Hello to all the Pine Ridge family.

My scripture reading took me to Ecclesiastes 2 and Psalm 23. It didn’t take much debate to settle on David’s psalm. However, if you do read Ecclesiastes 2 you will understand Solomon’s problem. Just count how many times in that chapter he uses the words, “I” and “myself.” It shows his problem.

Psalm 23 is the most known section of Scripture. It is quoted as the favorite scripture of more people in the English speaking world than any other. It is the most commonly requested passage for people at funerals. I don’t think that David intended it to be a funeral psalm. It is a psalm for the living, breathing believer.

The first line in not meant to be an “all-inclusive invitation.” The first line definitely limits to whom this psalm may apply: those who belong to the LORD. If there is not a distinct connection between you and the LORD, then nothing in this psalm applies to you. Shepherds are in control of the sheep, *they* are the Lord of the flock. David says that as a sheep, he agrees to be guided and cared for by this Shepherd. He recognizes that following Him is in his best interest.

Sheep rarely understand the intentions of their shepherd. They just trust him because just as there is a difference between a dumb animal and man, so there is a difference between us and an all knowing God. Trust is paramount between shepherd and sheep. The sheep are of great value to the shepherd. After all, you are not a shepherd without sheep and He declared Himself to be a shepherd to us. So even when he leads us in strange directions, we can trust him. He knows that there is a pasture up ahead for our rest.

The second part of this first line is, “I shall not want.” Many people envision this psalm being written while David was still young and tending the sheep. I think that is a mistake. This was not written by a young teen. This was written by someone who had had all the life experiences spoken about in this psalm. So when he says, “I do not want for anything” he speaks of someone who has fled from Saul and Philistines. He has been supported by enemies (2 Sam 22:45) and betrayed by friends (Ps 41:90). This man understands how to trust in the worst of circumstances.

Solomon is credited with being the wisest man who lived, but David was also the wise philosopher here. When he states that he does not want, he is saying that what he has now, where he is in life, satisfies him. He is where God wants him to be. It does not mean that he is not to strive to change that situation, in fact, he expects it. He is expressing satisfaction with the active and running will of God in his life. The negative part of wanting is wanting for something that is not in the will of God. David will not want for that.

David has struggled with understanding just how God was working in his life. Psalm 23 comes after psalm 22. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,” was written by David about some point in his life. He had *so* many events in his life where that verse could apply that we cannot know for sure which one prompted the 22nd psalm. So this is not about blindly trusting or never questioning God about your life. It is about agreeing to see that wherever you are, whatever is happening, God is in control. He will lead through strange paths because He knows that there is a peaceful pasture up ahead; there are still waters to refresh. We can trust Him because He has done this before, - and He has promised to always do it.

So, is the LORD your shepherd today? Then, like David, you too should not want, but trust that you are where He wants you. And that He will lead you tomorrow.

Have a blessed day.

Pastor EA