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THE SHEPHERD & *the Shelter*

*Psalm 23, Psalm 91 and four more psalms of comfort, printed in full, with
notes for reading them slowly*

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS WAS ISRAEL'S PRAYER BOOK AND HYMN BOOK, and it has been the Church's ever since. There are 150 psalms, and they cover every feeling a person can have: joy, anger, fear, grief, thanksgiving and hope. Jesus prayed the psalms. He quoted one from the cross.

Two psalms stand above the rest in how often people turn to them: **Psalm 23**, the Shepherd, and **Psalm 91**, the Shelter. In 2025 these two psalms held nearly every top spot on the list of the most-read Bible verses in the world. This booklet prints them in full, with four more comfort psalms, so you can read them slowly and make them your own.

PSALMS OF COMFORT
THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

PSALM 23

PSALM 23 · A PSALM OF DAVID

23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy

rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

KING JAMES VERSION



"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

READING IT SLOWLY

VERSE	WHAT IT TELLS US ABOUT GOD
1 · <i>The Lord is my shepherd</i>	He is personal. Not <i>a</i> shepherd — <i>my</i> shepherd.
2 · <i>green pastures ... still waters</i>	He gives rest. Sheep will not lie down unless they feel safe.
3 · <i>He restoreth my soul</i>	He puts us back together when life has worn us down.
4 · <i>the valley of the shadow of death</i>	He doesn't take us around every valley, but He walks through it with us.
5 · <i>a table ... in the presence of mine enemies</i>	He honors us, even while trouble is still around.
6 · <i>goodness and mercy shall follow me</i>	His kindness chases us every day, and we will live with Him forever.

UNDER HIS WINGS

PSALM 91



PSALM 91

91 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. ³Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. ⁴He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. ⁵Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that fli-

eth by day; ⁶Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. ⁷A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. ⁸Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. ⁹Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; ¹⁰There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. ¹¹For he shall give

his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. ¹²They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. ¹³Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. ¹⁴Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I

deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. ¹⁵He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. ¹⁶With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

KING JAMES VERSION

IN PLAIN WORDS

This psalm uses picture after picture: a secret hiding place, a shadow, a fortress, a mother bird spreading her wings over her chicks, a shield. It does not promise that nothing bad will ever happen in the world. It promises that the person who stays close to God is never outside His care. The last three verses are God speaking for Himself: *I will deliver him. I will be with him in trouble. I will show him my salvation.*

PSALMS OF COMFORT
WHOM SHALL I FEAR?

PSALM 27

PSALM 27:1-5

27 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ²When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. ³Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. ⁴One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. ⁵For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

KING JAMES VERSION

WHEN TO READ IT

When you feel surrounded or outnumbered. David says the Lord is his *light* (so he can see), his *salvation* (so he is rescued) and his *strength* (so he can stand). If God is all three, whom shall he fear?

PSALM 46

PSALM 46

46 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ³Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. ⁴There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. ⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. ⁶The heathen raged, the

kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. ⁸Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. ⁹He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. ¹⁰Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

KING JAMES VERSION

WHEN TO READ IT

When everything is shaking. The psalm imagines mountains falling into the sea, and still says: *we will not fear*. Then God speaks: *Be still, and know that I am God*. Sometimes the most faithful thing to do is to stop, breathe, and remember who is in charge.

PSALM 139

PSALM 139:1-12

139 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. ²Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. ³Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. ⁴For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. ⁵Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. ⁷Whither shall I go from thy

spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. ⁹If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; ¹⁰Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. ¹²Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

KING JAMES VERSION

WHEN TO READ IT

When you feel unseen or alone. God knows when you sit down and when you get up. There is nowhere you could go — not the heights, not the depths, not the darkest night — where He is not already there.

PSALM 121

PSALM 121

121 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ²My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. ³He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. ⁴Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is

thy shade upon thy right hand. ⁶The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. ⁸The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

KING JAMES VERSION

TRY THIS

Choose one of these psalms and read it every day for a week, morning and night. By the end of the week you will know much of it by heart, and it will come back to you when you need it most — in a hospital, at a graveside, or in the middle of a sleepless night.

SIT WITH IT

Which line from these psalms do I need most right now?

Who do I know that needs one of these psalms this week?



“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

PSALM 23:6

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

“Big Wesley” · The Freedom Church · Founded June 6, 1820

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 AM
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SUNDAY WORSHIP	11:00 AM
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