



Psalm 23: Confidence & Bravery in Battle
Lesson 1: A Covenant Mentality

1. Introduction

Psalm 23 is one of the most misunderstood and misused passages of scripture.

David did not write this Psalm so that we would have something nice and religious to read at funerals.

David wrote this Psalm _____
 as a reminder of his covenant with God.

The revelation contained in Psalm 23 is what you need when you are facing an attack of the enemy – you need to remind yourself of your covenant with God!

Although there is controversy over exactly when this Psalm was written in David's life, it is probable that it was written while he was still a shepherd, tending to his father's sheep.

Psalm 23 was possibly written right before David fought Goliath.

Some Historians tend to think that this is the time frame in which Psalm 23 was written. Some disagree. However, even if we are wrong, it is not going to change the meaning of the Psalm.

Considering the promises found in this Psalm, it makes a lot of sense that David wrote it right before his battle against Goliath.

2. Reasons why Psalm 23 was probably written right before David killed Goliath.

• _____

Psalm 23:5

We know that David was young when he wrote Psalm 23, but he was still old enough to have enemies.

Children do not have “real” enemies.

At the time of the famous story of David and Goliath, Israel was at war with one of its enemies – the Philistines.

Psalm 23:4 reveals that David was facing some kind of danger when he wrote Psalm 23.

Psalm 23:4

Goliath was dangerous!

The battle was fought in the Valley of Elah.

3. Spiritual conflict

Psalm 23 is not about an escape from conflict, but rather about how our relationship with God enables us to endure conflict. It teaches us how to fight and be victorious in battle!

It is about walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, not around it.

Too many Christians are more interested in avoiding conflict with the enemy, rather than engaging him, fighting, and being victorious.

4. The foundation for victories in spiritual battles is our relationship with God.

Psalm 23 is all about the relationship of a shepherd with his sheep.

At the time of the story of David and Goliath, David was still a shepherd.

He was sent to the battlefield by his father to check up on his brothers and take some food to them when he encountered Goliath.

In 1 Samuel 17:34, right before David fights Goliath, he refers to his training he received while he was a shepherd.

1 Samuel 17:34, 35

5. David's background

David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse from the kingly tribe of Judah. He was also a direct descendant of Ruth the Moabite.

David began his life as a shepherd in Bethlehem. One day, the prophet Samuel called him out of the field and anointed him as the future King of Israel. David simply returned to his sheep and continued his job as a shepherd.

David's first interaction with King Saul was when the king was looking for someone to play music for him. The king's attendant summoned David to play the harp. For a time, David was the king's musician. Then David returned to watching his father's sheep.

6. The setting for Psalm 23

Here stands Goliath, the Philistine, an enemy of God's people

- Goliath was 10-12 feet tall.
- He weighed approximately 600-700 pounds – which was all muscle. The Bible says that he was a trained man of war.
- Just his armor weighed approximately 225 pounds. His shield was so big and heavy that it was carried by another soldier in front of him.

Every day for forty days Goliath presented himself to Israel, challenging someone to fight him to win freedom for Israel.

The Army of Israel was so afraid of Goliath that they dug holes in the ground and lived in the holes to hide from him.

7. Uncircumcised Philistine

Along comes David one day and says, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?"

Circumcision is a sign of _____

David recognized that Goliath was not in covenant with God like the Army of Israel.

David was saying, "Who is this giant who does not live in the covenant? Who is he to defy Israel – God's Covenant people?"

God's covenant is about God's promises to those who have decided to be a part of God's family.

8. David and King Saul

David went to King Saul and agreed to fight Goliath, ignoring what everyone else was saying.

King Saul offered his armor to David, but it was useless to him.

King Saul was so much larger than David.

9. David and Goliath

David finds himself standing in the Valley of Elah, where he and Goliath are about to fight.

Twelve-foot-tall Goliath was fully arrayed in armor, ready to wipe out David.

David was a young Israelite. He was possibly about five feet tall with no armor.

He has his staff in one hand and his sling in the other hand, along with five smooth stones in his pouch.

All the army of Israel is standing around watching David – their fate lies in his hands.

All the Philistines are watching Goliath thinking is this some kind of a joke.

Then David, before he descends into the Valley to fight Goliath begins to remind Himself of God's Covenant promises.

10. In the face of conflict, we need to remind ourselves of God's covenant promises.

We need to remind ourselves of God's covenant promises everyday of our lives – not just when we are facing giants.

If we make it a habit to declare God's covenant promises every day, when we do face giants in our lives, we will have the confidence of David.

11. The Lord is my shepherd

Psalm 23:1

The Lord is my shepherd – _____

Rohi (or Raah, a variant spelling) is the Hebrew word for “shepherd.” Jehovah is God's personal name in Scripture. Jehovah Rohi means “the Lord Is My Shepherd.” It is one of God's many names in the Bible. Both “rohi” and “raah” come from a Hebrew root word meaning “to feed” and came to mean a shepherd who feeds his flock. The image of God caring for us like a loving shepherd cares for his sheep is one of the most familiar and loved pictures of God in Scripture.

In the Hebrew, the word “shepherd” implies _____

Sheep follow the shepherd. The shepherd leads them.

David was saying – “God is my chief and my leader. Fear is not going to lead me. Circumstances are not going to lead me. Man is not going to lead me. God is my leader, and I belong to Him.”

Notice that David does not say – “The Lord is a shepherd, or the Lord is the shepherd.”

The Lord is my shepherd. – The foundation of David’s life was not a doctrine or a fact he learned about the Lord. It was personal. The Lord was his shepherd.

The entirety of Psalm 23 is based on the relationship David had with the Lord.

He understood the Lord was his shepherd because he had experienced it.

He also had a revelation of the Lord being his shepherd because he was a shepherd himself.

When He is “your” shepherd you can stand with confidence, knowing that your shepherd will provide you with what you need.

12. I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

Sheep do not take care of themselves at all. If a shepherd doesn’t take care of them, they will die. The shepherd meets all the sheep’s needs.

This is not the case with most animals. Generally, animals take care of themselves.

Even the Hebrew word for “shepherd” means to feed or to eat.

David was saying – “I don’t have any needs because God takes care of all of them,”

Philippians 4:19

Hebrew definition of NOT WANT:

- Not lack
- _____
- Not lessen
- Not be abated
- _____
- Not make lower
- Not want

13. The mentality for warfare

Psalm 23:1

This is the mentality of warfare.

Most people do not think that Psalm 23 has anything to do with warfare.

But David, through the Spirit of God, is showing us the mentality of a warrior.

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore, I shall not want.

In other words, because of who the Lord is (because of His nature and character) I can count on the fact that certain things will be a reality in my life.

Because He is my shepherd – _____

This is a “covenant” mindset.

David understood his covenant when he went into battle with Goliath.

14. Fear comes through words we receive.

1 Samuel 17:22-24

Why did they were afraid? – They received the words of Goliath.

Words are carriers of either faith or fear.

The only way your enemy can defeat you is to get you to receive words of fear.

1 Samuel 17:25, 26

David heard the words of Goliath too. However, he understood his covenant.

15. Covenant

It is important to note that covenant is _____

If the Lord is “your” shepherd, you understand that you are victorious!

All covenants include responsibilities from each party involved in that covenant.

Marriage is a covenant. The husband has responsibilities, and the wife also has responsibilities.

In our covenant with God, there are certain things He will do. He performs His part of the covenant based on two things:

- Who He is
- His obligation to the covenant He has with you

Not only was the Lord David's shepherd, David understood the responsibilities of a shepherd.

16. The duties and responsibilities of an Eastern shepherd

- _____
- The shepherd looks for and finds the sheep that have gone astray.

That describes how incredibly committed God is to you!

- He leads them to food and water.

There is provision with the shepherd.

- _____

There is safety with the shepherd.

- He names them, knowing each of them personally.

The Bible tells us that the sheep know the voice of their shepherd.

This shows us the relationship the shepherd has with his sheep.

17. Conclusion

Warfare begins with the mentality of a soldier.

A soldier must know who they are and who they are in covenant with.

Romans 8:31

This is the understanding you need when you face your enemy – understand that God is with you!

David knew this and therefore did not let fear enter his mind. He was able to stand with boldness and confidence when confronting the enemy.