blasé about it and just run over the top of it, and I might do the same, but I did feel sorry for old Andy last week, really, without one.

Did you? Yeah? Lots of aching and bones and wasting away of flesh. Seemed hard work, and I did. So I get the job of Psalm 23 this morning, which addresses a number of issues.

Trust, protection, guidance, provision, rest, and comfort. All the nice things. Among many other things, of course. So, what we're going to do first is we'll just read the Scripture together, shall we? So, just on top of it this morning. I don't even have to say anything. It's there. Boom, like that. It's all over it like a car bonnet, as they say.

[1:16] Okay. 23. A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

If we want to read it together, that's fine. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, that's the valley of the shadow of death, by the way. 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 love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[2:19] Amen. May God bless that word to us and may reveal something fresh to us. I always struggle at starting these things off. So, I thought I'd give you a start with this little slide.

There we go. That's one of my sixth form students gave me that on leaving this week. It's a mug of student tears, physics student tears. This particular student had really struggled with so much with resilience and pushing through and sort of self-belief.

She's had so many meltdowns, it's unreal. And she had many tears. But she sent me this mug with a message and a card which says, I mustn't get emotional here.

I can feel myself going. But it said this. Where are the tissues, by the way? Come on, get it together. Where is it?

Oh, in here, are they? In front of you. So, that's it. I've knocked John's anointing oil over. I know I am. It's a communion. There we go. Okay. But she sent a message, a card to me.

[3:26] She said this. Thank you so much for your time, care and patience during the last four years. I will be forever in your debt. Dramatic. I'm not sure, but there you go.

If you say so. It's a thousand pounds, please. No. Behind every student who believes in themselves is a teacher who believed in them first. And you are certainly mine.

Told you I'd go, didn't I? That's enough for that. You're certainly mine. There will be no more physics-related tears.

I like it. There will be no more tears. I like that because it sort of echoes our relationship with God, doesn't it, really? You know, he believes in us before we believe in ourselves.

He loves us. And then our response is a response of love to him. So, I like that. I like that. And I also like it, the fact that she says there were no more tears. And we promised in the Bible that there'd be no more tears.

[4 : 29] One day, there'd be no more tears, which would be a great relief to me, I can tell you. Anyway, I thought I'd just share that with you. It's a lovely mug.

It's got all sorts of art crying two hours before an exam. Best served cold. Wash it out when you're done. There's all sorts on there. I just thought I might have a bit of a chuckle.

You just saw that. So, I guess the reason why I started with that is because, although there's lots of joy in this, there's a challenge in there, isn't it?

It doesn't, this passage is not purely about good times. It's about difficult times as well. It's about tears. It's about walking through that valley. And we'll talk some more about that as we go through. And I think it's because of that that this psalm is used in many funeral services. It's often quoted, The Lord's my shepherd. In that tone, you know. I shall not want.

[5 : 26] I never understood why Vick has taught like that. But there you go. Maybe it's just me. Okay. So, let's have a look afresh at that. And let's just ask the Holy Spirit to reveal something fresh to our hearts and minds this morning.

Yeah? I feel inadequate. But God spoke through an ass in the Old Testament. So, that's good news for me. So, Lord, we just ask you to have your way and teach us something fresh this morning. Something new. Something that will challenge us and move us on. In Jesus' name. So, let's have a look at slide four then, Josh, please. Okay.

It's widely believed that this psalm was written by King David, who, of course, spent a good deal of time being a shepherd himself. So, he knew what he was talking about. And in this landscape, this is actually a picture from Mike Fitton.

The great Mike Fitton, ace photographer. Journeyer of the world. Yeah. All around good guy. He sent me this picture.

[6 : 34] And it's actually the hills and mountains where they believe that David would have actually done his shepherding duties. And they think that this psalm was actually probably a response to him sitting there alone with God.

Actually, while he was shepherding. They think he may well have been written very, very early on in his life before he actually became King David. David knew what was needed.

If you look at that picture, you can see that's not an easy job shepherding, I should imagine, in that terrain. It's like spot the green pastures. There's not that many of them, is there really? You've got to walk a long distance, I think, for them.

So he knew about shepherding. Now, I'm going to spend quite a bit of time on verse 1. But don't panic. I feel as though God's laid on my heart that verse 1 is where we really need to focus and concentrate.

So I'm going to spend a long time on verse 1. Probably two or three hours. And then we'll start and do the other bits. That should only take another couple of hours after that. So you'll be home in time for the football.

[7 : 37] So verse 1 then, let's start on slide 5. Starts with this. The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing.

I shall not want, some versions say. This sets the context of the psalm. But we can often miss the importance of the first part and focus on what it means for us. In other words, the I will lack nothing bit.

I shall not be in want. That's the focus sometimes. But the real focus should really be on the first bit for me. The Lord is my shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord here, in this version, the actual Hebrew word is Yahweh, I believe. Of which I believe. And I'm no biblical expert. Please don't look at me and think, oh, it's a Bible expert there.

He's going to expound deep things about. That's not me, I'm afraid, at the moment. Maybe one day. Who knows? Maybe I'll get good one day. But I believe that the word Yahweh was a sort of very high term for God.

[8 : 39] And I believe that the Jews actually didn't mention it. They didn't say it out loud. Is that right, Martin? Am I right in saying that? Look at Martin, because he is a Bible expert.

But, okay. He coughed then as if he was making it up. But there you go. But it's the highest term, really, for God. It is God.

The highest name of respect for God. The Jews were afraid to say it out loud. In fact, it's used in the context, in this context, as a shepherd in several instances in the Old Testament. God's mentioned

as a shepherd taking care of and guiding his sheep, the people of Israel.

And it's David's own experience of that care in his own life as a shepherd that gives rise or causes this song of faith. Because that's what this is.

It's a song of faith and trust in God to be composed by him and for him to share his song to the Lord. To give an example from David himself and his shepherding, here in the build-up to fighting Goliath.

[9 : 41] We see this slide here. This is David's shepherding CV. He's already had his brother dismiss him, you know, for saying, you know, what's going on here? Nobody wants to fight Goliath.

And he says, shut up, you, you weedy little runt. Why are you here? You cocky, you are. That's your problem. He's already been sorted out by his brother. And now Saul's about to say, come on, be realistic.

You, look at you. You're not going to go out to fight Goliath. But David said to Saul, your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it.

Struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by his hair, struck it and killed it.

I have a strange picture in my head here of this great big bear wandering up. And David grabbing the sheep out of its mouth. The bear coming around like this.

[10 : 45] David grabbing it by the shoulders and going, wallop, like that. Glasgow kiss. Wallop. Straight down. Out like a like this bear. I don't know why. Oh, Carol, don't feel sorry for the bear.

It's trying to eat the sheep, man. Come on. Let's get there. Or wrestling with a lion, you know. Yeah, come on. Come on, then. Come on. Wow.

My goodness. Braver than me. But the reason why David could do that was this. It says, When it turned on me, I seized it by the hair, struck it and killed it.

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them because he defied the armies of the living God.

The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of the Philistine.

[11 : 43] And his assurance was in his shepherd. David was an exceptional shepherd because he knew he was being shepherded by the best shepherd you could have.

By God himself. He knew that the Lord was his shepherd. He knew that he would lack nothing. And that's the truth of it. Can I ask you my first question this morning?

Who's your shepherd? Who's your shepherd? There's an advert on TV at the moment. I see a lot because I see a lot of football. So unfortunately, I have to see a lot of betting ads.

But there's Eric Cantona there and he goes, Who you got? Who you got? I want to say to you, Who you got this morning? Who is the one whose voice you listen to?

Do you listen to that voice every day? Do you spend time in his presence? Whose guidance do you seek?

[12 : 47] Over her? When you've got a decision to make. Slide out. We know God through Jesus.

And of course, Jesus himself describes himself as the good shepherd in John 10. Not only that, he describes himself as the gate into the sheep pen.

So let's just read this, shall we? Sorry it's so small. Really, as a teacher, you'd think I'd get these things right, really, wouldn't you? But there you go. My boards are a little bit bigger.

Very truly, I tell you, Pharisees, anyone, this is Jesus speaking to the Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep by the pen, but climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber.

They didn't want to go via Jesus. They wanted nothing to do with Jesus. They wanted the order to stay as it was. But the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

[13 : 45] The gatekeeper opens the gate for him and the sheep listen to his voice. What a lovely picture this is. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he's brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them. And his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger.

In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Do we know the voice of Jesus in our lives?

Jesus used this as a figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Everything has to go via Jesus.

But I love this analogy of the shepherd. This is, I don't know. I mean, somebody once told me that actually that's how they used to do it. That's how shepherds used to lead their sheep. I don't know. [14:44] I honestly don't know. I'm not an expert in shepherding. Yeah? Come by. I can't do all that. But I do love this analogy because these sheep are being led.

They're not being driven. They've not got a dog snapping at their heels, forcing them this way and that.

And God's not like that with us. They're responding to his voice and following on command. Do we do that? Jesus never forces his plans, his purposes or himself on you.

The idea that Jesus is somebody who wants to control you is not where it's at. You always have free will to ignore or disobey his counsel.

Slide nine, please, Josh. Therefore, Jesus said again, Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who come before me are thieves and robbers.

[15:56] But the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.

In other words, in our lives, Jesus wants us to be so intimate with him that we know his voice and that we trust him entirely.

He wants us to bring each situation and decision every day and put it through the gate test. Jesus, shall I do this today?

I'm going out today into this pasture, Lord. Don't want to, but I'm going out. I want to do what you say is right for me.

Is this a safe place for me, Lord? How do I respond to this, Lord? The sheep pen isn't designed to constrain, but retrain us.

[17:10] Say that again. The sheep pen isn't designed to constrain, but retrain us. It's designed as a place of safety and protection.

And even when we go out, as we will, to find pasture, and it says that we'll go out the pen. We'll always be in that closeted place, looked after.

We'll go into difficult situations, out into the pasture. Into our daily lives, jobs, school. Some of that's the same thing for me, by the way. Throw that hat off.

Put another hat on. Sorry, I forgot to change my hat. But when we go out into these places, Jesus is already there in front of you, leading you.

Be aware of that each day of your life. If you're a Christian, as you walk out, Jesus is there.

Wherever you're going, Jesus is there. He's already there. Listen for his voice.

[18:10] He's calling you. Verse 10, it says, The thief, the one who doesn't come through Jesus, and anything in our lives that doesn't come through Jesus, that we don't give authority to Jesus, to veto, if you like, to put through him, talking in biology terms, and this is risky for a physics teacher, the cell membrane, yeah?

Decides what comes in and out of a cell. Jesus is a bit like, oh, cell membrane. If we allow him to be, he was laughing, because you got that question wrong on our exam. No, I'm joking. Basically, Jesus is like our cell membrane.

He decides what's good for us and what's bad for us. And he says, yeah, I'm going to let that come into your life. No, I'm not going to let that come into your life. That doesn't mean to say, by the way, that everything's going to be nice. It's not the way life is.

It's not how God designed it to be for us, to put us back in the right place in relationship with him.

Anyway, I'm witchering now, so shut up. Verse 11, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd. If you're looking to anybody else but Jesus, just remember they're a hired hand, won't you? Just remember they're a hired hand.

[19:27] Yeah? Nothing against hired hands. But they're not the shepherd. He doesn't own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.

Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he's a hired hand. He cares nothing for the sheep. There's no relationship there. No real relationship. No real commitment.

Okay? But Jesus is the good shepherd. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep. And my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, I lay down my life for the sheep.

Just like David laid down his life going after that lion or that bear. In confidence that God would do what was right for him. That he was being shepherded correctly.

You know, if you thought David was a brave shepherd, wrestling bears and lions, let's consider Jesus for a minute, shall we? One with God. The one through all things were made.

[20 : 30] Who left heaven and his throne out of love and compassion for us. Left the right hand of God. All authority. Poured himself into a human body.

Simply part of his creation. Simply part of his creation. His own creation. Tuck on mortality. The fear of death.

Lived. Offered people nothing but goodness. Eternal life. But was rejected by men. Put to death in a horrific way on the cross.

The sins he didn't commit. Became the sacrifice for the whole sins of the world. Past. Present. And future.

I am so thankful that God has got my future sins covered. Are you? And not only gave up his life. But literally went to hell.

[21 : 40] And back. To redeem you. From the jaws. Of the evil one. Now that's a shepherd.

That's the Lord shepherd. I like nothing. Because.

He is my Lord shepherd. The Lord. Is my shepherd this morning. I'll ask the question again.

Who's your shepherd? Can he or she. See into the future? Are they committed to seeing you live for eternity?

Have they given their life for you? Have they the whole universe? At their command? Slide 11 Josh.

[22 : 49] Colossians 1. 15 to 20 says this. The son. Jesus. Is the image. Of the invisible God.

The first born. Over all creation. I've heard that said loads of times. I've only just. Worked it out this morning. Aren't I stupid? The first born. Oh.

The first one to be born. That is over all creation. Nobody else has been born. That is over all creation. Did you know that? Jesus is the very first. And he'll always be the first. Because the first is always first.

Isn't it? Yeah. Your first born is always your first born. How silly. I've never seen that. For in him all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth.

Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him. And for him. He's before all things.

[23 : 45] And he's in all things. In him all things are held together. And he is the head of the body. The church. He's the beginning. And the first born from amongst the dead.

Nobody else has been from the dead. And been born again. Until he came along. He was the first. Wow. So that in everything he might have supremacy.

Hey I like the idea of having a shepherd who's supreme. Don't you? For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. And through him to reconcile to himself all things.

Whether things on earth or things in heaven. By making peace through his blood shed on the cross. What a shepherd. What a shepherd.

Amen. Well we haven't got very far through Psalm 23 so far have we? We're on slide 12 and it's verse 2.

[24 : 49] But don't forget. If you don't remember anything else today. Just remember what a shepherd you've got. What a shepherd you've got. One who cares for you and loves you so much.

One who's died for you. One who's redeemed you from the pit. He's fought the enemy. And he's grabbed you from his teeth. And brought you.

Into newness of life. Amen. He makes me lie down in green pastures. And leads me beside quiet waters. Well inevitably green pastures represent good grazing.

But the phrasing I think. Maketh. Makes. Causes me. If you like. These are the different versions. To lie down. The lie down bit means.

Sort of. From what I've seen. It means to stretch out. In green pastures. It makes me think.

[25 : 47] This is about rest and recuperation. More than feeding. Though God will still feed you. Wherever you are. Couple with that. In the commentaries I've looked at. The green pasture is a place of settlement.

A place. That will support life. And cause it to grow. Contrary to popular belief. We aren't always moving. And what I've got from this is. And God will occasionally.

Literally. He will make you lie down. He will literally. Make us lie down. If we don't. When we need to.

Or stretch us out. In a place. Where it will cause us to grow. And sustain our life. Often. We're confused. And we think we're not working. So we aren't earning.

We have that mentality. Yeah. I'm not working for God. At the minute. So I'm not earning his. Earning his approval. But he don't need that. God's not. He's not like a. You know.

[26 : 43] Today's shepherds. Where it's about. You know. You've got to get your. Cattle off to market. And make a few bob on it. He's not like that with us. He loves us.

And I just felt. As though I got the stress. To somebody. I don't know who it is. Don't despise the time. When God. Has brought you. To a standstill.

And made you lie down. Don't despise the time. When God. Has brought you to a standstill. And made you lie down.

Use it. Use it as an opportunity. To rest in him. To commit yourself. Into the care. Of the arms. Of the shepherd.

And stretch out. The lovely picture. On a 1970s album. Some people might remember it. Keith Green. Songs for the shepherd. Remember that John. John. I'm looking at John. Because he's one of the older ones here. But he had this.

[27 : 44] He had a lamb. Wrapped around his shoulders. On this picture. And he was smiling. And he looked a bit like Jesus. Because he got long hair. And he was white. No. I'm just joking. I'm just joking. Because all the old pictures.

I always saw that. Jesus was dead white. White. Subskin. Red hair. And all this kind of stuff. But Keith. He got this. This. This. This lamb.

Wrapped around his neck. And this lamb. Lamb is sort of like. Just. Just laid there. Quite happy and content. And then I picture myself. With me on God's shoulders. Going.

You've got to get off. You've got to get off. No. Come here. I want you to rest. You know. Commit yourself into the care of his arms.

And stretch out. Slide 13. Be ready for him to get you back on your feet though. He will lead you to places. Where you can calm those swirling emotions.

[28 : 43] I've said. Around in you. Water is often associated with emotions in the Bible. Isn't it? And fast flowing. Rough. Turbulent waters. Can be dangerous and scary.

Very. Very scary. Scary. But our Lord's shepherd leads us beside quiet waters. Even if those waters aren't quiet when we arrive. He's able to quell those waters within.

Those fears within. Those emotions within. Yeah. Situations that won't completely overwhelm us. Even in the storm we know.

When we're fearful and ask Jesus to calm the storm. Oh Lord we're going to drown. Oh you little faith. Peace. Be still.

And he speaks to the wind. And the waves. And they obey his voice. Because he's the shepherd. Verse 3.

[29 : 46] He refreshes my soul. He restores us. He repairs us. Fits us for the next leg of our journey through life. You been in the repair shop lately? Been in the repair shop lately?

Been restored? Had Jay Blades walking around you? Asking if you want a cup of tea? Oh I'll get that for you. He never seems to do any work Jay Blades. I don't know what it is. Is everybody else doing all the work?

Had those dints knocked out of you by Brenton? Doing his silver work? We all need a bit of time with our Lord.

Don't we? Our time. Quality time with our shepherd. Allow him in to care for us. To speak words of life. For us to drink of the water of life. Into our souls.

We all need time with him. We need to make sure we make that time. To allow him to feed us up. And then. He guides me along righteous paths for his name's sake.

[30 : 49] The Holy Spirit is the incarnation of God in you. If you receive Jesus into your heart. You've got the Holy Spirit at your disposal. He's your counselor.

He's your guide. He's the voice of Jesus inside you. He's like the WWJD bands. Can you remember those? What would Jesus do bands? Remember them? Never wore them.

Because I was all scared of doing something wrong. While I was wearing one. And somebody questioned me about it. It's impossible to benefit though from a counselor. And this came to me.

If you don't have a counselor. It's impossible to benefit from a counselor. Or if you don't have a good one. Yeah. If you have access to one.

But you don't turn up to sessions. So you don't spend any time. You never really spend any meaningful time with them. You'll get no benefit from the counselor. If you're not honest with the counselor.

[31 : 49] And don't listen to the advice that they give. In other words. You're not actually willing to be counseled. Jesus says in Revelation 3 verse 19 to 20.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. Not a heavy thing. But it has to be done. If you love your children.

You rebuke them from time to time. It's hard work. Saying the truth to your children sometimes. It's really hard work.

It's not nice. But he does it so that we're earnest and repent. Jesus says this. You want a counselor?

Here I am. Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice.

[32 : 50] And opens the door. I will come in. And eat with that person. And they with me. I will counsel them. I will fellowship with them.

I will love them. If you go on to read verse 21. The result is victory. Victory. Victory. Again in James 1 verse 4 to 6.

It says. Let perseverance finish its work. So that you may be mature and complete. This is interesting. Not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom.

You're lacking a counselor. You should ask God. Who gives generously to all without finding fault. And it will be given to you. But when you ask. You must believe and not doubt.

Trust him. Because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea. Blown and tossed by the wind. Those waters that should be quiet. Are bubbling up and thrashing around us.

[33 : 54] And it all goes pear shaped as they say. If you let him. He will guide you in right paths. Paths of righteousness. For his name's sake. You know his name is our guarantee.

I'm sure that's been used in advertising somewhere before. Our name is our guarantee. Well God's name. Is a guarantee. That he will do what he says.

His name will be honoured. He will always lift up his name. We won't suddenly discover. He's not always cracked up to be. As we do in this life. With some promises. His name is Jesus.

He is the Lord. And he puts his name to his promise. He will always be with you. Ready to do this. Wherever you are. But you must follow his voice.

Peace. So great then. No problems. All we must do is follow Jesus. He'll let us have a kip. Refresh us. Guide us to be righteous.

[34 : 51] To be righteous. But while ever. We're part of this world. Part of this pasture. Whether we're in the pen. Or out the pen. We will at some point. Encounter.

Encounter. The valley. Dun, dun, dun. Dun. Dun. And I shouldn't make light of it really. Because the valley is not a nice place.

We will encounter the valley. A place of dense. Covering. Steep sides. Hard for the light to get in. There's so much. Coverage. That's my picture of it anyway.

A place of dense. Covering. Steep sides. No escape. No way to get out. Only way to go is through. It may be a valley of a broken relationship. Or a lost child. Not making light of this.

[35 : 54] It may be actual. The shadow of death. May actually be. The shadow of death. Or a situation. That feels.

Like death. Like you're dying inside. Keep walking. Keep walking.

Keep going. Keep going. Jesus is leading you. Because he's clever like this. He's also behind you. And he's always to your left.

Yeah. Left. He's always to your left. And he's always to your right. Bible talks about him. Hemming you in. Keep walking when it's difficult.

I was reminded. Don't know if you've ever seen football. But it's an incredible thing. When you get a football crowd full. Singing. You'll never walk alone. I'm not a Liverpool fan.

[36 : 59] Never have been. But it's a tremendous. It's a tremendous feeling to watch it. Makes the air stand up on the back of your neck. But you know why? Because we know it's true. We will never walk alone.

We will never walk alone. More than hope in my heart. Jesus. The Good Shepherd. He will bring you through.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley. The valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil. For you were with me. Your rod and your staff. They comfort me. That rod to guide you.

To discipline you. But also. If you look in Leviticus. I'm going to cut this short a little bit. Leviticus 27.32 says. In terms of God. Every tithe of the herd and the flock.

Every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod. So the shepherd's rod was sort of a counting. Will be holy to the Lord. The rod was used to counting the sheep.

[38 : 09] To make sure they were all there. Furthermore. Our Lord Shepherd. Jesus has purchased us. And given us. To the Father. As an offering.

Not just one tenth. But everybody. His staff is a symbol of the authority. Of a shepherd. And as we know. Both Aaron and Moses.

Used their staffs. To perform many miracles. When deliverance was at hand. God will deliver you.

As you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Be sure of two things.

God's rod. Has counted you. You are counted. You are one of his. Be sure of the fact. That his staff. His authority. His miracle working power. Walks with you too. Be comforted by that. As you walk through the valley.

[39 : 03] And he delivers you safely through. Slide 17. Josh. Verse 5. You prepare a table before me. In the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

This is David saying two things. He says. God will show his extravagant grace and provision. In the most hostile of circumstances.

Right under the noses of your enemies. He's going to say. Come on. Let's sit down and eat. Come on. Let's sit down and have a chinwag. Let's get together. I'm going to refresh your style. I'm going to restore you.

Here. Take this. Eat it. It's good for you. Yeah. Yeah. But also. He sets us up as an example to those who oppose us. And plans. And opposes his plans for us.

He sets us up as an example of the benefits available to all those who follow him. Look at what you could have won. Jim Bowen used to say on Bullseye. Do you remember that program? Yeah. Look.

[40 : 01] Oh. Oh. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry you didn't want that. Look at what you could have won. Yeah. And he used to point them over there and there used to be a speedboat. Which is no good for you if you live in Birmingham. But there you go. Yeah.

But at the end of the day you know. Jesus doesn't say things like look at what you could have won. What he says is look at what you can have. And we need to be an expression of that to everybody around us.

Look at what you can have. Look at what I've got. Look at what you can have. We're told to bless our enemies.

Bless and not curse. Let's show them the opulent grace of God in our lives. And make them aware that it's available to all. The anointing oil pours on the head and it's fragrant.

And it pours everywhere. And our cup overflows. Our prayer should be that it overflows and spills onto our enemies. Just 18 now Josh.

[41 : 08] As we walk with our Lord Shepherd. We'll arrive in places and situations in other people's lives. Verse 6 says this. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Let's get the order here though. We often think oh great I'm in for goodness and mercy.

Goodness and mercy will follow me. As long as I follow the Lord Shepherd Jesus. We will be a source of goodness and mercy to others.

As we follow our Shepherd Jesus. We will not only be the sheep of His pasture. But a witness for Him. A source of goodness and mercy in other people's lives.

As we make the Lord our dwelling place. As we seek every day. Living according to His word. In the Holy Spirit. Under His grace. Every day.

[42 : 14] And you know what? That's our true worship song to our Lord Shepherd. Amen.