



A dark, atmospheric photograph of a body of water, possibly a lake or river, with a rocky shoreline in the foreground. Bare, tangled tree branches frame the scene from the right side. In the background, a small, dark building with a gabled roof is visible through the branches.

# Soul Care

PERSONAL RETREAT

# **SOUL CARE**

## *The 23rd Psalm*

### **SUGGESTED SCHEDULE**

*9:00 - 9:30 Prep Time*

*9:30 - 10:30 Diving Deeper*

*10:30 - 11:30 Making it Practical:*

*11:30 - 12:00 Closing consideration / prayer time*

*12:00 - 1:00p SOUL CARE DEBRIEF -*

*Share with someone what God has spoken to you today.*

### **5 "P"s of SCRIPTURE MEDITATION . . .**

*PREPARE ... a passage from Scripture to spend time with*

*PLACE ... where I will be uninhibited in my response to God's presence*

*POSTURE ... relaxed, peaceful*

*PRESENCE ... be aware of God in the space*

*PASSAGE ... turn to it and read it slowly ... wait on God to speak*

### **9:00 - 9:30 Prep Time**

Find a quiet place that will allow you to focus on God. Here's a couple of leading thoughts to start you off:

- 1     *Are there any circumstances preventing you from being completely present with Jesus this morning? Take a minute to offer those to God.*
- 2     *Read thru **Psalm 23** two or three times. Begin by being thankful that God is a shepherd. What thoughts does that bring to mind that you can be thankful for?*

### **9:30 - 10:30 Diving Deeper**

Let's break it down now.

### ***THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; I SHALL NOT WANT. HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES.***

Recall the past and present blessings of your life in the areas below. Think about your life broken down into segments — how have I experienced these things in each of these seasons of my life so far?

Write down the blessings of God in each area as they apply to you ...

AS A CHILD

AS A TEEN

20-29

30-39

40-49+

- 1     *When you have not been in want ...*
- 2     *When you have found rest, satisfaction, life peace, plenty of available 'water' ...*
- 3     *When you have been MADE to lie down ...*
- 4     *Re-read the Psalm.*

***Other Scriptures about the love of God for you:***

*Isaiah 43:1-4*

*Romans 8:35-39*

*Psalms 81, 103, 104*

***HE RESTORES MY SOUL. HE LEADS ME IN PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE.***

Sheep are always looking for the soft easy place to lie down. In such places, when the hollow is too soft, too rounded, it's easy for the sheep to roll over and become 'cast down.'

That's a danger in the Christian life, too — always looking for the easy place, the cozy corner, the comfortable position where there is little need for endurance or little demand for self-discipline.

The moment we think we 'have it made' is often the moment we're in danger.

Additionally, a sheep's wool could become matted with manure, mud, burrs and other debris - making it easier for the sheep to be 'cast down.' The shepherd would quite simply shear the sheep to forestall the danger.

Our lives aren't much different. The Master takes us in hand and applies the cutting edge of His Word to our lives, shearing and clipping and cleaning out. That can be unpleasant business for a time, but the after-effects are amazing.

We need to - on a regular basis - examine our own lives as to any sin that has slipped in and ask God to purge us to make us ready for the call He has on us.

Below is a list from ***Galatians 5*** to run your own life through. This version is from THE MESSAGE and gives a little different spin on some things that can cause us to be 'cast down.' Work thru the list and make some self-correction if you need to.

**Galatians 5:19 - 21 - “it is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time:**

- **repetitive, loveless, cheap sex**
- **a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage**
- **frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness**
- **trinket gods**
- **magic show religion**
- **paranoid loneliness**
- **cut-throat competition**
- **all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants**
- **a brutal temper**
- **an impotence to love and be loved**
- **a divided home and a divided life**
- **small-minded and lopsided pursuits**
- **the vicious habit of de-personalizing everyone into a rival**
- **uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions**
- **ugly parodies of community**

## **10:30 - 11:30      Making it Practical:**

*David, in his Psalm, challenges us to willingly and with determination ‘be led in paths of righteousness.’ That begs the question: HOW?*

*Author Eugene Peterson suggests that David’s ‘imagination’ had much to do with his victories in life. He saw things from God’s perspective so often. Peterson then poses the question, ‘Where did David gain such a divinely oriented imagination?’ He suggests four things that shaped it — **David’s praying, his singing, his meditation and his adoration.***

*Ask yourself these questions and ‘imagine’ how each of them might be present in your life.*

- **How should I BEST incorporate praying into my own day-to-day life going forward?**
- **How should I BEST incorporate singing into my own day-to-day life going forward?**
- **How should I BEST incorporate meditation into my own day-to-day life going forward?**
- **How should I BEST incorporate adoration into my own day-to-day life going forward?**

**THOUGH I WALK THRU THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I SHALL FEAR NO EVIL FOR YOU ARE WITH ME.**

*Clearly, David understood about walking thru valleys. He knew the pain of it - how God used it - and the benefit from it.*

*What's your 'valley'? Are you in one right now? MORE than one? NAME them.*

---

*Then meditate on and be thankful for these three possible results:*

- ***An attitude of quiet acceptance because we know God is with us***
- ***The potential of great future refreshment as a result of it***
- ***Strength and courage for right Christian character development***

*Look at some of the valleys Jesus walked through from the Gospel of **Mark** and let it be an encouragement to you in your own valley:*

<b><i>Testing by Satan</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 1:12, 13</i></b>
<b><i>Criticized for befriending a sinner</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 2:16</i></b>
<b><i>Disciples who just didn't 'get it'</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 4:34</i></b>
<b><i>The storm at sea</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 4:40</i></b>
<b><i>His hometown has no respect</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 6:3</i></b>
<b><i>Personal heartbreak</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 6:34</i></b>
<b><i>Pettiness of others</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 7:2</i></b>
<b><i>Desperate sorrow</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:34</i></b>
<b><i>Desertion of friends</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:40</i></b>
<b><i>Betrayal</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:43</i></b>
<b><i>Lying against Him</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:56</i></b>
<b><i>Humiliation</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:65</i></b>
<b><i>A close friend denies Him</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 14:66-72</i></b>
<b><i>Being mocked</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 15:18</i></b>
<b><i>Thinking God deserted Him</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 15:34</i></b>
<b><i>Crucifixion</i></b>	<b><i>Mark 15</i></b>

**11:30 - 12:00      CLOSING CONSIDERATION / PRAYER TIME**

***SURELY GOODNESS AND LOVINGKINDNESS SHALL PURSUE ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE.***

*Do I leave behind resurrections of peace in others' lives?  
Do I leave behind resurrections of forgiveness in others' lives?  
Do I leave behind resurrections of contentment in others' lives?  
Do I leave behind resurrections of love and mercy in others' lives?*

Consider your current legacy as a man/woman - a husband/wife - a father/mother - a friend - a follower of Christ.

***PRAYER:*** “*I want to be where You are, God — I want to totally immerse myself in You: to know You. My deepest desire is to become more like You. Make it clear to me how to do that day-to-day in my life going forward.”*