

Refreshing My Empty Times Series

May 28, 2025

Scripture: Psalms 23:1-6

Summary: "Refreshing My Empty Times" provides four essentials for experiencing satisfaction in life from Psalm 23:1-6.

Times Of Refreshing

"Refreshing My Empty Times"

Introduction

We've been in the book of Psalms, looking to experience "Times of Refreshing" from the presence of the Lord.

If you've ever been disappointed by the emptiness and dissatisfaction that often times marks our lives, then Psalm 23 is for you.

One of the most beloved portions in all of God's Word, it has been a comfort at funerals, an encouragement to the bedridden, and a blessing to young children.

King David wrote this Psalm, which gives us the essentials for "Refreshing My Empty Times."

There are four essentials for finding refreshment in empty times...

1. KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE (v1)

The imagery of the Psalm:

When King David wrote how God meets our deepest needs, he did not envision a beggar crawling to a rich lord, or a trembling slave entreating his cruel master, but he pictured the relationship between a Loving Shepherd and his dependent sheep. David grew up a Shepherd and knew all too well the relationship, which he describes.

To understand this Psalm, we have to have the perspective of a sheep belonging to a Shepherd

****I can't make it on my own:**

People are referred to as sheep at least 65x in the Bible.

Isaiah says that” we all like sheep have gone astray, each has turned to his own way.”

Jesus was moved with compassion toward people because He saw them like “sheep without a Shepherd.”

Not very flattering comparison when you consider how God designed sheep:

1. Directionless: cats and dogs can find their way home instinctively, but sheep are directionally confused very easily. They need the Shepherd to guide them.

2. Defenseless: most animals have defense mechanisms – sharp teeth or claws, speed, illusiveness, keen sense of smell, sight or hearing, strength, ferocity or a growl, but not sheep, they are totally vulnerable to attack from predators. They need the Shepherd to protect them.

3. Fearful: very aware of their weaknesses, sheep are spooked easily. They are emotionally reactive animals, often driven by fear. They need the Shepherd to calm and rest them.

4. Filthy: Other animals lick, scrape or roll themselves in the grass to get clean, not sheep, they will carry parasites and remain filthy unless the Shepherd cleans them.

5. Dependent: other animals can find food and water on their own, but sheep will be happy to eat poisonous weeds and die. They are so dependent that one will follow the other in destructive patterns. They need the Shepherd to provide for their most basic and fundamental needs.

That's God's Design: Like sheep, we were NOT created to try to make it through life on our own. Because God designed us to for a personal relationship with Him, and we'll sense something is missing from our lives until we come to know Him. The sense that something is missing from our lives is felt by the “poor and unknown” as well as the “rich and famous.”

GOD DIDN'T CREATE US TO GO THROUGH LIFE ON OUR OWN

****I need to belong to the Lord:**

I used to be troubled by David's words "I shall not want", thinking that David was saying he did not want God as his Shepherd.

But many feel that way...why? We have serious misconceptions.

I took a survey of 100 people, the top 3 answers are on the board for the question, "Why don't people want God to run their lives?"

Answer number;

3. God doesn't really care about me. The thought that God is unfeeling, impersonal, and a cruel disciplinarian: impersonal.

2. God will withhold good from my life. As though God is holding out on us and enjoys seeing us in need: uncaring.

1. God will make me give up the things I like to do. This is the idea that God's plan will make me miserable, no fun.

Do these thoughts sound familiar?

Satan's lies about God's plan Gen 3:1-5.

David is saying, since the LORD is his Shepherd, he lacked nothing.

God doesn't want to rip you off or ruin your life. He wants to give you the fulfilling life you were meant to live.

GOD DIDN'T CREATE US TO GO THROUGH LIFE ON OUR OWN

****I need to belong to the Lord:**

David is saying the since the LORD is his Shepherd, he lacked nothing. God doesn't want to rip you off or ruin your life. He wants to give you the fulfilling life you were meant to live.

But it is the result of belonging to God as your Shepherd.

The \$64,000 question, “Do you belong to Jesus?”

Maybe you’ve heard of Him, and believe in Him, but have you received Him as your Savior?

· John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name (NKJV).

Circle “believe.” Do believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins? You’re half way there, circle “received.” Have you ever made this moment of time choice to receive Jesus as your Savior and become His child. Have you done that? Get it done today!

WE CAN ONLY SAY, I SHALL NOT WANT,

IF WE CAN FIRST SAY, “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD!”

Refreshment begins once you know whose you are, then you must ...

2. TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE (v2-3)

All that God has for His people is accessed through trust!

****Rest when I feel weary “He makes me lie down in green pastures”**

“Makes me” refers to providing the environment for rest to occur.

Sheep will only lie down when...

- 1. They’re satisfied: Hungry sheep stay on their feet searching for food, but green pastures are what the Shepherd provides.**
- 2. They’re secure: Sheep will not lie down when they are fearful. Wolves, bears and lions are a constant threat.**
- 3. They’re still: Sheep will not lie down if fleas and flies are bothering them.**
- 4. They’re serene: If there is harmony in the flock and no butting, they will relax and lie down.**

The Shepherd’s responsible for providing the environment for rest

Sometimes we hurry about life and miss what is most important.

God will not have that, so He shapes circumstances so we can come to Him for rest. What are your circumstances saying?

****Replenishment when I'm thirsty "He leads me beside quiet waters"**

Water is a problem for sheep. They're poor swimmers and get bogged down when their wool gets wet, so they're fearful of moving water.

"if not led to the good water supplies of clean, pure water, they will often end up drinking from polluted pot holes where they pick up...internal parasites.

****Restoration for when I've strayed "He restores my soul"**

"Restore" means to turn back or show the way home." In Matthew 18:12 Jesus said a Shepherd would leave his 99 to go and bring back 1 who has strayed. Sometimes we get off track and drift away, but Jesus seeks to restore us to the fold.

No matter who you are or what you've done. Will you trust Jesus for full and complete restoration of your soul?

****Right leadership for my life "He leads me in the right paths"**

A Shepherd is the leader, manager, and director of His sheep. Sheep were created with needs that only a Shepherd can fulfill. There are many paths in life that look good, but are dead ends. He "leads" and we are to "follow" because He knows the path and we do not.

>How can I be sure God is trustworthy? "For His name's sake"

"He acts for the sake of His reputation" it is literally understood.

God is putting His reputation on the line as assurance of His care.

Parents are evaluated by the way they care for their children.

A Shepherd is judged by the condition of His flocks.

God has proven Himself faithful in my life in each of those areas!

Which area do you need Him to prove Himself faithful in today?

Mark it down! Trust Him to do His part as you do your part.

- Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (NIV).

We experience refreshment when you know whose you are, you trust God to provide then you must....

3. RELY ON GOD'S PRESENCE (v4-5)

You never have to go through anything alone, God is there for you.

****Experiences: "I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"**

Circle "though" because we should expect some valleys in life

Every valley is surrounded by mountains, expect valleys.

The Shepherd knows the way and goes with you through them.

A first grader stood up in front of his class to give his speech, "What I Want To Be When I Grow Up." He said, "I'm going to be a lion tamer and have lots of fierce lions. I'll walk into the cage and they will roar." He paused for a moment, thinking through what he just said, then added, "But of course I'll have my Mommy with me."

****Emotions: "I will fear no evil"**

Fear has become a multimillion-dollar industry. Amusement parks, horror movies, Stephen King books, and TV shows like Fear Factor have all become popular. Maybe it's because each is in a controlled environment and we know everything will turn out OK in the end. But life's no controlled environment and fear can paralyze us.

But God's presence changes everything. God is with me!

If you are sick, He is the Great Physician. If you are lonely, He promises to never leave me nor forsake me. If I am afraid of the dark, He is the Light of the world. When He is present, everything changes.

Rod and Staff: These are two ends of the same stick.

The rod is the blunt end used to drive off attackers.

Sheep are defenseless creatures that rely completely on the Shepherd to protect them.

The staff is the crooked end the Shepherd uses to pull the sheep out of tough places. Sheep are stupid and routinely require the Shepherd to rescue them.

Be comforted that He is with you to protect you!

****Enemies: "In the presence of my enemies"**

There will be enemies. But His presence overrides theirs.

Jesus said in John 15:18, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before I t hated you."

There will be bad experiences, we will have to face difficult emotional battles, there will be enemies about us, but His presence makes all the difference.

. Hebrews 13:5 ...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (NIV).

We experience refreshment when you know whose you are, you trust God to provide, rely on His presence, then....

4. TAKE THE LONG LOOK (v6)

Life is a marathon, not a 100-meter sprint, a process not a product; it's a life-long journey with a final destination.

****Take the long look @ My whole life "all the days of my life"**

When the Lord is my Shepherd, I put myself under His care.

"Goodness" will mark my life. It means favor, grace, sweetness and bounty. God fills my life with good things.

"Lovingkindness" is God's unconditional love that cannot be earned or deserved.

What is your life marked by? Dissatisfaction and emptiness or goodness and lovingkindness?

This is the opposite of the top 3 reasons people don't want God to run their lives. He bestows favor and unconditional love toward those who are His. Every day of your life it follows after you!

IF I HAD 1000 LIVES I'D GIVE EVERY ONE OF THEM TO JESUS

****Take the long look @ My Eternity "I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever"**

Have you ever thought about where you'll eternity?

When you get to where you're headed, where will you be?

David said he'd spend forever with God in God's house.

Where will you spend it? Are you His? Is the Lord your Shepherd?

THE BACKDROP OF YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS ETERNITY!

If you want refreshment for your empty times, then turn to God, ask Him to wipe out your sins because of Jesus. Then Times of Refreshing are coming your way. Two words for you: "believe" that Jesus died to pay for your sins, and "receive" Him as your Savior and Shepherd this moment.

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (NRSV)