

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 9/19/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, September 20 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for our church. Thank GOD that we have been invited to be a part of this community and for the opportunities to care for and serve with one another. Ask the HOLY SPIRIT to continue to guide us to the places where GOD needs and wants us.*

There is not much memorization of scripture done anymore, but for those who do have some verses stored in their mind, probably the first scripture you learned was Psalm 23. It is a favorite psalm of comfort and assurance of the LORD'S care and protection. We often hear it at funerals and memorial services, again because of its familiarity and promise of GOD'S abiding presence both now and forever.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² HE maketh me to lie down in green pastures: HE leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ HE restoreth my soul: HE leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for HIS name's sake.

⁴ Yea, 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.

⁵ THOU preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: THOU anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ 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. (KJV)

We usually think about this psalm in terms of what GOD does for us. But there is one verse that has a missional quality to it as well. It says something about what GOD'S love in our lives means for us in this world. Verse 5 includes the promise, "my cup runneth over," or "my cup overflows." Indeed, this phrase speaks of GOD'S abundant provision for our needs.

But there is also a stewardship quality to this message. GOD provides for the things that we need even to the point of overflowing Psalm 23 tells us. And we shouldn't want or need a bigger cup. We have all that we need and more. Since this cup overflows, it also tells us that we have enough to share. Whether it be physical abilities, or wealth, or time, GOD gives us what we need and more. GOD equips us, not just for what is essential in our lives, but also so that we can help to meet the needs of others.

Sometimes wants and desires get in the way of that. Like the wealthy man whose harvest was so great that he had more than he would need for years to come, we decide that we need "bigger barns," to accommodate all with which we have been blessed. But the overflowing cup is a sign that the blessings we have received are not to be stored up, but rather flowing out to others. That, too, is a blessing. The ability to share with others through our support for our church and for those around us is a reminder that GOD has invited us to be part of GOD'S mission in the world. GOD has purposes in mind for us as we gather together in GOD'S name and as we interact with others in our world. We need not fear meeting, getting to know, and then helping others. That is part of GOD'S invitation and call. And we need not fear it because we have the promise from Psalm 23 that our cup overflows!

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey