

## 1-19-20 **MANAGING THE 'RAT RACE' OF LIFE #1** **THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD --- Psalm 23**

In the 70's and 80's the phrase "Rat Race" was widely used to describe the craziness of schedules, expectations, and demands upon our lives at that time.

As I experience and observe life today .... I believe the pace of life and its demands are worse! Stress levels are at all-time highs ... social media consumes us, never letting our minds rest ... relationships are arguably fewer and weaker than ever before ... depressions and fears of all kinds are taking the joy out of living ... and the pressure "to be" and "to do" is under constant critique --- even by our closest friends and family ...

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE TO NOT BE OVERCOME BY THESE FORCES  
AND INFLUENCES OF THE CRAZY "RAT RACE" OF LIFE?

Yet, we read the words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4 & 6  
***"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice and be joyful! ...  
DO NOT BE anxious ABOUT ANYTHING ..."***

And we read the words of David in Psalms 16:11 ***"You make  
known to me the path of life, you will fill me with joy in your  
presence, with eternal pleasure at your right hand."***

And we read Jesus' words in John 10:10 ***"I HAVE COME THAT  
YOU MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL."***

How can we not be overcome by the demands and craziness of  
life?

How can we at least 'manage' life and experience God's well-  
being?

Today, we'll start a 7-week series titled: **MANAGING THE RAT  
RACE OF LIFE** that will draw from Junius Dotson's book, *SOUL  
REST*. I anticipate the following outline of sermons:

1-19-20 The Words of a Shepherd Boy Psalm 23 (David)

1-26-20 How Is It With Your Soul? Matthew 11:28-30 (Jesus)

2-9-20 It's Not All on Me Luke 10:41-42 (Mary & Martha)

2-16-20 Eat Something 1 Kings 19:5-9 (Elijah)

2-23-20 A Life in Crisis Job 17:7 (Job)

3-1-20 Living in the Light John 3:17 (Judas & Peter)

3-8-20 Wrap Up – THE CHURCH ON THE HILL, THE LIGHT ON THE HILL  
SHINING THE LIGHT OF GOD UPON THOSE CLOSEST TO US

**Linda Morey will be leading a Wednesday night study that corresponds  
to this sermon series and that will consider Junius Dotson's book,  
*SOUL RESET*.**

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### **Psalms 23** (NIV)

**The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside quiet waters,  
He restores my soul. He guides me along the 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 Your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days  
of my life, and I WILL DWELL in the house of the LORD  
forever.**

## **REFLECTIONS & APPLICATIONS:**

Jesus identifies himself as the “GOOD SHEPHERD.”

**John 10:10,11, & 14:** ... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ... <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... <sup>14</sup>“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—

- Jesus relates the “good life” to a life in the shepherd’s care.
- Jesus notes that a sheep’s shepherd is the voice that the sheep listen and respond to --- Whose voice do you most listen and respond to? “God help me to hear your voice through the noises of life and help to CHOOSE to follow your voice even though the world and even my own emotions encourage me the “other way.”

1. **DAVID REFLECTED UPON GOD’S GOODNESS & PROVISION in terms that David could relate --- WHAT METAPHOR OR TERMS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE GOD’S CARE & PROVISION FOR YOU?**

**HOW MIGHT YOU REFLECT UPON GOD** --- as the Great Auctioneer? The Great Golfer? Bowler? Gardner? Husband? Parent? Mechanic? Lawyer? Retiree? Teacher?

HOW DO YOU WANT GOD TO BE MADE REAL TO YOU TODAY?

WHAT ATTRIBUTES OF GOD DO YOU NEED RIGHT NOW?

2. **As God revealed Himself to David in terms of a shepherd --- what might God want the Old Testament Audience to know about Himself? What might God want us to know about God as we reflect upon the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm in the context of your life today?**
3. **IS THE LORD YOUR SHEPHERD?** Do you acknowledge God as your shepherd? Do you hear His voice? How do you respond to him? Do you tend to be like the ‘black sheep’ who is more self-spirited and defying?

4. WHAT WOULD HAVE IT MEANT IN DAVID’S CONTEXT TO “**DWELL WITH GOD**”? WHAT THOUGHTS & FEELINGS DO YOU CONSIDER WHEN YOU THINK OF “DWELLING” WITH GOD?
5. A SHEEP’S LIFE IS **A LIFE OF PILGRIMAGE** ---- DO YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU ARE ON A PILGRIMAGE? FROM WHERE? TO WHERE? DOES IT HELP TO BE REMINDED THAT THE “GOOD SHEPHERD” LOOKS AFTER US IN EVERYWAY?

HOW IS YOUR LIFE LIKE A PILGRIMAGE? Where are you traveling?

TO THE PROMISED LAND?

TO A BETTER PLACE? A BETTER WAY?

6. God sets a table for us (even in the midst of life’s craziness) --- WHAT EMOTIONS, FEELINGS AND CONNOTATIONS DOES THIS EVOKE IN YOUR MIND’S EYE?

**PRAYER: LORD help me to live this day, quietly & easily.**

*To lean upon Thy great strength, trustfully & restfully.*

*To wait for the unfolding of Thy will, patiently & serenely.*

*To meet others, peacefully & joyously.*

*To face tomorrow confidently & courageously.*

*St. Francis of Assisi*

### **Psalm 23 (Message)**

God, my shepherd! I don’t need a thing.

You have bedded me down in lush meadows,  
you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word, you let me catch my breath  
and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through Death Valley,  
I’m not afraid when you walk at my side.

Your trusty shepherd’s crook  
makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner  
right in front of my enemies.

You revive my drooping head;  
my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me  
every day of my life.

I’m back home in the house of God  
for the rest of my life.