

THE FIRST 15

Monday, June 17, 2024

Today is Monday, June 17 and we are studying what the Bible says about contentment.

OPENING PRAYER

In the quiet stillness of a dawning day, I seek the Lord who loves me. I calm my restless thoughts, slow my breathing and center myself upon God's holy presence. Come, Holy Spirit, teach me to rest in your loving kindness. Help me discover the secret of contentment and peace in this earthly life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

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 fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest 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. Psalm 23:1-6 (RSV)

REFLECTION

During the summer we are slowing down to enjoy a lengthy reflection on a beloved Psalm - Psalm twenty-three. The summer season is an opportunity for us to join together, seek a Sabbath heart and discover the inner peace and soulful rest God desires for us. The opening words, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," grab at my heart. David's song is a declaration of deep trust in God. It serves as a prayer and meditation on my faith in God's provision for me. David sees God as a capable and faithful Shepherd who looks out for the best interests of the flock he loves. In John 10:11, Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

If God is truly my Lord and my Shepherd, then I am in need of nothing. If I really trust him, I can rest confidently knowing that he will Take care of me. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus invites us to ask God to "give us this day our daily bread." This same God can be trusted with all aspects and areas of my life - physical, spiritual, emotional, relational and financial. When I pray "I shall not want" or as other Biblical translations say "I lack nothing," this puts me in a place of peace and contentment. God knows exactly what I need and God will supply me to the full. When my needs are met I am more likely to look outward to the needs of those around me. God's Holy Spirit inspires me to meet the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational and financial needs of others and will even equip me to do so.

I consider my own life and how I have invited Jesus to be my Lord and Shepherd. I pause to examine myself - body, mind and spirit. What do I "want"? What am I "lacking"? What do I need my Shepherd to supply? I take careful inventory of myself and my life. I lift up my needs to God in prayer one by one - my physical needs, my spiritual needs, my emotional needs, my

relational needs, my financial needs, other needs. I put my trust in God to supply my needs - not necessarily my whims and desires, but what God knows I need. I remember how Jesus told his followers, "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open to you" (Matthew 7:7). I ask my Lord and Shepherd and trust completely in his loving care.

Ask: What is on my heart to ask God for this morning? How can I pray for my needs and the needs of others?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord God, you are the Shepherd of my soul. I have everything I need as I dwell in your loving presence. Lead me to the joy of green pastures and the peace of still waters. Remind me to stop and rest throughout my day and appreciate the little blessings you provide. As I go about my comings and goings, remind me that you are there to provide companionship, comfort and care. I am not alone, you are with me, guiding my steps to faithfully journey the good paths you have prepared for me. I lack nothing because I dwell in your abiding presence and love. Amen.