Steps for Living a Blessed Life
Psalm 23
Sermon Outline

A. Rest Assured that God is Always in Control (vs. 1a):

1. Has always been the Master of David’s life even when David was unaware of it.
2. The Lord has been David’s rock, shield because He fought for David.
3. The Lord is Master Controller because He directed and established David as king.
4. Shepherd:
   a) On the one hand, he is the “sheep” whose Shepherd is the Lord. At the same time, one of the most common description of kingship in the ancient world is that of shepherd. In this sense, David as king was shepherd over the flock of Israel. This means that Ps. 23 is also a royal psalm. Even though the word “king” does not appear in it, this psalm is a description of what it means to be a good ruler. Moreover, the psalm prophetically speaks of Jesus. He is the Good Shepherd whose flock trusts in Him (John 10) and the King whose perfect rule will be established (Luke 23:2, 3; Rev. 17:14). The psalm has two movements: (1) a description of the Lord as Shepherd caring for the psalmist’s every need (vv. 1–4); (2) a description of the Lord as Shepherd extending His mercy to all (vv. 5, 6).[1]

B. Submitting to God Establishes Provision (vs. 1a-b):

1. God is an efficient Provider.
2. Qal, 1st person, singular, imperfect, active, preterite, common - David never goes lacking because God’s grace is sufficient to meet his needs.
   a) “I shall not want” is the theme of Ps. 23. “I shall not want” for: rest and refreshment (v. 2), restoration and righteousness (v. 3), protection in trouble (v. 4), provision in the wilderness (v. 5), and a home to go to at the end of the day (v. 6).[2]
3. When a believer walks righteous God blesses them (Psalm 112; 128).
4. When a believer seeks wisdom and knowledge God blesses them (Proverbs 24:3-5).

C. Our Shepherd Sustains Us When we are Weary (vs. 2; Galatians 6:9):

1. Because He is Lord and Shepherd he makes me rest from exertion with abundant care.
   a) The Lord provides forgiveness and peace for those who follow Him.
2. Always blesses us to rest when life leaves us exhausted.

a) God makes me to rest from exertion in, with a sense of security, in the abundant care God (pastures) gives to His people (“pastures of tender grass,” are mentioned, not in respect to food, but as places of cool and refreshing rest.\textsuperscript{3[3]}. Still waters [Like camels sheep can go for long periods of time without water and then drink as much as nine liters.

3. God is my provider and He blesses me.
4. Our Shepherd leads by the hand because before Satan we are helplessly dependent on His guidance.
   
a.) The most distinctive feature of this extended metaphor is the wise leading of the shepherd. He leads into rest and reviving, into the struggles of life, and through the dangerous places. The shepherd thus provides for the needs of life and protects from the fear of danger. \textsuperscript{4[4]}

5. Because we become unsettled when life is turbulent Christ quiets life down so we can be refreshed.

   a) God’s provision of still waters has \textit{a soothing effect} and calms the sheep (They are contrasted with boisterous streams on the one hand, and stagnant, offensive pools on the other.\textsuperscript{5[5]} [Lead – Shepherd’s loving concern, to lead someone by the hand who is helpless. This represents \textit{spiritual refreshment} and therefore causes David to lack nothing (John 6:35; godliness leads to contentment 1 Tim. 6:6).

D. He Refreshes and Guides us Through Life’s Painful Issues (vs. 3):

1. Brings their spirit back (return) to God’s original intent.
2. Heals our spirit restoring joy and peace (Isaiah 41:27-31).
3. The Holy Spirit give us vitality and sustenance from the inside out. He brings us back from death to life.
4. Christ keeps me from getting into trouble by convicting my heart and leading me into the path of righteousness (John 16:7-11).
5. He guides me not against my will but always towards His will.
6. Christ guides me into a well-worn path. This is grooves in a dirt path as a condition of being often used by carts.
7. He guides us so that we develop an unwavering adherence to the standards of God.
8. His loving, tender guidance leads establishing God’s reputation so that among men God is famous with a great memory among His people.

E. Submitting to God Establishes Protection (vs. 4; 1 Peter 10-15):

1. Walk could be related to the path of righteousness that God guides since the word walk relates to a person who behavior is characteristic of a righteous lifestyle.
   a) Walk through a ravine overhung by high precipitous cliffs (designated as a the burial site for the hostile armies of God – Ezek. 39:11,15, a place where they burned trash or a place where the worship molech and sacrificed their children to him), filled with dense forest, and well calculated to inspire dread to the timid, and causes someone to be prey for wild beast. Despite his surroundings, which encourage fear, he will not react emotionally.

2. David has reason to fear evil, after he evaluates everything intelligently, but made a choice not to fear – God is the Good Shepherd (the path is righteous and well-traveled).

3. David will not fear those who have a very negative inner attitude toward God and therefore lack the ability to live based on God’s standards.

4. God remains with me with no plans to leave me (Matthew 28:20).

5. God’s authority rules and He protects against all evil as we walk in the path of righteousness.
   a) The rod was a club worn at the belt, while the staff was a walking implement that doubled as a weapon in time of need (1 Sam 17:35) and guided and controlled the sheep.
   b) The shepherd used the “rod” as a weapon of defense to drive off beasts of prey, and the “staff” to lean upon as well as to guide straying sheep (Ps 23:4). The Hebrew words translated “the dark valley of death” (23:4) are better translated “valley of deep darkness.”

6. Means to provide support while they are walking and steers them when needed. This fills David with confidence despite the danger that surrounds him.
   a) The staff was a long stick used for support in walking.

7. God consoles us, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16), giving us compassion as someone would do when another has lost a love one. This compassion allows the person to be able to take deep breaths again.
   a) The soul when thinking of the possible danger, is quieted and comforted by the assurance of the faithfulness of the Divine Shepherd. The shepherd not only leads the flock, but defends it, hence the mention of two staves[6][6]

F. Our Shepherd Desires Fellowship and Friendship (vs. 5-6; John 15:13-14):

1. God arranges and sets in order provision despite the presence of enemies (referring to opposing battle lines).

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a) In this verse the scene changes to a banquet hall where a gracious host provides
lavish hospitality. Under this imagery the psalmist rejoiced in the Lord’s provision.

2. God’s arrangements to take care of us is done in our presence.
3. Despite the position of his enemies God organized the table and then treated David as a special
honored guest.
   a) To rub a guest’s head with olive oil was part of the prescribed etiquette (the forms
prescribed by custom or authority to be observed in social, official, or professional
life) followed by a solicitous host as he welcomed his guests (same for Christ; Luke
7:46).
4. God provides an abundant supply an overabundance of what we need.
   a) “My cup is full (or “overflowing”): the immediate reference is to the banquet cup
from which the psalmist drank, but the symbolism is deeper. The banquet was a
celebration of God’s provision and protection; the psalmist’s experience of life (viz. his
cup) had been so bountiful, that it was life itself which was full of blessing, overflowing
with thanksgiving. 7[7]
5. God’s kindness, mercy, economic benefits, favor, and loyalty pursue or hunts after us.
   a) Pleasant and excellent life experiences, and practical benefits. It also means to
experience economic benefit that is excellent, as well as practical good to the point of
delight to acknowledge the attributes of God’s works
6. God’s steadfast, unearned generosity pursues us because God always maintains is
observation to His people.
   a) The word refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between
the parties of a relationship (especially Yahweh and Israel). But checed (Hebrew) is
not only a matter of obligation; it is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of
loyalty, but also of mercy.
7. God’s goodness and lovingkindness pursues us every day of our lives because He is our
Shepherd. His faithfulness leaves us lacking nothing.
8. David has no intention of ever removing himself from the presence of God. He enjoys
worshipping God and fellowshipping with Him. David’s desire is to have a permanent
relationship with God.
9. When our friendship with God is sincere time becomes irrelevant.
   a) The Hebrew for this word suggest “throughout the years.” 11:7; 16:9-11.