

STUDY NOTES

PSALM 23 // A MESSAGE AT NEW CITY CHURCH
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The following content is based on the message "Psalm 23" spoken on 11/27/16 by Tom Schrader at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: PSALM 23

LIFE IS FILLED WITH UNCERTAINTY

Psalm 23 is typically associated with a death because it mentions the shadow of death. However, it is not about dying, it is about living. As we all know, life is filled with uncertainty, but standing in the middle of that uncertainty is Psalm 23. We find God shepherding us, and as the shepherd to his sheep, he wants to guard us and fight for us. However, it isn't true for everyone, because the Lord is only the shepherd of those who know Christ in a personal way. Re-read Psalm 23:1-4 by starting with the word "because" (Because the Lord is my shepherd...) to see how he wants to guide us.

- *What are some things in your life currently that have caused you to feel like life is uncertain?*
- *Share about some of the times in your life when you've looked to God as your shepherd more regularly.*

A PRAYER ROOTED IN GOD

Psalm 23 isn't telling us that life is going to be easy. But it does give us a model of hope a rooted in who God is. Verse 5-6 can represent a prayer that is rooted in the: *character of God, promises of God, faithfulness of God, and sovereignty of God*. But even though we can know that our hope rests on these things, we'll never understand that Jesus is all we need, until Jesus is all we have. Why? Because we are like sheep.

Here are a few things that we know about sheep:

- they are stupid
- they are defenseless
- they are really dirty
- they are stubborn
- they are always lost
- they have a mob mentality.

Sheep need a shepherd. You need a shepherd, and the Good Shepherd came along to find you right where you are. God loves you in spite of you, not because of you.

- *Why should our hope be rooted in God's character and not in the things of this life?*
- *How does the description of sheep resonate with you?*
- *Talk about how you either believe or don't believe that God loves you in spite of you, not because of you.*

HOW DOES LIFE LIKE THEN?

The shepherd knows the sheep and knows what you need. We can live confidently, boldly because of him. God is bigger than anything that you don't have. God is bigger than anything that you do have. The shepherd knows each sheep to know what they need to be safe and secure.

You have everything you need for right now.

While this is true, this doesn't line up with our personal experience. We don't feel like we have everything we need. Our Christian lives weren't meant to be problem free. Difficulties are designed to make you draw near to him. God is never going to say to you that he doesn't love you if you come to him in repentance and faith. Even if you have had this all along, but never realized it, all these blessings are yours.

- *Especially going into Advent, how difficult is it for you to believe that God is bigger than anything you don't have or anything you do have?*
- *Why do we struggle with believing that we have everything that we need right now?*
- *We might say that we understand that the Christian life isn't meant to be problem-free, but how do we often fall into the trap of believing that it's meant to be problem-free?*
- *What are some ways that the Good Shepherd reminds you that he cares for you?*
- *Pray with each other and ask God to lead us individually and as a group.*