



## Additional Scripture Readings:

John 10:27-30, Hebrews 11

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to you to have assurance of your salvation? What are some of the ways that people might struggle in their spiritual lives without that sense of assurance?
2. Are you sure of your salvation in Jesus Christ? What are some of the reasons you answered this question the way that you did? Have there been times when you have wrestled with that question in your life?
3. When our eyes are focused on the circumstances right in front of us, it is common to make decisions or choose paths which seem right in the short term but cause us to stray from the straight path of God's will. Share with each other a story of a time when this was true in your life. How did you get back onto the right path?
4. What are a few of the practical ways that you make sure to keep your vision firmly fixed on Jesus in the midst of your daily circumstances? What is a spiritual discipline that you have been thinking of trying?
5. In the Lord's prayer, we ask to receive our daily bread from God's hands. What is a way that God has provided for your need in the middle of difficult time of your life?
6. In this psalm, David rejoices in the idea of dwelling in the house of the Lord. In the New Testament church, we, God's people are described as a living temple. In the sermon, a statement was made that the life of the church is much more than the one hour of our Sunday worship gatherings. Would you agree with this statement or disagree? Why? What does it look like for you to "dwell" within this house of God, the church?

## Action Steps:

1. This week I will make time each day to intentionally turn my attention to God's word to listen for his voice in the midst of my circumstances.
2. Take time this week to give thanks for the many ways in which God has provided for your needs.

### **Nourishment: Restoring Balance - Psalm 23:2-3a**

<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; <sup>3a</sup> he restores my soul.*

What are the things that nourish and sustain us? What brings life and what is sucking the life out of us? When we eat and drink from the right sources, we will be refreshed, strengthened and restored.

### **Listening: Waiting on God - Psalm 23:3b**

<sup>3b</sup> *He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.*

How much of our time, attention and energy are wasted because we are pursuing a path that leads to nowhere, or worse leads to our downfall? God has a path of blessing for us if we will hear his voice.

### **Letting Go: Facing Fear - Psalm 23:4-5a**

<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff -- they comfort me. <sup>5a</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;*

How much of our agenda is driven by our fears? Our worries and anxieties (failure, acceptance, conflict, future) can rob us of energy and joy in our daily lives. Knowing we do not face our fears alone can free us to choose paths that bring blessing and peace into our life.

### **Fruitfulness: Investing in What Matters - Psalm 23:5b**

<sup>5b</sup> *you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

A way for us to evaluate what belongs in our lives or needs to be weeded out is whether these activities are bearing fruit or not – both in a practical and spiritual sense. Sometimes the hardest decision is to let go of something good so that there is room for something greater.

### **Assurance: Eyes on the Goal - Psalm 23:6**

<sup>6</sup> *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.*

Like the first verse – knowing whom we follow - we also need to have a clear understanding of what our ultimate goal and destination is. When our eyes are firmly fixed on the prize of eternity and faithful service to the kingdom of God, then our priorities fall into place naturally.

### **Questions to Consider:**

*What are the two most life-giving things going on in your life right now?*

*What are the two most life-draining things going on in your life right now?*

*What is one spiritual practice in your life right now that helps you maintain a healthy balance?*