**Trusting Christ-Followers**

**(Identity in Christ part 2)**

 *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

***2****He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*

***3****He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

***4****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.*

***5****You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

***6****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, ESV)*

 Happy Mothers’ Day everybody! May the Lord bless all our mothers, may He defend them, strengthen them, and use them for the flourishing of our families. Moms, we love you and may the Lord keep you with us always.

 I believe that the Word of God is conveying to us today that we as Christians are the people who trust God. Today we are continuing our sermon series from last week, and we are talking about an important expression of our faith, namely our trust (in God). The 23rd Psalm is world-famous in its pleasantness and simplicity. However, the truth of its contents is often not put into practice or even respected(!). Today we are talking about what kind of approach is needed to life as followers of our Lord through this faith-journey of life. If we are truly those who follow Christ, then perhaps our spiritual lives need to contain that same level of trust that we see in Psalm 23. Again, we as Christians are called to be disciples of Christ who trust God. Let’s see how that works in a bit more detail…

 Living with a constant trust in God is part of our identity. Everybody knows this Psalm. At the very least, you know the phrase, “The Lord is my shepherd.” What does that mean, however? The answer to the question is given in the rest of the psalm through examples of our Heavenly Father’s deeds. First, He is the One who takes care of all our needs – He does not withhold anything that we need. He gives us, His sheep, opportunities to rest in “green”, nourishing environments. He keeps the sheep in tranquility, despite the fact that in the deserts, there could be threats of sudden storms and flash flooding. The Shepherd (God Himself) works for the restoration of the sheep. His goal is to bring the followers onto the path of justice or righteousness (which He is always on). Even in the darkest situations which are usually involving death, He cares for us so well that we the sheep are not afraid of anything. Why? It is because the presence of The Shepherd is already a strong support. The staff and the rod are already sufficient to keep the sheep on the right path and keep the wild animals far from the flock. The Shepherd has water and oil with Him – He satisfies thirst with water, while protecting the sheep from insects with the oil. In that ideal situation, how could David not say that goodness and mercy would follow him always?

 For example, when you go to a hotel for vacation and everything is taken care of already, what a great feeling it is when you know that you are simply there to enjoy the already purchased blessing.

 Today, you and I can safely trust God because He has already taken care of everything through Jesus. He has given to us all that we need according to His will at the right time. He has given us chances to be restored through His Word. Even though there have been proverbial or literal “enemies” on our path, He has, through His “table”, through His nourishment, enabled us to stand and withstand them. He has satisfied us both physically and spiritually. He has not only corrected our life-path, but also defended us from all kinds of dangers, from things that we may not have even sensed were a threat. He has guaranteed our salvation, and without being prideful about it, we can say that we will dwell in the House of the Lord always.

 Therefore, knowing all this, can we do anything but trust God absolutely in our lives? How can we not trust Him who has kept your life in the very palms of His hands? We are the examples to the world with our trust in God, and it is our calling to invite those around us to that same absolute trust in Him. May the Lord grow within us a trust like King David had in Him, and may people see and hear just how trustworthy God is through our testimonies. Living with a constant trust in God is part of our identity. We as Christians are the people who trust God.