



Sermon, Sunday April 28, 2024 “David’s Confession of Faith!”

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 23:1-6 ¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; ³ he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Introduction: Are you satisfied with your life?

Today is the fifth Sunday of Easter. Today’s text is titled “A Psalm of David.”. There are many praise songs that use Psalm 23 as their lyrics. The reason Psalm 23 is loved by Christians is because its lyrics are simple, yet deep and gracious. Today’s text begins with the sentence, “**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.**” and ends with the sentence, “**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**”

It would be nice if we could live a life like David's confession in today's text, but it is not easy to live this life because most people feel more lacking than satisfied in their lives. I hope that David's confession in Psalm 23 will be our confession today. If we can sincerely confess like David, we will experience a more abundant life. So, what was David’s life like?

Body: David’s life

In fact, David is a well-known figure in the Bible, so much so that anyone who has lived a religious life at church has heard of David. We know very well the story of David and the Philistine general Goliath. So even people who do not go to church know David's name well.

However, David's life as recorded in the Bible was full of difficulties and hardships, and he also had a tragic family history. David, who lived this kind of life, said, ‘**I shall not want.**’. It is an unexpected confession. Under normal circumstances, David would not recommend his life to others.

David was a rural shepherd boy who became the son-in-law of Saul, the first king of Israel, and then the king of unified Israel. However, he lived an uneven life from beginning to end.

. David's relationship with his wife Michal was also not smooth. He suffered from problems with his children until his death. David's son Amnon committed the tragic act of raping his half-sister, Tamar. Because of this incident, Tamar's older brother Absalom even killed Amnon. Then several years later Absalom attempts to usurp David's throne. Of course, ‘**Absalom’s Rebellion**’ was suppressed, but this incident led to Absalom’s death. David was very sad about the death of his son Absalom. (2 Samuel 18:33)

Furthermore, David suffered from the problem of who will succeed him to his throne. David had several sons. Representative sons are Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, and Solomon. Because Amnon and Absalom died, Adonijah had to inherit the throne. However, Solomon, not Adonijah, inherited the throne. Later, Solomon



killed Adonijah. In this way, David's life as told in the Bible was not happy. Nevertheless, why was David able to sing, **'I shall not want.'**

Before answering this question, we need to think about human life. When evaluating people, many people only look at their outward appearance (appearance, wealth, power, fame, ability, talent), and we sometimes ignore those who do not have these things and are marginalized.

However, these external conditions are a non-essential part of life. The most important and essential parts of our lives are hidden. People are not willing to reveal their hidden essence. The most important essence of human existence is that the human soul is restless. So, as Psalm 23:4 says, all humans have no choice but to walk through the **'darkest valley.'**

However, this anxiety of the human soul cannot be resolved by any conditions in the world. Therefore, when thinking about the essence of human beings, there is no difference between those who have many external conditions and those who do not. David's life was like that; like a hero on the outside, but internally his life was dominated by anxiety and pain.

Nevertheless, there is only one reason why David was able to confess Psalm 23. David maintained a very close relationship with the Lord throughout his life. For David, faith in the Lord was the driving force that enabled him to live a life despite any shortcomings.

People outside the church may find this answer too obvious or too religious. In today's message, I would like to tell you about two important grounds for David's faith.

First, the basis for David's life is contained in the sentence, **'The Lord is my shepherd.'** This confession comes from David's actual experience. David's original occupation before becoming king was as a shepherd. He clearly knew what the relationship between **'sheep and shepherd'** was like. Shepherds take risks to protect their sheep. Sometimes shepherds risk their lives for their sheep. In this way, the shepherd and the sheep have a common destiny. Because they trust such a shepherd, the sheep absolutely trust and follow the shepherd. With the same heart, David confessed, **'The Lord is my shepherd.'**

So, can a shepherd always completely guarantee the safety of his sheep? In fact, no matter how well a shepherd takes care of his sheep, difficult things happen to the sheep. For sheep, natural disasters may occur, epidemics may spread, and some sheep may die while giving birth. Similarly, difficulties can always arise for those who believe in the Lord. Nevertheless, David praises the Lord, saying, **'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.'** How was this possible for David?

Because the goal of life for those who believe in and follow the Lord is to get closer to the Lord. If something difficult happens in our lives, it will make us tired and uncomfortable. However, these things cannot stop us from getting closer to the Lord. David experienced this in his life, so he can confess in Psalm 23:4 like this, **"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me."**

I hope that we can all overcome this with faith and not be afraid of harmful things or misfortunes that happen in life.

So what is the second basis for a life without deficiencies that David talks about? Verse 4 of today's text says, **'you (the Lord) are with me.'** Because David knew this, he was not afraid of any difficulties or misfortunes that might come his way. Also, in today's text, David expresses the fact that the Lord is with him by saying, **'your rod and your staff— they comfort me.'** In this verse, the rod is a tool that shepherds use to lead their sheep, and the staff is a tool used by shepherds to fight wild animals to protect their sheep. Sheep follow their shepherd without complaining even if it rains or snows or if they encounter a steep slope. This is because they absolutely trust that the shepherd will ultimately lead them to safety.



However, this kind of faith is not given automatically. Also, we can't force ourselves to believe it. Such faith is formed through a long trusting relationship between shepherd and sheep. If we apply this to our religious life, our absolute faith in the Lord is given to us as a gift of grace as our relationship with the Lord deepens.

However, the problem in our religious life is how we can experience that the Lord is with us. When young, many people live intensely, following their life goals and schedule. And, as we grow older, we are so preoccupied with the issue of death that we cannot think deeply about these issues. However, John 10:11 says: **'I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.'**

Please remember that the Lord, our shepherd, is not only good, but he even gave up his life for us. People who thrive in life are sometimes characterized by excessive self-confidence and blind self-worship. For these people, the death of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, often cannot reach their hearts. It is not because the size of the Lord's love is small, but because people who live such a life not only do not see the Lord's love but are also not interested in it.

Therefore, if our interest in the Lord, the Good Shepherd, is growing little by little in our lives, we are heading toward the right path. On the other hand, if we are more interested in the sweet pleasures brought by the world's material civilization than in the Lord, the Good Shepherd, it is clear evidence that our faith is moving away from the Lord.

Conclusion: May Jesus be at our center.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Now let's summarize today's message. In today's message, I said that human existence is like passing through the darkest valley. No matter how colorful and enjoyable our lives seem on the outside, humans are lonely and anxious beings.

However, many people in the world ignore our true nature and live by following the world's materialistic ideology like an idol. Such thinking is a momentary consolation to their anxious and lonely lives.

However, we Christians are people who center our lives on the fact that Jesus Christ is the good shepherd who gives up his life for the sheep. Please do not forget that the lives of these people lack nothing in the fundamental essence of life. David is confessing this today through Psalm 23. I hope we can all respond with 'Amen' to David's confession. **Amen!**

