

Daily Devotional, May 6, 2020 For His Name's Sake

You have seen in the flow of the Psalm in yesterday's devotion how God provides: of David's faith in a God who provides for him food and nourishment and restoration and guidance. David tells us that God leads him in the right paths, taking him in the right direction. But why? That is one of the interesting questions of Psalm 23 and our focus in this devotion. Why does God do this for David? Because David is a great person? Because God greatly favors David? No, He does it for ultimately one reason, and one reason only. "He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." The reason why God leads David in paths of righteousness is not just to help David, but ultimately, at the deepest level, God does what He does *for His own sake, for His name's sake*. God does what he does so that *He* gets the glory, the honor, and the praise. It is intensely God-centered.

I think our human tendency is to go through life thinking that *I* am the center of the universe and that absolutely everything revolves around *me*. So, when I pray to God my shepherd and I ask for things, I'm expecting God to do it because *I am the center of everything. I am the most important person on the planet*. Everything is about me, right? No, it is not about me. At the deepest, most fundamental level, it is about God, God's name, God's reputation, God's glory, God's honor, and God's praise. That is what David understands. He understands that *all things are to be done to the glory of God, not me, not your elders, not your church, and not your country. All things are done for God's glory*. Just as *we* are about God's glory in what we say and what we do, so also is God about *His own glory* in everything that He says and does.

This is one of the great unifying themes that run through the entire Bible. There are many passages that we could look at, but here are a few that are also written by David that appear in a few of his Psalms, for example, Psalm 25:11 (NIV). In this Psalm David is asking God for forgiveness of his sins. David writes, "*For the sake of Your name, Lord, forgive my iniquity though it is great.*" David wants his sin forgiven, but, there is a more personal element in that, he understands that his request is not what ultimately motivates God. What ultimately motivates God is that it will be done for the sake of God's name. When we seek forgiveness or make any other deep request, when we witness God's affirmative reactions, then our praise and our glory and our honor and our adoration does *not* go to the sinner. It does *not* go to the preacher who talked about the sin, or the person who encouraged the prayer. No, the praise, honor and glory *go to God*. It is for His name's sake, for His reputation.

David writes, this time in Psalm 31:3 (NIV): "Since You are my rock and my fortress, *for the sake of Your name*, lead and guide me." We see this line of thought all throughout the Bible. David most clearly understands this: God is the center of the universe. All things revolve around God and ultimately everything that we say and do, all that we think and the ways we act, all that we believe and that we teach and that we preach, all of these things, are to bring praise and glory and honor ultimately to God and God alone. David understands that "He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake." David is not the center of the universe and neither are we.

David's ultimate reaction to God in Psalm 31:5 is a complete surrender of himself, displaying no doubt, but complete trust: "Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God." (NIV) You may recognize these first words as those also used by Jesus on the cross. We should commit our families, our possessions, our vocations, our health, our fears and our health to God. But above all, we should commit ourselves completely to Him. *For the Sake of His Name*.

Prayer: Jehovah Raah, for the sake of Your name, forgive my iniquity though it is great. Lord, though these times in my life are often difficult, times when I do not always see the grass as green or the water as still, when I veer off of the path that you have encouraged me to follow, help me to seek you in all things. When I lose track of you and seek other ways to relieve my troubles and fears, to strive for and to take pride in my own successes, I no longer honor you or give you the credit or the glory that only you deserve. Forgive me in my blindness, may I commit my spirit, my entire being into your hands, for the sake of your Holy name, Amen.