

Theme: The psalms of confidence display the confidence God's people have in His loving care for them.

I. Intro – Amazing Grace in Star Trek

- A. Funeral for Spock – way in future
- B. Played Amazing Grace!
- C. Some things are so embedded can't change
- D. Psalm 23 has a place like that
- E. What is it about this Psalm?

II. Psalms of Confidence

- A. United by tone & content – not structure
 - 1. Laments use common structure
 - 2. Thanksgiving psalms use common structure
 - 3. Confidence psalms have no set structure
- B. Normal elements of tone & content
 - 1. Tone of great confidence
 - 2. Often confidence in face of enemies
 - 3. Confident because God is present
 - 4. Use metaphors for God – rock, light, shepherd

III. Psalm 23 – The Lord Is My Shepherd

A. The structure of Psalm 23

- 1. One central figure – the Lord! (1, 4, 6)
 - a. Inclusio of name in 1, 6
 - b. You – verse 4 (center)
 - c. Note shift from 3rd to 2nd person
- 2. Two key metaphors for Lord (shepherd, host)
 - a. Shepherd (vv 1-4) – common, but note “my”
 - b. Host (vv 5-6)
 - c. Same key ideas: provision & protection

B. The Key Ideas of Psalm 23

- 1. The Lord is my provider
 - a. Food, drink – grass/water (1); table/cup (5)
 - b. Rest/renewal – lie down (1); restores (3); comfort (4); anoint (5)
 - c. Guidance – guides me (3); staff (4)
- 2. The Lord is my protector
 - a. Valley of shadow of death (v 4)
 - b. His rod of protection (v 4)
 - c. Protected from enemies (v 5)
- 3. Abundant nature of provision & protection

- a. No lack (v 1)
 - b. Cup overflows (v 5)
 - c. God Himself is with us (4)
 - d. God Himself provides & protects ('my'; 4-5)
- C. Conclusion: Pursued & Kept by Covenant Mercies
- 1. His covenant mercies & character
 - a. Goodness and love (☺☺☺)
 - b. God's covenant character is in view
 - 2. Pursued by covenant mercies
 - a. Pursued – not just followed
 - b. Ps 143:3; 31:15; 109:16
 - c. Pursued by God – not enemies!!!
 - 3. Kept by covenant mercies
 - a. Will dwell in house forever
 - b. God will sustain and keep me
 - c. None can snatch away!! (Jn 10:27-30)

- 2. Can you say this? – don't delay!
- B. Be confident – He is our Provider & Protector
- 1. He Himself is all you need
 - 2. He gives to His people richly!
 - 3. He is with us at all times and places
- C. Jesus & Psalm 23
- 1. He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
 - 2. He is proof of God's covenant mercies
 - 3. He anoints us with oil of Spirit
 - 4. He sets out Table for us - Eucharist

Confidence: The Lord Provides for and Protects Me

Psalm 23

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Response: Communion

Benediction: Hebrews 13:20-21

IV. Conclusion & Summary

- A. Is the Lord your shepherd?
 - 1. The Lord is **my** Shepherd – personal

Psalms of confidence

- ✓ United by tone & content rather than structure
- ✓ Normal elements of tone and content
 - Statements of confidence
 - Often confident in face of enemies
 - Confident because God is present
 - Metaphors for God (rock, light, shepherd)

3 The enemy **pursues** me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

Psalm 143:3

15 My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who **pursue** me.

Psalm 31:15

16 For he never thought of doing a kindness, but **hounded** to death the poor and the needy and the brokenhearted.

Psalm 109:16

27 My **sheep** listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. **28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.** 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; **no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.** 30 I and the Father are one.”

John 10:27-30