

OUR BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

Psalm 23:1-6

INTRODUCTION: Stress is a major problem in all of our lives today. We are working harder and resting less in America today than at any other time in the history of our nation. Have you ever felt like you were burning the candle of your life on both ends? The Word of God gives us a solution to our stress. There is a Bridge over our troubled waters. When we chose to follow Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior there is a promise given to us in God's Word of rest: Psalm 23:2. In that verse are tucked three secrets on how to handle the problem of stress we all face and how to get the rest of body, soul, and spirit that we all really need.

I. WE MUST FIND OUR REST IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD!

Psalm 23:1-2 tells us the first thing our Shepherd does for the sheep is to "make them lie down in green pastures." The Lord wants us to rest before we go to work: Ecclesiastes 3:13. Our Lord wants us to enjoy what we have worked for. When we spend time in the presence of our Good Shepherd we grow faster and get stronger than at any other time of day. The first step in dealing with stress in our lives is to realize we must rest in the presence of our Lord.

II. WE MUST RELY ON THE PROVISION OF OUR SHEPHERD!

The Shepherd not only makes the sheep lie down, but He makes them lie down in green pastures. The green pasture we lie down in is the Word of God which is our spiritual food. Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:103. There is grass that is not good for the sheep. Our Lord knows what we need! Ezekiel 34:14-15. Sheep will only lie down when they are fully satisfied, when their stomach is full, when they have shelter, and when there is safety. Ephesians 1:3: we already possess in Christ all the blessings we will ever need: 1 Timothy 6:6-8. One of the reasons we have so much stress is that we have yet to learn to be content with what our Lord has given us. Philippians 4:19.

III. WE MUST BE REFRESHED WITH THE PEACE OF OUR LORD!

Psalm 23:2: Our Lord leads us beside the waters of quietness. In Israel between March and October there is virtually no rain. The heat scorches the grass and water holes dry up and the sheep must be led and fed both green grass and be led to sources of water. Just as the grass God speaks of refers to the Word of God, so the still waters he speaks of refers to the Holy Spirit. John 7:37-39; Mark 6:33-34. So many are eating goat grass and drinking from polluted streams yet they are never satisfied: John 4:6-14. We need to STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN: John 10:27-30. We must learn to take time in prayer to listen to our Lord and take time to speak to our Lord in praise. When we allow our Good Shepherd to make us lie down in the green pastures or His Word and lead us beside the still waters of His Spirit; while others are drowning in a sea of difficulty and stress, we will be standing on our Bridge over troubled waters.