

Today I want to share the different version of Psalm 23, The TV is my shepherd.

1. The TV is my shepherd, My spiritual growth shall want; It makes me to sit down and do nothing for His Name's sake.

2. It requires all my spare time; It keeps me from doing my Christian duty. It produces so many good shows that I must see; It restores my knowledge of the world.

3. It keeps me from the study of God's Word. It leads me in the path of failing to attend worship and doing nothing for the kingdom of God.

4. Yea, though I live to be a hundred years old I shall view my TV as long as it works. It seems to be my closest companion; Its sounds and pictures they comfort me.

5. It provides entertainment for me and keeps me from doing important things with my family. It fills my head with ideas which differ from God's will.

6. Surely, because of all the wasted hours there will be a lack of rewards at the Kingdom of God; Yet, because of His goodness and mercy, I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Some Christians lose the opportunity to experience God's activity because they haven't devoted enough time to their relationship with God.

I hope that The TV is not your shepherd. Let us memorize the Challenge bible verse, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." *Psalm 23:1*,

During the Lenten season I have shared some of the lessons I learned in the book, "*Seven Realities for Experiencing God*". I would like to share the last reality of Seven realities, "Obey and Experience." As I shared, knowing God is much more than just knowing about Him. Knowing God means experiencing God working in and through us.

When we obey what God tells us, God carries out what He purposed through us and we experience God's power and presence.

In today's scripture we meet Peter and John who experienced God's power and presence. Act 5:27 says that they stood in the council of Jewish leaders.

The first time that Peter and John had been arrested was after the healing of a lame man. They were asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Peter boldly replied, "Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead." So the Council commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you judge."

The second time the Apostles were arrested was when the high priest and the Sadducees laid hands upon them and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the Temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

You can imagine the embarrassment of the officers of the court when they came to fetch the apostles, and they were not there. But the apostles were not hiding.

Someone reported that they were standing in the Temple and teaching the people.

So they were arrested a third time. The accusation pronounced by the high priest falls into three parts: "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?" "And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching"; "and intend to bring this man's blood on us!"

The reply of Peter and the others is as bold as ever: "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

Our difficulty in following God isn't that we don't know His will. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul said, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."

Every day, every moment, God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible to reveal God's presence, God's purpose, and God's ways. Our discomfort comes from the fact that we know His will, but we don't want to do it.

A pastor shared a conversation with a man. He gave him the nickname, Mr. Luke Warm, for he was neither cold nor hot. Mr. Luke Warm said, "I am a Christian but seldom attends church because I am under a great deal of tension where I work and often go fishing on weekends for relaxation. Church is all right, but a person can't do everything, you know."

Mr. Luke Warm also had an uneasy conscience about his giving, for he continued, "I put a dollar or two in the offering plate whenever I go, and I think that's all God can expect of me. If I gave a tenth of my income, it would amount to more than \$2000. You just don't know how expensive it is for me to maintain my cabin at the lake and pay dues to keep my membership at the country club and the bowling league. Anyway, churches put too much emphasis on money."

I think Mr. Luke Warm does nothing wrong in that he wants to center his life around a career, a sport, a hobby, making money, or having fun. However, Does God want him to live in such a way? God has a plan for us. God is doing something in us or through us for His purpose. If we remain self-centered, we miss much of what God could do through our experience, both for us and for those around us.

When God gives you instructions in the worship, the personal prayer time, or the specific way, we have to obey immediately. However, sometimes God leads us to do things we won't fully understand until we have done them. God doesn't usually reveal all the details of His will when He first speaks to us. Instead, He tells us enough for us to implement what he said.

At the beginning of Moses' walk with God, he had no way of knowing everything he would need to do for him. But each time faced a need, he learned something new about God. Moses came to realize that there was much more to God than a burning bush. What if Moses had been so enamored with his experience at the bush that he built a tabernacle on the spot and established The Church of the Burning Bush? He would have missed out on so much more that God wanted to reveal to him.

Also, In Genesis 12:1 GOD told Abraham, "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you." What if Abraham had not followed what God spoke to him, He would not have experienced God's promise of a son to be fulfilled. He would not had been the father of faith. He learned to trust God through battles with kings and through the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The pinnacle of Abraham's walk of faith was when God asked him to sacrifice the one thing that meant more to him than anything else. God didn't ask Abraham to make such a significant sacrifice at the beginning of their relationship. Rather, it came more than 30 years after Abraham began walking with God. God taught Abraham to trust Him step by step.

As God progressively reveals His ways to us in our Christian pilgrimage, we , like Abraham, will develop a deeper level of trust in God.

Roman 8:29 says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.”

As God leads us in our Christian growth, He will allow challenges in our lives that match our character and relationship with Him. God won't totally change our character at once when we become a Christian. Rather, He will lead us through a process to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. God won't take shortcuts in His process of making us like Christ. Because He sees our lives from eternity, He will take as long as necessary to produce lasting spiritual growth in us.

Don't become impatient while God is producing Christlikeness in us. Obey all we know He's asked, and He will lead us at a pace that fits our present character and His purposes for us.

Our response to God will affect what He does next in our lives. Our obedience may affect the way others around us experience Christ as well. Obey God and Experience the abundant life God gives us.