*Jesus in the Psalms Series*

Psalm 23: The Shepherd King’s Banquet

**Intro: The Bible’s most bookmarked page?**

**I. Old Testament Context (of Psalm 23)**

- O.T. royal shepherding metaphors: 1 Kings 22:17, Jeremiah 23:1-4, Ezekiel 34:1-10, Psalm 80:1

- O.T. royal banquets: Gen 43:31-34, Job 36:16, Isaiah 25:6, Psalm 45:7,

**II. Basic Form and Original Message (of Psalm 23)**

a. The Lord as Shepherd (Psalm 23:1-4)

- A God who leads and provides for his people (vs 1-2)

- A God who restores our [*nefesh*] life breath (vs 3)

\*James Herriot story

- In the most dramatic point of the poem, the poet speaks directly to God in an affirmation of trust (vs 4-5)

“The true setting of this Psalm is the existential space of being in the presence of something that is terrifying, a space in which every reflective human being finds himself or herself at some point, and a space in which, according to the witness of the poem, the Lord can also be found.” Nancy deClaisse Walford

b. The Lord as Banquet Host (Psalm 23:5-6)

**III. New Testament Development of Psalm 23**

- Luke 15:1-7 Jesus = An invitation to the royal shepherd’s banquet table

- Luke 22 Jesus = The Passover lamb becomes the banquet feast…

- Rev 7:17 Jesus = the lamb who leads his people to living water!

**Conclusion**

Individual and Group Study Questions

*Icebreaker:* Do you know anyone personally who cares for sizable amounts of animals (country vet, dairy farmer, dog breeder, etc)? Tell the group about the characteristics, temperament, and unique attributes of this person..

1. Read Psalm 23 out loud. Speculate what makes this such a famous and beloved poem.

2. According to the poem, what are some ways that God cares for his sheep?

Can you think of any personal examples of how he has done this for you?

3. Review verses 4 and 5. What declarations does the poet make while he / she is in the valley of death?

4. What did the poet likely mean by “fear no evil?” Is this possible for us? How should Psalm 23 still help Christians with fear and anxiety?

5. There are two clear things that God is compared to in Psalm 23: a shepherd and a banquet host. Can you find examples of how New Testament writers develop these themes and images via Jesus?

(Hints to get started)

Jesus as Shepherd: Matt 9:36, Matt 15:24, John 10:3-30

Jesus as Banquet Host: Luke 13:26-27, Matt 24, Luke 7:46

6. Study Luke 15:1-7. How is this story connected to both elements of Psalm 23 (God is our shepherd + God prepares a banquet)? What is the significance of Luke including both details? Coincidence?

7. How can/does/might the original, Old Testament understanding of Psalm 23 help you find comfort and direction from God?

8. How does this New Testament understanding of Jesus (as our shepherd and our banquet host) help you understand and follow Him (refer back to section III of sermon)?