

P227

GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM

SERIES: Psalm 23

TITLE: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness

SONGS: Keep Your eyes upon the cross

Jesus hold my hand

INTRO: Though God is a powerful leader, He's also a gentle shepherd.

Isaiah 40:11 says...

He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.

In his book, Psalm 23: The Song of a Passionate Heart, David Roper writes...

God knows our pace. He knows when grief, pain and loneliness overwhelm us. He knows when the full realization of our limitations come home to us. He knows when we're shamed and broken and unable to go on. God does not drive His sheep. He gently leads them.

Today on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek will describe how God leads us as we continue with our study of the 23rd Psalm.

Psalm 23:3b says...

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

There are three questions we need to ask about this statement.

How does God lead us?

What are the paths of righteousness?

What does 'for His Name's sake' mean?

Let's think of life as a journey. We travel many roads and make many decisions to get to our destination. Without directions, we're in the dark. In our ministry, we drive many miles. I get directions from someone at the church we're going to and from the internet. Most of the time the directions written by people are far superior to those from the internet. Why? Because people are familiar with the roads – they've been there.

A person who leads is one who shows the way by going in advance of you. He encounters the obstacles first and steers you away from them. Jesus does this for us. He's like the shepherd who clears the pasture of poisonous grass and snakes before letting the sheep go in.

The ways, or paths of the Lord are righteous, or right ways, but His ways are foreign to us. In Isaiah 55:8 the Lord says...

My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways.

How can we be lead then? 1 Corinthians 2:11 says that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Verse 12 says that Believers in Christ receive the Spirit of God, and verse 16 states that through the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ. Jesus said in John 8:12...

I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

God reveals his will through the Holy Spirit and through His Word. Psalm 119:105 says...

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

As we read the Bible and listen for the voice of the Lord, the Holy Spirit will guide us to the path on which we should walk. We'll learn to hear only His voice; the same way sheep do their shepherd.

The Lord is the perfect direction giver because He has been there before and has cleared the way to our eternal home. That reminds me of a familiar hymn.

**I must needs go home by the way of the cross.
There's no other way but this.
I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light
If the way of the cross I miss.**

**I must needs go on in the blood-sprinkled way
The path that the Savior trod.
If I ever climb to the heights sublime
Where the soul is at home with God.**

**The way of the cross leads home.
The way of the cross leads home.
It is sweet to know as I onward go.
The way of the cross leads home.**

******* WRITERS: Becky Stewart/D. Dunn
*** KEEP YOUR EYES UPON THE CROSS *** LENGTH: 4:05

*There are days when Heaven seems so far away
A dream almost too good to be true
When everything I do takes me farther from You
I forget the vows I made and I wander far away*

*When the ROAD FROM BETHLEHEM to Calvary
Seems much too LONG & far to HARD to CLIMB
Then I HEAR HIM gently say ' Follow me' – I am the Way
Don't LOOK BACK for an INSTANT
Look ahead in the distance*

*Keep your eyes – keep your eyes upon the Cross
It will guide you when you are lost
It will shine in the night –a BEACON of PURE light
Keep your eyes – your eyes upon the CROSS*

*From the MANGER to the CROSS there is a winding ROAD
And TRUTHS to learn along the way
There are MIRACLES & MYSTERIES
Faith to build if we believe
But the FINAL DESTINATION – is the CROSS of our SALVATION*

(chorus)

It will shine in the night – a BEACON of pure light – Keep your eyes

*SO I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Where my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it someday for a crown – for a crown*

What does the phrase 'for His Name's sake' mean? It means 'because of His nature'. God is righteous. He will never lead us anywhere where He knows we will fall. So, to prevent us from getting involved with harmful things He sometimes sets up blockades. His intent is to protect us and the family Name. When we accept Christ as our Savior, we take on the name 'Christian'. Our walk will either point people to Christ or away from Him. God's reputation is at stake with every choice we make.

Think of it this way. As parents, we try to steer our children away from evil. We're grieved when they disobey. It can defame our family name. How grieved God must be at our wrong decisions.

When we go through God's barriers, we're in the danger zone of temptation. I think when Jesus said in His model prayer..."Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", he meant for us to say..."Lord, do whatever it takes to keep me from evil".

This may mean that God will hem us in and foil our plans. King David wrote in Psalm 139...

**You hem me in – behind and before. Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn; if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your right hand will hold me fast.**

**So, what is our part in this process? We're commanded in Proverbs 3:5-6 to...
Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.**

Proverbs 4:26 says that when it's time to make a choice...

Make level (or consider the) paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left. Keep your foot from evil.

What can we expect when we follow His leading? Not necessarily 'easy street', but surely protection from accidents, because there's no such thing as an accident with God.

My husband, Dale, and I sometimes walk together for exercise. Walking hand in hand makes the journey so much more bearable and safe. If we walk in God's ways, we walk hand in hand with Him. Psalm 37:23-24 says...

If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His Hand.

******* WRITER: Andrew Johnson**

***** JESUS HOLD MY HAND *** LENGTH: 3:09**

VERSE 1

*As I travel through this pilgrim land
There is a friend who walks with me
Leads me safely through the sinking sand
It is the Christ at Calvary
This would be my prayer, dear Lord, each day
You help me do the best I can
For I need Thy light to guide me day and night
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand*

CHORUS

*Jesus, hold my hand
For I need Thee every hour
Through this pilgrim land
Protect me by Thy power
Hear my feeble plea
O Lord, look down on me
When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand*

VERSE 2

*Let me travel in the light divine
That I may see the blessed way
Keep me that I may be wholly Thine
And sing 'Redemption's Song' some day
I will be a soldier brave and true
And ever firmly take a stand
As I onward go and daily meet the foe
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand*

Repeat chorus

*When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand*

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Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!