

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of April 14, 2019

Wilderness Without Wanting

Guest Preacher Dr. Jack Beck 8:15,9:30, 10:55

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on "Reckless Love?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener Question: What is often your first reaction when facing situations with great uncertainties beyond your control?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Mark 14:1-11. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

<p>The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.</p> <p>² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,</p> <p>³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.</p> <p>⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;</p>	<p>your rod and your staff, they comfort me.</p> <p>⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.</p> <p>⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.</p>
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- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Dr. Beck said that Psalm 23 was written by David who was drawing from his experiences as a boy tending sheep near the village of Bethlehem for half of the year, and in the Judean wilderness in the other half. How have you pictured the setting of Psalm 23 in the past? How does placing the setting in the Judean wilderness affect the interpretation?

- What spiritual truth is communicated in the shepherd metaphor in verse 1 when David, in a way, said “I lack nothing in the place that lacks everything?”
- How does the Shepherd offer His sheep protection from the dangers of the wilderness in verses 3b-4 (both for those who stay with Him and those who wander)?
- The party imagery of verse 5 seems odd given the harsh circumstances of the wilderness setting. What lesson about joy and wilderness do you believe is intended here for us?
- What other qualities of the Shepherd are revealed in verse 6 and what certainties in the wilderness of uncertainty flows from them?

Other Related Scriptures (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read out loud John 10:11-18. What is the difference between the good shepherd and the hired hand?
- In the hostile environment described here, what is the means of the survival of the sheep?
- What is required of the sheep (verse 16)?
- How does Jesus’ choice to lay down His life for the sake of His sheep (us), reveal the depth of his love for us as well as the Father?
- What does it reveal of His capacity to forgive and restore those who have wandered into dark valleys and sinful ways?
- In verses 14-15, Jesus likens his relationship with the Father to the relationship between His sheep and Himself, the Good Shepherd. Does this statement about the degree of intimacy that we can have with Christ astonish you? Why or why not?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Of the four areas lifted up in the message this week- God’s provision, protection, joy and assurance of homecoming, which among them speak to you the most this week?
- What uncertainties in your circumstances are calling for listening to the voice of the Shepherd for guidance along the right path?
- Dr. Beck mentioned the still waters in the wilderness are very difficult to find and that you don’t see them until you are almost right on top of them. How might the Good Shepherd be calling us to trust in his guidance and provision for things we cannot yet see this week?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- Verse 5 offers us the promise of God’s provision and joy in the presence of our enemies. Who might be counted as enemies in your life this week?
- How might enjoying the goodness of the Lord in their presence be a means of overcoming for you? Be a means of positive change in them?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.